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The Troilus and Criseyde of Chaucer as Romance

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THE TROILUS AND CRISEYDE OF CHAUCER AS ROMANCE

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William Charles McCusker, of the Society of Jesus, was born in Bayonne, New Jersey, on November 4th, 1921, the son of Thomas A. and Frieda R. McCusker. After his elementary education at St. Vincent de Paul's Parochial School in Bayonne, he attended St. Peter's College Preparatory School in Jersey City, graduating in June, 1938. In July of this year, the author entered the Novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Wernersville, Penna. From 1940 to 1942, he studied at Georgetown University; and in September, 1942, transferred to Loyola University, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1944. From 1945 to 1948 he was Instructor of Latin and English at St. Francis Xavier's High School in New York City. At present, he is engaged in theological studies at the College of the Sacred Heart, Woodstock, Maryland.
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ABBREVIATIONS

C H E L - Cambridge History of English Literature.


M L N - Modern Language Notes.

M L R - Modern Language Review.

M P - Modern Philology.


P Q - Philological Quarterly.

Q Q - Queen's Quarterly (Kingston, Ont.).


S P - Studies in Philology.

Spec - Speculum.

T L A - Times Literary Supplement.

Wis U Stud - Wisconsin University Studies.
CHAPTER I

SETTING THE PROBLEM, THE AIM, AND THE PROCEDURE

The charming love story of Troilus and Cressida has been a favorite of readers for centuries. Language, nationality and time have never been obstacles to the full enjoyment of the dramatic story of these two lovers. Boccaccio gave it to the Italians in Il Filostrato. Chaucer popularized it for the young and old of Merry England in the Troilus and Criseyde. Years later the theater goers of London enjoyed Shakespeare's version of the story on the capital's stages. However, here the story as told by Boccaccio and Chaucer is of chief interest.

Within the last four decades or so, there has risen a discussion of the romantic and realistic elements of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde. Several Chaucerian critics, notably Professors Root, Ker, Kittredge and de Selincourt, have emphasized the psychological and realistic elements of Chaucer's poem. They have felt that Chaucer so deftly handled characters, so tended to realism, and invested the piece with so much irony that his work suggests the psychological novel rather than the medieval romance. It is certainly true that these critics do not wish to deny all allegiance of the poem to medieval romance. However, as subsequent quotations will reveal, these critics have maintained that many of the romance elements have been so obscured by Chaucer's method that his poem resembles more the psychological or modern novel than the medieval romance. On the other hand, opposition to this opinion has been afforded by scholars like Professors
Young and Lewis. They have maintained that Chaucer wrote his poem in the traditions of the medieval romance, and that the presence of subtle characterization and realism does not destroy the impression of medieval romance. In spite of the living characters and the irony, the general atmosphere, so state these two critics, and the pervading flavor of the poem is that of the traditional medieval romance.

This thesis purports to investigate the opinions of both groups of critics in this matter, and to show, that although Chaucer has deviated from the romantic tradition in some ways, still one would be wrong in emphasizing the realistic elements over the romantic. Though at times there are certain elements in the poem which might remind us of a modern, psychological novel, still the general impression of a medieval romance seems to prevail.

Professor Root emphasizes the realistic characterization and the living humanity found in the poem. In his *Poetry of Chaucer* he writes:

Hitherto Chaucer had written, gracefully and wittily, in the school of French allegory and dream-vision. With Troilus he became the poet of living humanity. Though ostensibly a tale of Troy long ago, it makes but the scantest attempt to suggest the world of classical antiquity. Only the names are ancient; the characters, the manners are modern and contemporary. Troy is but medieval London, besieged as it might have been by the French. The parliament which King Priam convenes is an English parliament. Troilus might as well be son to Edward III. Its spirit and temper is that of the modern novel rather than of the medieval romance. Were it written in prose, it would be called the first English novel.

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Professor Root centers much attention on the irony of Chaucer's poem. The ironical humor and the subtle, philosophical interpretation of action and life lead him to consider the poem a masterpiece of irony. He writes:

Into its fundamental tragedy Chaucer breathes a spirit of ironical humor, which is all but totally foreign to the Italian poem. Even as he recounts the idealism of Troilus and presents the inexhaustible charm of Criseyde, he is conscious of the bitter mockery of both, which is to be provided by Criseyde's ultimate treachery. That such angelic beauty and womanly charm should reside in a nature so essentially shallow and unstable, that the youthful ardor and utter loyalty of Troilus should be expended on a woman capable of Criseyde's baseness, that is part of the mystery and mockery of human life. And so, if Chaucer's poem has much more humor that Boccaccio's, it has also a much higher seriousness, a seriousness which becomes at the end a philosophic interpretation of the action, and through it of the ultimate values of life... Chaucer dwells with the subtle analysis of great comedy on the complications of his tragic plot, the interplay of motive, above all on the psychological problem of Criseyde's character. The result is a poem which is neither a tragedy nor comedy, but a masterpiece of irony.2

Doctor Ker hails the Troilus and Criseyde as the pioneer of the modern novel. He believes that the subtle characterization, the variety of life and the dramatic imagination found in the poem remove it from the field of medieval romance. He writes:

Chaucer attains a place for himself above all other authors as the poet who saw what was needed to transform medieval romance out of its limitations into a new kind of narrative. Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde is the poem in which medieval romance passes out of itself into the form of the modern novel. What Cervantes and what Fielding did was done first by Chaucer; and this was the invention of a kind of story in which might be represented no longer in a

2 Ibid., 98-9.
conventional or abstract manner, or with sentiment and pathos instead of drama, but with characters adapting themselves to different circumstances...moving freely and talking like men and women.3

According to Doctor Ker, Chaucer so changed Boccaccio's romance that the resulting poem is free from the romantic conventions. In the book cited above Ker writes:

The story of Troilus he saw was strong enough to bear a stronger handling, and instead of leaving it a romance, graceful and superficial as it is in Boccaccio, he deepened it and filled with such dramatic imagination and such variety of life as had never been attained before his time by any romancer; and the result is a piece of work that leaves all romantic convention behind.4

Doctor Ker briefly compares the three main characters, Troilus, Criseyde and Pandarus, in the poem of Chaucer with the three corresponding characters in Boccaccio's work. The result of the comparison indicates, for this critic, an abandonment of the romantic tradition.

The Filostretto of Boccaccio is a story of light love, not much more substantial, except in its new poetical language than the story of Flamenca. In Chaucer, the passion of Troilus is something different from the sentiment of romance; the changing mind of Cressida is represented with an understanding of the subtlety and the tragic meaning of that life which is 'time's fool'. Pandarus is the other element. In Boccaccio he is a personage of the same order as Troilus and Cressida; they all might have come out of the Garden of the Decameron, and there is little to choose between them. Chaucer sets him up with a character and a philosophy of his own, to represent the world outside of romance. The Comic Genius claims a share in the tragedy, and the tragedy makes room for him, because the tragic personages, 'Tragic Comedians' as they are, can bear the strain of the contrast. The selection of personages and motives is made in

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4 Ibid., 368.
another way in the romantic schools, but this poem of Chaucer's is not romance.

Finally, Professor Ker states that Chaucer's chief contribution to Boccaccio is reality.

What Chaucer contributed to the Filostrato is what we roughly call reality. He sees the story acted, not in the limited selected world of romance...but in a world where one has a sense of ordinary life going on.

Professor Kittredge calls the Troilus "a great psychological novel, strikingly different from Boccaccio's romance." He pictures Chaucer as planning a romance, but actually writing something quite different. He writes:

Oblivion has treated Chaucer generously...She has spared that masterpiece of psychological fiction... The Troilus is not merely, as William Rossetti styles it, the most beautiful long narrative poem in the English language, it is the first novel, in the modern sense, that was ever written in the world, and one of the best... Chaucer sat down to compose a romance, as many a poet had done before him. The subject was to be love; the ethical and social system was to be that of chivalry; the source was the matter of Troy; the material was Italian and French and Latin. His readers were to be the knights and ladies of the court, to whom the name of the hero as a lover and a warrior was already familiar. Psychology it was to contain, or what passed for psychology in the medieval love-poets, the analysis of emotion in the terms of Chrétien de Troyes and the Roman de la Rose. Yet the work was not, in Chaucer's intention, to be a romance precisely. He conceived it as what scholars then called a 'tragedy', - though with a somewhat peculiar modification of the standard term. This was to be a tragedy of love, and

5 Ibid., 369-70.


the fall of the hero was to be from happy union with his lady to the woe and ruin of her unfaithfulness.

In the details and characterization of the poem, Professor Kittredge finds justification for calling it a psychological novel.

The interest lies in the details, which are told with much particularity, and in the characterization, which is complex and subtle in a high degree. Readers who look for rapid movement and quick succession of incidents, are puzzled and thwarted by the deliberation, the leisureliness of the Troilus. The conversations are too long for them; they find the soliloquies languid; the analysis of sentiment and emotion and passion fails to keep their mind awake.

Kittredge cites two characters of the poem, Criseyde and Pandarus as examples of the subtle and complex characterization. He writes that Criseyde "is not a simple character, like the elemental Griseida of Boccaccio; but her inconsistencies are those of human nature." Kittredge further notes the significance of Chaucer's choice of Pandarus as the exponent of chivalric love.

It is a very pregnant manifestation of Chaucer's feeling for the irony of life and circumstance when he makes Pandarus the exponent of chivalric love... Pandarus has the distinctive quality of the pure humorist; he perceives the true comic element in himself, that is, in his own standing toward his character and environment, his theories and acts... Thus he is a rare but perfectly human compound of enthusiasm and critical acumen.

Professor deSelincourt places much emphasis on Chaucer's sense of

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8 C. L. Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1933, 109.10.
9 Ibid., 112.
10 Ibid., 135.
11 Ibid., 137-9.
actual life. His ability to portray the world of everyday tends to nullify
the classical and medieval elements that are found in the poem.

Troilus and Criseyde is Chaucer's first and greatest
adventure in that world of everyday where his genius
found its natural home. Under the guidance of his
French masters he had perfected himself in the
technique of his art; and his irrepressible sense of
actual life had broken ever more insistently through
their prescribed conventions of dream and allegory;
his advance towards a fuller freedom had received a
marked impetus by his vital sense of the realities.
With their help he had learned, among other lessons,
how to tell a story directly and simply, with due
emphasis on character and significant situation...
Troilus and Criseyde, despite its classical names
and its medieval setting, is a page out of the book
of modern everyday life, illuminated with an imagi­
native insight into character only rivalled by
Shakespeare and Browning among our poets, and by a
few of our greatest novelists. 12

In a brief comparison between Boccaccio's poem and Chaucer's, deSelincourt
notes a greater realism and naturalness in the latter's work which helps
to justify its interpretation as our first great psychological novel.

It has been calculated that whilst Chaucer's poem
is hardly half as long again as Boccaccio's, less
than a third of it is drawn from him; and even
where Chaucer translates literally, he often gives
his own turn to the meaning. He applies to three
characters that full psychological analysis which
the Italian had given to only one; two of them he
entirely recasts; he allows himself a place as a
commentator; gives to his scenes a still fuller and
more vivid realism and to his dialogue a greater
naturalness; and sets his tragic story in a back­
ground of comedy which enhances both its poignancy
and its truth to life. The romance which Boccaccio
had seen merely from Troilo's point of view,
Chaucer sees dramatically, as a rounded whole.
The Troilus and Criseyde has justly been regarded
as our first great psychological novel. 13

12 E. deSelincourt, Oxford Lectures on Poetry, Oxford University Press,
London, 1934, 50.
13 Ibid., 52.
The irony which Chaucer introduced into his poem, especially in the
characters of Pandarus and Criseyde, receives some comment from Professor
deSelincourt. He considers this quality one of the methods employed by
Chaucer to take his poem out of the world of medieval romance and introduce
it to the world of everyday and of common sense.

While Pandarus's attitude to the amour courtois is
sympathetic, it is also ironical. Chaucer's con-
summate genius saw in this third character the novel-
ist's golden opportunity for presenting the story
from another angle. Boccaccio's Pandaro is Griselda's
cousin, a man of the same age as Troilo, and wholly
of a piece with him; Chaucer makes him Criseyde's
uncle, gives him the advantage of a few years' ex-
perience, and endows him with his own matchless gift
of humour, thus opening the door of this hot-house
of romantic passion to let in the bracing air of the
world of common sense. 14

Criseyde, according to deSelincourt, is the representation of a common
figure of everyday life.

Criseyde belongs to a different world. If she is
not, as some critics have tried to make out, an
ignorant girl decoyed from innocence by an un-
scrupulous pandar, still less is she the practiced
coquette of a naturally sensual disposition. She
is, indeed, something far more complex, more subtle,
and one may add, more commonly met in life than
either. 15

The conclusion which deSelincourt draws from this irony of life and subtle
characterization is that the reader feel "that the story, despite its
chivalric setting, is after all, a piece of normal human experience." 16

14 Ibid., 57.
15 Ibid., 62.
16 Ibid., 76.
These four authors, Professors Root, Ker, Kittredge and deSelincourt, seem to agree in general in their interpretation of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. They have concentrated their attention on the realism of detail, on the complex and subtle characterization of the three leading personages of the poem, and on the irony of humor and action. Such are their chief reasons for placing the poem outside of the romance tradition and for calling the poem a psychological novel, whose spirit and temper is that of the modern novel rather than of the medieval romance.

On the other hand, critics, notably Doctor Young and Mr. C. S. Lewis, have written of Chaucer's poem from the opposite viewpoint. Though conscious of the subtle characterization and the reality of certain parts of the poem, they have interpreted the poem as essentially a medieval romance. In spite of these apparently foreign elements, Chaucer has preserved enough of the romantic elements to create the general impression and atmosphere of the medieval romance.

Doctor Young expressly objects to the interpretation of the poem as a novel which leaves romantic convention behind. In an article in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, he has written:

It is certain, in any case, that the critics who expound the poem as a psychological novel are completely sensitive to the romantic beauty... and are eager to have us appropriate it. From their criticism, however, the medieval charm seems often to vanish. Their formula - strikingly successful within its narrow bounds - is so limited that it averts our eyes from those romantic effects to which Chaucer gave great original effort, and which he spreads before us in spacious brilliance. And then the critics tell us that the poem represents
'ordinary life' and leaves 'all romantic convention behind', they would seem to be closing our eyes to the Chaucerian medieval beauty altogether. When moreover we are told that Troilus is 'the first novel, in the modern sense' we are, I fear, being misled. If Chaucer's poem is to be called a 'novel' the same term must be applied to many a romantic narrative which preceded it by a century or two.  

In interpreting the poem of Chaucer as essentially a medieval romance, Doctor Young briefly compares the poem with the Il Filostrato of Boccaccio, asking:  

whether it would not be more generally accurate to say that the Filostrato is something like a novello of Naples which Chaucer, in large measure, transformed into a romance of a glamorous Middle Age, of a remote Troy, and for one precious moment, of a magical nowhere.  

Young also reminds us that "our critical preoccupation with psychology and ordinary realism must not be allowed to obscure the charm and flavor of the poem as a romance."  

Mr. C. S. Lewis agrees with Doctor Young in interpreting the poem. He notes the changes in Chaucer's poem over that of Boccaccio and suggests that:  

in the course of these changes Chaucer was chiefly concerned with correcting and refining Boccaccio's treatment of courtly love, and with merging narrative and courtly doctrine according to the tradition of Chrétien de Troyes and the latter's successors.

17 E. Young, "Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde as Romance," PMLA, 1938, LIII, 62.  
18 Ibid., 40.  
20 Ibid., 58.
Mr. Lewis also writes that "it was as a poet of courtly love that Chaucer approached Il Filostrato."21

Professor T. A. Kirby, investigating the relation of Chaucer's poem to the Filostrato of Boccaccio, writes that "Geoffrey Chaucer was perfectly well aware that his Troilus and Criseyde is a poem of courtly love."22 Professor Cummings, discussing the indebtedness of Chaucer's work to Boccaccio, concludes that "the atmosphere of Troilus and Criseyde...is permeated with the breath of romance."23 These last two critics do not attack the entire question of this thesis, but confine themselves to showing that Chaucer followed the romance tradition at least in the matter of courtly love.

There seems, therefore, to be an opposition of critics in the interpretation of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde. It would be foolish to judge that any of the authors completely denies the position and findings of the others. However, the first group, consisting of Root, Ker, Kittredge, and de Selincourt, have seen more of the modern, psychological spirit in the poem, than the medieval romantic temper. Young and Lewis, and more narrowly, Kirby and Cummings, seem to emphasize the romantic elements of the work. The result of their investigation would seem to show that the atmosphere created by Chaucer in his poem is predominantly that of the traditional medieval romance. Perhaps it could be said that Chaucer put a

21 Ibid., 58.
23 H. M. Cummings, The Indebtedness of Chaucer's Works to the Italian Works of Boccaccio, Collegiate Press, Wisconsin, 1918, 121.
new twist to an old, traditional type; but in spite of the newness, and the additions, it remains still the old, conventional form.

The method to be followed will be chiefly to compare the changes wrought by Chaucer on the Boccaccio version of the story. The investigation of these major changes seem to indicate that Chaucer added subtle characterization and some reality but still manages to retain the medieval romantic spirit of his work.
The literary form of Romance flourished for several centuries during the medieval era. Because of its wide extent and its many variations, it becomes rather difficult to define or even describe this form in detail. However a satisfactory description of the principle elements of Medieval Romance can be obtained from some of the standard commentators and critics on this subject. Likewise, from one of the recognized romances these elements can be seen in operation.

In general there are three chief elements of Medieval Romance, love, adventure and chivalry. The term, love, is used to signify courtly love about which a whole science was evolved by Andreas Capellanus, a court chaplain. Adventure is meant to include action and fancy. It deals with plot, but in an imaginative fashion. It takes the medieval away from his ordinary activity and locale with its tale of distant places and times, of daring and fanciful activity. This element of adventure is more concerned with the action of the characters than with the characters themselves. The third element, chivalry, is closely linked with adventure. It includes all the convention of knighthood and nobility and "courtoisie."

The first element, love, is that romantic love, of the courteous and revolutionary sort which Provencal poets invented and which was codified.
by Andreas Capellanus in the De Arte Honeste Amanti. Professor Young considers this type of romantic love a necessary element of Medieval Romance.

He writes:

"The romances were the obvious home of courteous love and the exhibition of it was perhaps their chief social function."^2

Otis and Needleman find one of the features of romance to be "an emphasis on supreme devotion to a fair lady."^3 The importance of this element is confirmed by Charles Baldwin. Writing on the literature of medieval times in England, he views romantic love as the chief aspect of the romance. He writes:

"By romantic love we still mean passion and idealizing devotion, wooing and worship... Wooing and woman-worship in medieval romances are in great measure a literary code. Influences from Vergil's Dido and from the women of Ovid had been transformed by the courtly poets of the Provence. This Provencal courtly love passed into general literary habit through France and at the same time was brought into England directly...The literary change brought about by these influences appears in the romantic convention exalting women as worthy of all devotion."^4

Miss Barrows, commenting on those romances in which adventure is subordinated to love writes:

"The hero may travel extensively and travel much,"

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1 E. Trojel, Andreas Capellani regii Francorum de amore libri tres, Ravnias, 1892.
2 K. Young, 45.
but unchanging devotion to the heroine is responsible for his going, for his return and for most of what he does along the way. Valor, the call of adventure, the impersonal obligations of chivalry cannot long distract the course of the true lover's duty from his lady. As for her, she holds her place as heroine by rights of love alone; she had no other excuse for being. And upon the lovers all things converge.5

This love, according to Miss Barrows, is "the all-powerful passion refined by courtesie...a fashionable ideal of the aristocratic society which the poets picture with poetic heightening for the pleasure of knights and ladies of courtly circles."6

Professor Ker notes the insurgence of this romantic element in the French romances of the twelfth century. He writes:

The old national epics...were displaced by a new romantic school...The new romances were intended to be read in my lady's bower; they were for summer leisure and daylight...These French romances were dedicated to noble ladies and represented everything that was most refined and elegant in the life of the twelfth century.7

Ker further remarks that:

The leaders of this school, Benoit de Ste. More and Chrétien de Troyes, with their followers, were courtly persons...authors bent on putting into their work the spirit, and all the graces of gentle conversation as it was then understood, more particularly the refinements of amatory sentiment.8

6 Ibid., 5.
8 Ibid., 311.
Professor Ker notes the importance and value of this element of courtly love. He writes:

There are several stages in the history of the great Romantic school, as well as several distinct sources of interest. The value of the best works of the school consists in their representation of the passion of love.

Professor Atkins writes that "the charming love-problems had exercised the minds of medieval courtiers and had subsequently been analysed in the romances after the approved fashion of the courts of love." 10

The second element, adventure, which includes the notions of the strange, the fanciful and the ancient, often assumes an equally important position in the romances. Miss Barrows remarks that "the emphasis in the medieval romance is on the one or the other of the two great themes of romance, love and adventure." 11

Dr. Baldwin explains that adventure receives a new emphasis in the romance.

Adventure, of course, is also a motive of epic; but in romance it is more extolled for itself, is less related to the character of the hero, and passes more readily into fairyland... Because real life for most of us is humdrum, romance tells us that behind the closed door, or over the edge of the horizon, is mystery. Fancy, says romance, if on the strand beyond the next point should sit the fairest of damsel... Above the real world which

9 Ker, Epic and Romance, 327.
11 Barrows, 2.
we daily touch is an ideal world in which men are
brave and generous without calculation, in which
women are beautiful, in which, above all, something
happens just as we should like to see it happen,
and turns out just the right way. This ideal world
is the world of fancy; and its expression in
literature is romance.12

Professor Patch comments on the peculiar characteristics of romance.

The characteristic which marks romance, I think,
and defines its quality is rather a primary appeal,
through the nature or the manipulation of the sub-
ject matter, to the imagination. Romance means
nothing, if it does not convey some notice of
mystery and of fantasy.13

He further explains:

Remote or mysterious or fanciful the stuff of
which it is made may be, or again, the things it
presents may not be so far off or unhappy, nor
the battles those of so very long ago, but in
either case the imagination is touched, follows
readily and comprehends, while one's reason is
mystified and held in abeyance...This refers to
what is strictly within the fold of medieval
romance, and perhaps is only another way of
indicating what one critic has called the in-
credible nature of the material.14

Professor Ker notes the importance of adventure in the Medieval
Romance.

In the twelfth-century narratives, besides the
interest of the love-story and all its science,
there was the interest of adventure, of strange
things... Variety of incident, remoteness of
scene and all the incredible things in the world,

12 Baldwin, 55.
13 H. R. Patch, On Rereading Chaucer, Harvard University Press,
Cambridge, 1939, 14.
14 Ibid., 15.
had been at the disposal of the medieval authors long before the French Romantic Schools began to define themselves.15

Doctor Johnson briefly describes the hero of a romance.

A knight puts on his armor, saddles his horse and rides in any direction...He meets a knight, well mounted, clad in black armor, who challenges him to fight. They fight three or four hours according to the rules, and the stranger yields... The whole story is unreal, impossible, and unrepresentative of anything save some fanciful ideals of chivalry.16

Closely linked with this second element of adventure is the third quality, chivalry. However, it forms a third element, since it adds something to the elements of courtly love and of adventure. It includes the conventions of the court, of knighthood and of "courtoisie." Mr. Ernest Rhys notes the gradual introduction of this element of chivalry in the Medieval Romance. He writes:

In time, romance, like every form of literature, tended to set up a convention, and in deciding this convention, it called in the aid of the apparatus of chivalry.17

Otis and Needleman consider as a necessary element of romance "manners and morals representing some aspects of the contemporary ideal of Chivalry."18

Professor Atkins considers the element of chivalry the ruling motive
of romances. He writes:

The ruling motive of these romances... is clearly that of depicting on a large scale, the heroic element in humanity and of pointing out the glories of invincible knighthood... They concern themselves with chivalrous valour and knightly accomplishment. Their aim is to point to the more masculine elements of medieval chivalry. The joy of battle is everywhere articulate. 19

Chrétien de Troyes' Lancelot may be used as a typical example of the Medieval Romance. The three elements of love, adventure and chivalry are clearly present in this romance.

The first element, courtly love, is revealed in the devotion of Sir Kay and more especially of Sir Lancelot for Arthur's queen, Guinevere. Sir Kay appoints himself to defend the queen after Méléagant wagers his captives against Guinevere. After the defeat of Sir Kay and Guinevere's capture, Lancelot, in typical courtly-love fashion, sets out after them. He even undergoes humiliation, riding in a peasant's cart, for his lady. Because he loves her, he will give up all in her service. And this was expected of him as it was of every hero of the Medieval Romances. After Lancelot defeats Méléagant, he has his amour with the queen. Later on, in Arthur's tournament, Guinevere, following the rules of Andreas Capellanus, tests Lancelot's love by bidding him be a coward for two days. In obedience to Guinevere and the code of courtly love, Lancelot obeys. According to Professor Tilley, the main question in the Lancelot is "should a knight

19 Atkins, 342.
sacrifice the most legitimate self-esteem if his lady demands it."\(^{20}\)

The second element of adventure likewise pervades this romance. The story begins with Meleaganz' bold entry into Arthur's court and his wager of the captives against the queen in single combat. Sir Kay's fight and then Lancelot's journey, fraught with trouble and obstacles, his passage on the bridge over the river which Gawain cannot traverse, and his further and almost incredible adventures in the country of Meleaganz, all contribute to this element of adventure. His release by Bodemagen's daughter is equally fanciful and highly imaginative. Professor Holmes, commenting on the quality of fancy and imagination, -- a part of the element of adventure, -- writes:

The Kingdom of Bodemagen and of Meleaganz is plainly a representation of perpetual spring from which one cannot return.\(^{21}\)

Likewise in this romance, the court plays a major role. A large part of the story is placed in the court of Arthur and of Meleaganz. Other qualities of chivalry are shown in the offer of single combat, Sir Kay's offering of himself, the disgrace of Lancelot after losing his horse by riding in the peasant's cart, the tournament in Arthur's kingdom, Lancelot's self-effacement in the tournament and his final victory in the fight, and his final victory over Meleaganz.


The three chief elements of Medieval Romance are, therefore, courtly love, adventure and chivalry. Before a work can be considered as true Medieval Romance it must conform to these three requirements. If Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* contains these three elements, then he has essentially conformed his work to the requirements set down by the romantic tradition. Even if he has diverged in minor details, his work is substantially a Medieval Romance with certain minor innovations.

The elements of reality and character study would seem to be opposed to the element of adventure. If an author had deserted this second element of adventure and substituted entirely reality, irony and character analysis, then he could truly be accused of leaving behind the romantic tradition. But what of an author who includes the essential elements, but admits some character study, some irony, and some reality into his poem?

Even before Chaucer wrote, makers of Medieval Romances began to interest themselves in these foreign elements. Into an analysis of Chretien's romances, necessarily comes some consideration of psychology and character study. In his romances, there is a definite interest in the feelings and thoughts of his personages; without however destroying the element of adventure and fancy. Professor Ker writes:

Chretien...often treats his adventure with great levity in comparison with the serious psychological passages; the wonder is that he should have used so much of the common stuff of adventures in poems where he had a strong commanding interest in the sentiments of the personages. It is plain enough both that the adventures are of secondary value as
compared with the psychology, in the best romances, and that their value, though inferior, is still considerable.22

In Chrétien's Lancelot, we note character analyses of Sir Lancelot, Guinevere and Sir Kay. Ironic elements are included in the false accusation of Sir Kay and Lancelot's ride in the peasant's cart. There are likewise certain realistic touches in Chrétien's romances as in other romances of the period. Professor Atkins writes:

In certain respects these romances may be said to reflect the age in which they were written. They bear witness in two ways to the communistic conception of society which then prevailed; first by the anonymous character of the writings generally, 23 and secondly, by the absence of the patriotic note.

An added realistic touch is the underwater bridge in Chrétien's Lancelot which suggests the crannog causeway of Ireland.

Professor Tilley notes Chrétien's interest in character analysis. He writes:

He tried to penetrate below the surface; he liked to analyze feelings, to mark especially the different phases of love and each of his romances introduces a problem of the heart which his characters must solve by their conduct.24

Thus even in the accepted Medieval Romances just before Chaucer's time, there is some tendency to character study and reality. But these

22 Ker, Epic and Romance, 333-4.
23 Atkins, 363.
24 Tilley, 294-5.
elements are not prominent enough to subordinate the required elements of Medieval Romance. So if Chaucer adheres to the requirements of Medieval Romance, and like Chretien, makes use of some reality and character analysis, then his work is still in conformity with the romantic tradition.
CHAPTER III

CHAUCER AND COURTLY LOVE

This chapter will be devoted to noting how Chaucer changed Boccaccio's version of the story in order to more closely observe the rules of courtly love. These changes reveal something of Chaucer's plan in writing the Troilus and Criseyde. They show that he faithfully adheres to the principles of courtly love. The love treated in this poem is the love of that courteous and revolutionary sort which goes back to the Provencal poets and which was codified by Andreas Capellanus in the De Arte Honeste Amandi. It is the love of the true medieval romance. Professor Young considers this discussion of courtly love of prime worth. He writes:

The romances were the obvious home of courteous love, and the exhibition of it was perhaps their chief social function. If, therefore, Chaucer takes pains to enhance the element of courtly love in the story that he has received from Boccaccio, it follows that he is reverting to the spirit and manners of the medieval romance.

In Boccaccio's poem there is some conformity to the code of courtly love, but in Chaucer's version, there is found several examples of superiority in handling this courtly tradition. There is in the Troilus of Chaucer a more conspicuous devotion to religion than in the Troilo of Boccaccio. This quality is most explicitly demanded by the erotic code

1 K. Young, 45-6.
and romantic convention. In the De Amore of Andreas Capellanus one of the Chaplain's ladies says: "Eclesiae frequenter debet limina visitare." This devotion to religion is revealed not only in Chaucer's occasional use of the terminology, Church of Love, but likewise in Troilus' visit to the temple. In the fourth book Chaucer inserts a rather prolonged scene in which Troilus visits the temple and engages in some rather Boethian reflections. Such church-going of heroes of Romance is quite in keeping with the traditions established by former romancers of the Middle Ages. This activity can be noted especially in some of the predecessors of Chaucer. The heroes of Chretien de Troyes, Guillaume of the Flamence, Durmart of Durmart le Galeil and Amadas of Amadas and Ycoine, all faithfully visit their church or temple, to show their devotion to their religion or their gods.

In general, Chaucer brings the whole story of Troilus and Criseyde into line with those conceptions of love which he expressed in the Romance of the Rose. If there is something which cannot be reconciled with the courtly love tradition, Chaucer omits it. Mr. C. S. Lewis, in the Allegory of Love, makes a brief comparison between the Italian and the English authors.

Passages in which Boccaccio displays contempt for women are dropped; passages where he shows insufficient devotion to the god of love are

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2 A. Cappellanus, 68.
heightened. Doctrinal passages on the art and law of love are inserted. 4

Elsewhere the same author notes:

Finally Chaucer approaches his work as the poet of courtly love. He not only modified his story so as to make it a more accurate representation in action of the orthodox erotic code, but he also went out of his way to emphasize its didactic element. Andreas Cappellanus had given instructions by example in the course of a concrete story. 5

Boccaccio spends but six lines in introduction to his story, while Chaucer devoted full four stanzas to introducing his tale. In this section, Chaucer makes a very special point of begging prayers both for those who might find themselves in a situation similar to that of Troilus and also for himself, the author, who is likewise a true and faithful lover.

Chaucer asks his readers to pray for:

Here that ben in the cas
of Troilus as ye may after here,
That Love hem bryng in hevane to salas
And ek for me proieth to God so dere
That I have myght to shawe in som manere,
Swich peyne and we as Loves folk endure
In Troilus unsely aventure. 6

The important point here is not so much that Chaucer enlarged upon the original of Boccaccio, but that he renders it more in keeping with the traditions of courtly love, with the religion of Love. C. S. Lewis, in commenting upon this passage, notes that "this prayer with its careful

6 Ibid., I, 29-35.
discriminations in intercession for the various recognized stages of the amorous life, and its final reference ad Amoris majorem gloriae, is a collect.\textsuperscript{7}

Noteworthy is the comparison between the Temple scene in Chaucer's\textsuperscript{8} and Boccaccio's version. Boccaccio spends the space of one stanza to mention that the pleasure of love is not worth the pains. Chaucer, as the true poet of courtly love, drops the stanza completely. We can imagine Chaucer scanning the Italian version a bit further on, where Boccaccio describes the process of Troilus becoming enamored.\textsuperscript{10} The Italian, "Amor trafisse" is hardly more than a literary variant for "he fell in love."

Such a brief and pithy statement of such an important event especially for the hero of a romance must have annoyed Chaucer. Therefore we find Chaucer going back through the metaphor to the allegory that begot it and giving us his own thirtieth stanza. We find Troilus being smitten by the god of Love, who bends his bow in anger after the hero expresses his own sentiments on this game of love.

And with that word he gan caste up the browe,
Assences, 'Loe? is this naught wisely spoken?'
At which the god of Love gan loken rowe
Right for despit, and shop for to be wroken.
He kide anon his bowe nas naught broken;
For sodeynly he hitte hym atte fulle;
And yet as proud a pekok kan he pulle.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{7} Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 67.
\textsuperscript{8} Troilus and Criseyde, I, 155-315.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., I, xxv.
\textsuperscript{11} Troilus and Criseyde, I, 204-210.
such an allegory is not at all new with Chaucer, but as Mr. C. S. Lewis remarks, "Christian uses it, with particular emphasis on Love as the avenger of contempt." 12

In keeping with the tradition of the explicit erotic moral, Chaucer wanted his own erotic moral, based on the special contrast between the pride of the young scoffer and the complete surrender which the offended deity soon afterwards exacted of him. Hence he inserts lines 214-251, which according to Professor Lewis, "emphasize the dangers of ubris against Love and the certainty of its ultimate failure." 13 This contrast is strikingly revealed in the last few lines of this passage,

So ferde it by this fierce and proude knyght
Though he a worthy kynges some were,
And wende nothing hadde had swich myght,
Ayeysns his wille that shuld his herte strete,
Yet with a looke his herte was a-fere,
That he that now was moost in pride above,
Wax sodenly moost subgit unto love. 14

A comparison between the scoffing of the Troilus of Chaucer and the Troilo of Boccaccio reveals a most decided difference. The scoffing of Boccaccio's hero is based on contempt for women, fickle as wind and heartless. 15 Chaucer's is founded on the hardship of the religion or code of love, on the labor of gaining love, the doubts and hesitancy of keeping it, and the pains and sorrow when it is lost.

12 Lewis, "What Chaucer Did", 68.
13 Ibid., 68.
14 Troilus and Criseyde, I, 224-251.
15 II Filostrato, I, xxi-xxii.
And which a labour folk han in wynnyng
Of love, and in the kepynge which doutaunces;
And when youre prey is lost, woo and penaunces.
O veray fooles, nyoce and blynde be ye!16

C. S. Lewis briefly summarizes the difference:

Boccaccio dethrones the deity; Chaucer complains
of the severity of the cult. It is the difference
between an atheist and a man who humorously in-
sists that he is not of religion.17

From the very beginning of the poem, Chaucer saw fit to enlarge upon
Troilus' conduct as a courtly lover. Professor Kirby remarks that Troilus'
"sleeplessness and restlessness are typical symptoms." 18 We find ready
substantiation for this in Andreas Capellanus. The twenty-third of his
rules of love reads: "Minus dormit et edit, quam amoris cogitatio vexat." 19
Further, Chaucer's version of the hero's reaction after he has seen the
heroine is interpreted by Kirby as having an added significance. 20 Troilus
decided to follow love's craft, while Boccaccio's Troilo was merely dis-
posed to follow such a love. Professor Kirby writes:

The statement that Troilus decided to follow the
art of love shows clearly that he considered him-
self a disciple of courtly love. The rest of the
stanza, telling of his determination to keep his
plan absolutely secret, is of course genuine court-
ly material.21

Further differences become apparent when we consider the method em-
ployed by the two authors in having their hero reveal his love to Pandarus.

17 Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 71.
18 Kirby, 246.
19 De Amore, 63.
20 Troilus and Criseyde, I, 330-2.
21 Kirby, 250.
This revelation is found in the Second Book of Boccaccio, 22 and in the First Book of Chaucer's poem. 23 In each story the hero hesitates to reveal the name of his loved one. In the Filostrato the reason given is Criseida's relationship to Pandaro, and Pandaro answers very quickly that he cares nothing about that. 24 In the English poem, Troilus' hesitation is due to the typical courtly lover's certainty that "she nil to noon such wrecche as I do warne." 25 Boccaccio's Pandaro has no argument to use against the silent Troilo, except the rather insignificant reply that he might help him. 26 Chaucer, on the other hand, has Pandarus expound the code of love to Troilus. Fully six stanzas in the English text are devoted to Pandarus' answer, which included the fear of dishonor in the lady's eyes, the duty of humble but not despairing service in the face of all discouragement, and the acceptance of this service as its own reward. Pandarus urges on Troilus with the reminder that:

Many a man hath love full deere ybought  
Twenty wynter that his lady wiste,  
That nevyr yet his lady mouth he kiste. 28

And later to avoid despair, Pandarus attempts to stir Troilus to:

Serve and love his deere hertes quanne  
And think it as a guerdon, hire to serve, 29  
A thousand fold moore than he kan deserve.

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22 Il Filostrato, II, vi-xxviii.  
23 Troilus and Criseyde, I, 603-1108.  
24 Il Filostrato, II, xvi.  
25 Troilus and Criseyde, I, 778.  
23 II Filostrato, II, xxviii.  
27 Troilus and Criseyde, I, 768, 819.  
28 Ibid., I, 608-811.  
29 Ibid., I, 817-819.
Mr. C. S. Lewis, commenting on the behavior of the two Pandars, after the lady's name has been mentioned, writes:

Boccaccio's cynical as ever, encourages Troilo by the reflection that female virtue is not really a serious obstacle. Chaucer's makes the virtue of the lady itself the ground for hope - arguing scholastically that the genus of virtue implies that species thereof which is Pitee.30

We can explain Professor Lewis' comment that "Pandarus, while further advising, becomes an adviser of a slightly different sort,"31 by showing that he instructs Troilus not so much on his relationship with the lady, as on his relationship to Love. Pandarus endeavours to awaken in Troilus a devout sense of his previous sins against the god of Love, and urges him to repent.

Now set thi brest, and sey to God of Love, 'Thy grace, Lord, for now I me repente.'32

Pandarus then enumerates the commandments of love and warns Troilus of the dangers of a divided heart. All this is in sharp contrast with the reaction of Boccaccio's Pandaro, whose answer is neatly paraphrased by Mr. Lewis.

Splendid! Love has fixed your heart in a good place. She is an admirable person. The only trouble is that she is rather pious; but I'll soon see to that. Every woman is amorous at heart; they are only anxious to save their reputation. I'll do all I can for you.34

30 Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 73.
31 Ibid., 73.
32 Troilus and Criseyde, I, 932-933.
33 Ibid., I, 953-950.
34 Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 71.
It is likewise significant to note that Chaucer departs from Boccaccio in introducing Troilus as unattached, in the Trojan Temple, while Boccaccio's Troilo has already tried love. By thus avoiding any impression of a jaded lover, Chaucer has conformed his hero to the typical fresh and young lover of the earlier French romances.

In the Third Book of both the Italian and English poem, we find both Troilo and Troilus making merry and enjoying themselves. To these statements, Chaucer adds the additional fact that Troilus kept about him a world of the liveliest and best folk that he could find. This, according to Professor Kirby, is "typical of Chaucer's attempt to place greater emphasis on the finer aspects of love... Generosity which is stressed in these lines, was regarded as a virtue particularly desirable in the courtly lover." In the Fourth Book, when Troilus addresses his love, we find that Chaucer has changed the "dolce bocce" of Boccaccio for "sovereign lady". The next stanza is likewise independent of the Filostrato. Troilus begs joyful lovers:

But when ye come to my sepulture,
Remembreth that your felawe resteth there,
For I loved ek, though ich unworthy were.

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35 Il Filostrato, I, xxiii.
36 Troilus and Criseyde, III, 172—22.
37 Kirby, 254.
38 Troilus and Criseyde, IV, 516-8.
39 Il Filostrato, IV, xxxvi.
40 Troilus and Criseyde, IV, 327-9.
Professor Kirby calls this "a definite courtly love addition, for the courtly love addition, for the courtly lover was always expected to be humble and to regard himself unworthy of his lady's love."41

It is good form, according to the commands of courtly love, for a lover to keep his lady always in mind. Andreas Capellanus urges that "verus amans assidua sine intermissione eoamantis imaginaciones detinetur."42

Professor Kirby notes a passage in the Fifty Book43 where Chaucer enriches the section with courtly love additions.

In one place, Criseyde said to Troilus: 'Goode Sir, love me well, I praye;' and in another she beheld him so well, that until death, his heart would be bound to hers; this exemplified the unqualified devotion of the courtly lover as do also lines 575ff., in which Troilus remembers a place where Criseyde sang so beautifully and melodiously that he can still hear the sound of her voice.44

With the death of Troilus by Achilles, the narrative ends. Professor Kirby excellently sums up the character of Chaucer's Troilus in comparison with the Troilo of Boccaccio.

Chaucer did not transmute Troilus as he did Pandarus and Criseyde, but he did change him very considerably, so much so, in fact, that he is a character very different from his Italian prototype. Troilus is something far different from the love-sick boy of the Filostrato... As a soldier he is far more valiant; as a lover, far more noble. It is by elaborating these two conceptions of his

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41 Kirby, 259.
42 De Amore, Regula XXX, 312.
43 Troilus and Criseyde, V, 565-581.
44 Kirby, 269.
hero that I feel that Chaucer has so elevated him, that the resulting character is one quite different from Troilo. This change is largely to be explained through the development of Troilus as a courtly lover, or rather, through the enhancement of the courtly qualities with which he was already endowed and by the addition of others... The poet was fully cognizant of the courtly conception of love as a great spiritual, ennobling, and regenerative force, and it is this understanding of the courtly love code which seems to me to explain the great transformation of Troilus.45

Furthermore, Chaucer enhances the courtliness of his hero by altering Boccaccio's concept of the valor of the young Trojan. Although both poems endow the young prince with valor required of a courtly lover, Chaucer greatly excels in this respect. Professor Young cites one example, Troilus' manly behavior at the parliament of Trojans assembled to discuss the exchange of Criseyde for Antenor.46

Boccaccio's Troilo ignominiously swoons, and after being resuscitated by his kinsmen retires in dejection. By contrast Chaucer's hero, under the same circumstances, is a model of fortitude, concealing his extreme distress, and in the midst of the turbulence planning a courageous course of action.47

It is seen from our codifier of courtly love, Andreas Capellanus, that as a concomitant of the lover's valor and manliness in public, he was expected in the presence of his lady to exhibit an almost abject timidity. Andreas writes: "Omnia consuevit amens in comantis aspectu pallescere... Amorosus semper est timorosus."48 Further examples of such pallid and

45 Kirby, 279-280.
47 Young, 50.
48 De Amore, 310.
timorous lovers can be found in *Amadas et Ydoine*, in the hero, Lancelot, of Chrétien de Troyes. However there is a definite contrast between the action of *Troilus* and *Troilo* when the amour is consummated. *Troilo* proceeds with self-possession and zest. *Troilus*, however, faints at Crisèyde's bedside.

Therewith the sorwe so his herte shette,
That from his eyen fil ther naught a tere,
And every spirit his vigour in knette,
So they astoned or oppressed were.
The felyng of his sorwe, or of his ferre,
Or of aught elles, fled was out of towne;
And down he fel al socheuly a-sworne.

Marchette Chute concurs with this interpretation of *Troilus* as a true courtly lover, adding that *Troilus'* song in praise of love is in imitation of Boethius.

When *Troilus* sings a song in praise of love, it is a more or less faithful translation of the eighth lyric in Book Two of the Consolation of Philosophy, in which Boethius describes love as the power which binds together the whole earth and keeps its stable. *Troilus* himself is altogether reformed by the success of his suit. He aids the poor, is courteous to the lowly, and flees pride and avarice. When he goes our hunting he spares the 'female beastes' with a consideration that only a lover could be expected to show... This is accurately in the tradition of courtly love.

Such virtuous action is recommended by Andreas Capellanus. "Avaritiam sicut nocivam pestem effugias et ejus contrarium amplectaris. In Omnibus urbanum et constituas et curialem."

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49 *Troilus and Criseyde*, III, 1086-1092.
61 *De Amore*, 105.
Professor Tatlock likewise describes Troilus as the true courtly lover, vastly different from the Troilo of Boccaccio.

Though evidently by nature sensual... he is a clean sort of man; unlike Troilo in Boccaccio, he even shown no sign of experience with a woman before... Needless to dwell on his value and valor as a warrier, next to Hector's, which are traditional, and more emphasized than in the Pillostrato. Boccaccio’s earlier women care little for masculine men. Chaucer saw more fully than he that the more of a man the lover is, the more of a tribute to Love is the grip of love upon him.52

As an added proof of Chaucer’s efforts to turn his hero into a true courtly lover, there is found one quite minute detail of his work, the form of address used by the hero and heroine. Neither Criseyde nor Troilus uses the familiar form in addressing the other. C. C. Walcutt explains this as a convention demanded by courtly love.

In Chaucer’s use of the pronoun of address there appears to be another element of courtly love which has not been noted before. In a poem of such dramatic power... Chaucer would surely have allowed his lovers to employ familiar pronouns of address - especially in their passionate interviwes of Book III and IV - unless he had been constantly aware of a convention which demanded that he do otherwise. The attitude of abject, patient adoration demanded of the courtly lover explains why Troilus consistently addressed Criseyde as ye and yow; and there does not appear to be any other explanation, for familiar address is invariably connected with the language of passion in the love poetry of other periods and countries.53


Troilus' monologue on predestination is a passage not even so much as suggested by the Filostrato. The conclusion of this passage by Troilus amounts to the fact that man has no free will. Professor Patch regards this as an integral part of the poem, and he remarks that "the speech is not intended as a sample of dialectic fireworks but as an outburst of human emotion."55

Professor Root expresses the opinion that the soliloquy, is no more a digression than are the soliloquies of Hamlet. It is thoroughly in accord with the character of Troilus as Chaucer conceived him.

For Troilus in his love for Criseyde, there is no such thing as free choice.56

Professor Kirby feels that if the monologue is studied from the point of view of courtly love, a new avenue of approach will be opened which will throw additional light on the problem. His point is that, the whole concept of courtly love was something entirely foreign to the idea of free will. The classical idea of a god whose arrows cause love to spring up, together with the troubadour conceit of love originating through the eyes, implies that men must love by ‘necessité'; for no one is able to protect himself against a god who may at any time attack without warning nor can a man be held responsible if he sees a lady and then suddenly finds himself in love with her. So likewise is the lover's conduct entirely foreign to the idea of free will; as the slave of his lady, he is absolutely powerless and is able to do nothing of his own choice.57

Examples to substantiate the correctness of this view of courtly love as opposed to the notion of free will can be had by noting Troilus' views

54 Troilus and Criseyde, IV, 958-1078.
56 Root, 117-8.
57 Kirby, 262.
about destiny and love. In the First Book, he speaks of himself as one who
must "loven through...destines." In the Third Book we find Troilus appeal-
ing to the gods as a mere child of fate. 69 Chaucer likewise considers
Troilus' death as caused by fate. "Fate wolde his soulde "unbodye." 60
Troilus again holds Fortune responsible for his troubles. He tells Pandarus
that it is difficult to help him, "for well finde I that Fortune in my fo." 61
Professor Kirby concludes that,
...the predestination passage...is fully in keeping
with Troilus as a courtly lover, and that, further-
more, since it perfectly represents the courtly love
attitude, its presence in the poem is fully justified. 62

Troilus, therefore, is presented as a young hero in perfect accord
with the traditions of courtly love. His attitude toward religion, his
humility, his manliness, his observance of the requirements set down by the
courtly code, and his attitude toward his beloved, all enhance his position
as a typical romance hero.

Crisseyde likewise is an excellent example of the loving lady of a
medieval romance. Mr. W. M. Rossetti, noting that the most important point
of difference between the Italian and English work are the incidents which
lead up to the actual amour between Troilus and Crisseyde, considers Crisseyde
as much superior to Boccaccio's Gisela.

Boccaccio gives the whole affair simply enough; an
assignation made by Chryseis after much arguing

58 Troilus and Crisyde, I, 520.
59 Ibid., III, 733,5.
60 Ibid., V, 1550.
61 Ibid., I, 637.
62 Kirby, 264.
and kept by Troilus, and turned to account by both.
Chaucer has invented an entirely new series of pre-
liminaries; far more elaborate, and such as almost
to leave his Chryseide in the position of a modest
and chaste-minded woman, even after the amour is in
full career. At the decisive moment, she had
scarcely consented to her own frailty, but has been
lured into it. The reader is left to contemplate
Chryseide as loving — Graseida as amorous. 65

Actually, Chaucer's modifications in his treatment of love in relation to
the heroine are even more comprehensive in scope than those concerned with
the hero. Chaucer alters the Filostrato with the obvious intent to enhance
the heroine's position in society. Examples of Chaucer's elevation of his
heroine socially are numerous throughout the poem. A superior worldly
station is suggested by the elegance, amplitude and literary refinement
associated with Criseyde's house and garden. 64 Another charming exhibition
of her social relationship is given in the dinner-party at the house of
Deiphebus. The effect of this gathering is to display Criseyde's easy
intimacy with the Trojan princes and princesses, and to make her the center
of a brilliant social picture. Professor Young remarks;

The geniality of the scene, the urbanity of the
royal personages, and the unforgettable grace
and radiance of Helen are of the essence of
Romance. 66

All these social privileges are unknown to Boccaccio's heroine. There is
a constant reminder in the Italian poem of the low rank of the heroine in

63 W. M. Rossetti, Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde Compared with Boccaccio's
64 Troilus and Criseyde, II, 78-112.
65 Ibid., II, 1394, II, 228.
66 Young, 61.
passages which Chaucer intentionally omits. A comparison of passages in both works reveals Chaucer's suppression of any references to the heroine's inferior rank. Commenting on the superiority of the lady, demanded by courtly love, Professor Young writes:

Griseyde's reception into the social circle of princes and princesses allowed her an easier command of the sovereignty over her lover which the domina of courteous love must possess.68 Pandaro's withering retort that Griseida is unworthy of Troilo and Griseida's humiliating confession that Troilo would grow weary of a person of such lower rank are both omitted by Chaucer. This is especially noteworthy in the parallel part of the narrative in which Chaucer adopts all of Griseida's reflections except this one. Mr. W. G. Dodd cites this passage as an indication that Boccaccio considered this difference of rank as an obstacle to marriage of the lovers.71 Later in the poem, as the amour approaches its consummation, the Italian heroine apologizes to her lover for her indignity of rank, thus giving occasion for the lover to make physical demands on his "innamorata."72 In the related part in the English poem, not only is there no apology on the part of Griseyde, but in Troilus himself we see nothing but a helpless humility.73

Troilo's remarkable encomium of Griseida uttered on the eve of their

58 Young, 53.
59 II Filostrato, II, lxxii.
60 Ibid., II, lxxvi.
61 W.G. Dodd, Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower, Ginn and Co., Boston, 1913, 150.
62 II Filostrato, III, xxxi.
63 Troilus and Criseye, III, 705-735, 1065-1092.
separation is transformed by Chaucer into a declaration by Criseyde to
Troilus. Professor Young considers this change an excellent example of
Chaucer's skill.

Chaucer's skill appears not only in the necessary substitution of masculine qualities for feminine, but also in the added recognition of a fine principle of the amorous code; namely that love is incompatible with voluptuousness...The most brilliant effect of Chaucer's transformation is the enhanced dignity of the heroine. Once more Criseyde exhibits her charming sovereignty.

In this passage Criseyde is seen to rise to the dignity of a superior, a domina controlling her vassal and conferring a favor on him. The action of the heroines of other romances is here suggested, of Guinevere of Chrétien's Lancelot, of Ydeine of Amadis et Ydeine, and of Benoît's Briseïda.

Besides elevating his heroine's social position, Chaucer also has Criseyde acting entirely in conformity with the rules of the courtly code. This is especially true in the development of the amour. C. S. Lewis summarizes her actions pithily in The Allegory of Love.

Chaucer goes out of his way to tell us that 'she gan to like him (Troilus) first' and afterwards 'his manhood and his pune made love with mine hir for to myne'. He tells us that she came to the house of Deiphobus 'al innocent' of Pandarus' machinations; and 'al innocent she entered the chamber of Troilus; and when she admitted Troilus; and when she admitted Troilus to her, it was because the story she had been told was so probable and so pitiful, and she was 'at dulcifarnen, right at her witnes ende.' In the Criseyde of the first three books Chaucer had

74 Ibid., IV, 1667-80.
75 Young, 56.
painted a touching picture of a woman by nature both virtuous and amorous, but above all affectionate... She commits no sin against the social code of her age and century; she commits no unpardonable sin against any code I know of... By Christian standards, forgivable; by the rules of courtly love, needing no forgiveness. 76

Professor Tatlock likewise realizes the difference between the heroine of Boccaccio and of Chaucer.

Boccaccio's Griselda is an attractive sensual Neapolitan... capable of any trivial impulsiveness, little more than a lay-figure to carry her part... Grisyeve, on the other hand, is the earliest full-figure Portrait of a Lady in English Literature... Chaucer here shows his heroine far more charming and dignified and less easy to win than Griselda. 77

This element of proving difficult to the lover is indeed an essential of the courtly code of Andreas Capellanus. The fourteenth rule of Andreas' longer code reads: "Facilis perceptio contemptibalem reddit amorem, difficilis eum carum facit haberi." 78

The suddenness with which Boccaccio's heroine falls in love with the hero was recognized by Chaucer as hardly in keeping with the traditions of courtly love. Hence in the English poem, Grisyeve's first glimpse of Troilus was merely the beginning of love. 79 Any other course of action on the part of Grisyeve would be shocking to a devotee of the courtly system of love. As Arthur Misener remarks in what has been considered one of the

76 Lewis, Allegory of Love, 182-3.
77 Tatlock, 96-7.
78 De Amore, 310.
79 Troilus and Grisyeve, II, 673-5.
finest interpretations of Criseyde's character:

For Criseyde to fall deeply in love with Troilus immediately, would be shockingly indecorous according to the courtly love code. In other words, if she is to appear an admirable person, the reader must be made to believe she fell in love slowly.80

To further emphasize the required slowness with which Criseyde fell in love, Chaucer departs from the Italian poem to introduce a scene in which, for a second time, the heroine sees her lover passing by her house.

The decorous slowness with which Criseyde falls in love is further emphasized by Chaucer's introducing a second scene in which Troilus passes by her house and by his carefully pointing out that it is far too soon for Criseyde to consider yielding to Troilus, a thing which she does not do for a considerable time.81

Compare this gradual process of falling in love with the sudden tumble of Boccaccio's heroine.82 Even Criseyde's actions of the night in Pandarus' house must be interpreted in keeping with the ideal of a courtly domina.

We have Chaucer's own words that Criseyde was not playing at being anxious.83

In the Second Book, Troilus' triumphant return to the city after having put the Greeks to rout is accompanied by a cry of the people in the street.84 Professor Cummings quite correctly remarks that "this passage contains one of Chaucer's finest artistic additions to the Troilus story, the figure of

80 A Mizener, "Character and Action in the Case of Criseyde," PMLA, (1939), LIV, 71.
1 Ibid., 73.
2 Il Filostrato, II, lxxv.
3 Troilus and Criseyde, III, 799-801. 918-924.
4 Ibid., II, 604-44.
Crisseyde at the window watching her hero ride by in triumph. Slowly and carefully Crisseyde observes the appearance of Troilus and lets it sink into her heart, so that she says to herself, "Who yaf me drynke?" Professor Kirby here remarks:

How perfectly this reference to a love potion fits in at this point! The whole scene is in distinct contrast to the preceding and is one of the very few in which Crisseyde's emotions almost get the better of her reason. She blushes deeply when she realizes that this is the man who her uncle has told her will die unless she have mercy and take pity on him.

Another change from Boccaccio is found in the Fourth Book where Crisseyde explains the reasons for her love. It was not his royal state, vain pleasure, bravery in battle, nor pomp, display, noble rank, wealth — none of these made her pity his distress, but,

Moral vertu, grounded upon trouthe,
That was the cause I first hadde
on yow trouthe.

Additional reasons were his "gentil herte and manhod", his despising everything bad, and the supremacy of his reason over his desires. This according to Professor Kirby,

...is a significant passage, for the idea of 'moral vertu grounded upon trouthe' is hardly so much implied in the Filostrato. These virtues which Crisseyde has enumerated as present in Troilus make him the ne plus ultra of courtly lovers.

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85 Cummings, 56.
86 Troilus and Crisseyde, II, 651.
87 Kirby, 198.
88 Troilus and Crisseyde, IV, 1667-80.
89 Ibid., IV, 1672-3.
90 Kirby, 222.
A very powerful argument that Chaucer was definitely writing in imitation of other medieval romances and in accordance with the rules of courtly love may be found in his renunciation of love at the end of his work. Here the poet, after presenting the merits and practices of courtly love, suddenly renounced what he had taught. Such a course of action can hardly be considered odd or incongruous because the English poet was not the first to write thus. Andreas Capellanus, the acknowledged codifier, expositor and apologist of the courtly system, uttered a similar renunciation of love in his work, De Amore. The entire third book of his work is entitled, De Reprobatione Amoris. In this book, the author addresses Gualterus, who is named in the preface of the book, and states that the chief purpose of expounding the art of love in the first two books has been to enable Gualterus, by avoiding love, to achieve the greater reward in heaven. This third book of the De Amore was written so that the pupil of love, having received full instructions in the nature and practice of courtliness, might renounce it altogether. In this book, then, Professor Young sees that:

clearly Andreas utters a sweeping renunciation of the courtly love which he has previously expounded and illustrated, and which he had commended as omnium fans et origo bonorum.

91 Troilus and Criseyde, V, 1835-1870.
92 De Amore, 313-314.
Professor Young considers this parallel as indicative of the courtly tone of Chaucer's poem.

In denouncing the conception of earthly love and in directing the thoughts of the pupil heavenward, the expositor provided something of a parallel to Chaucer's quasi-retraction... All I venture to suggest is that what Andreas Capellanus did in his treatise upon courtly love helps to explain what Chaucer did in his courtly love poem. We may now infer more confidently, perhaps, that in his disavowal, the poet was incited in large measure by the amorous principles embodied in his story. If the expositor of the courtly system ends by directing our attention away from his code toward religious piety, Chaucer's turning away from 'Love of kinde' toward 'love hete celestial' should, at the very best, seem more intelligible.94

This renunciation of love becomes even more significant when we realize that there is nothing of this sort in the Italian poem. There is no repudiation of the courtly system at the end of the Filostrato. Boccaccio exhorts young people to pray that Troilo may rest in peace and to take care that they do not fall victims to fickle women, but rather choose ladies who are noble and constant. In Chaucer, on the other hand, Troilus dies in profound disillusion. Crisneyde is led by passion to break the natural and the conventional laws of true love. The answer to it all, according to Chaucer, is that love is not the diety to serve, but God alone.

And love hym, the which that right for love
Upon a crois,oure soules for to beye,
First starf, then roos, and sit in hevene above,
For he hyl falsen no wight, dar I seye,

94 Young, Renunciation of Love, 276.
That wel his herte al holly on hym leye.
And syn he best to love is, and most make,
What nedeth feynede loves for to seke. 95

Professor Lawrence grasps the full meaning of the comparison between
Boccaccio and Chaucer on this point:

The code of what was right and proper socially
was...essentially the same for Chaucer as for
Boccaccio. But their attitude towards this code
was not the same; Boccaccio accepted it, Chaucer
tested it. 96

There is one minor detail which can be added at this point. In the
Second Book of the Troilus and Criseyde, there is a reference to two years
of widowhood required for Criseyde. Once again, this is a point in keeping
with the courtly love tradition and a precedent for this action was set by
Andreas Capellanus. The seventh rule of Andreas' longer code reads:
"Biennalis viduitas pro amante defunctor superstiti praescribitus amanti." 97
Dorothy Everett agrees that "the point of mentioning two years is explained
by a passage in De Amore of Andreas Capellanus." 98

Thus far, it has been shown that Chaucer definitely conformed his poem
to the tradition of courtly love. The characters and actions of the hero
and the heroine have been so changed to portray Troilus and Criseyde as
more perfect and more true courtly lovers. Chaucer has gone so far as to
imitate the courtly love codifier in the matter of the renunciation and

95 Troilus and Criseyde, V, 1841-46.
96 W. W. Lawrence, Shakespeare's Problem Comedies, Houghton Mifflin Co.,
    New York, 1931, 146.
97 De Amore, 309.
98 D. Everett, YWES, 1934, XV, 40.
even in a minor point like the prescribed time of widowhood for his heroine. In this important and essential element of courtly love, one of the chief requirements of medieval romance, Chaucer has conformed his poem. In this one point, at least, Chaucer was writing in the romance tradition.

Therefore it seems obvious that if Chaucer planned to desert the romantic tradition he would not have made so many changes over Boccaccio's version in the favor of one of the chief elements of the romance, courtly love. Likewise, the end product shows conformity to the rules of courtly love. As a result 

Troilus and Criseyde can hardly be said to have diverged from the medieval romance tradition in the element of courtly love.
CHAPTER IV

THE ELEMENT OF THE ANCIENT AND STRANGE

The question of realism in Troilus and Criseyde, as opposed to the notions of the ancient and strange, is an important point in this discussion. Some of the authors who consider Chaucer's poem a divergence from the romantic tradition have based their opinions on the element of realism or real life found in the poem. For them, this realism is sufficient to nullify the elements of the ancient and strange in the poem and to remove the poem from the field of Medieval Romance.

To consider Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde a medieval Romance, the elements of the ancient and strange must be included in the poem; and an overemphasis of real life must be avoided. As has been noted elsewhere, one of the reasons for the popularity of this literary form was its ability to lure the reader away from his ordinary life and to take him in imagination to places and times far from the present time and place. It seems that Chaucer's poem did not fail in this point. It is true that the Troilus and Criseyde does contain certain contemporary references, but in general it seems to lack real fourteenth century urban realism and avoid a general impression of contemporary London existence. In spite of the modern references in his poem, Chaucer has sufficiently stressed the ancient and strange elements to include his poem in the romantic tradition.
First, it is important to note that Chaucer deliberately withdrew from the poem the obtrusive presence of the author himself and thus prepared the way for the departure from the personal and ordinary life. Boccaccio's poem, on the other hand, issues directly from his own experience. Karl Young remarks:

Boccaccio addresses it to the woman whom he desires to possess, and he declares that it is, in large measure a mirror of his own life; that Troilo's suffering and longing, at least, are the longing and suffering of the author himself. His own personal and physical passion pulses throughout the poem, and several times comes to the surface in his direct appeals to his desired mistress. It seems likely that certain scenes reflect in some measure Boccaccio's own social environment.¹

Chaucer, in contrast with Boccaccio, deliberately excludes himself from the story by an explicit declaration at the beginning.² Neither the young lovers nor the kind of love which they gave themselves can be taken for anything actual in Chaucer's own life. Finally, at the very end of the poem, Chaucer reminds us that the lovely story is after all quite unreal.

Professor Kirby remarks:

His work done, he stopped, looked back, saw the artificiality not only of courtly love, but of all earthly endeavors and consequently urged his readers to devote their efforts to the things of eternity.³

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¹ Young, 41.
³ Kirby, 284.
While the life portrayed by Boccaccio is essentially the life of Naples, Chaucer takes pains to remove the story from the familiar surroundings of urban existence. This is chiefly accomplished by the wealth of ancient, archaic, or Trojan details inserted in the English poem. Professor Tatlock writes:

Chaucer took pains to avoid such an excess of contemporary medieval color as would have marred the remote romantic background which gave dignity to the emotional romance. 

Professor Cummings likewise notes many added elements in the English poem inserted to emphasize the ancient and the strange. He writes:

It is ornamented with classical allusions, invocations and astrology. It is filled with the philosophical ideas of Boethius in regard to love, to mutability in fortune, and to predestination, and made still further sage by the introduction of proverbs and admonitions such as abound in the Roman de la Rose. Its historical details are, as it were, verified by references to the Roman de Troie and the works of Joseph of Exeter and Guido delle Colonne. One great scene, the Calydonian Hunt (V, 1464-79) is probably borrowed from the classics. 

Professor Tatlock ventures to explain the different effect that the poem would have on a present day and on a fourteenth century reader. He writes:

The poem was as romantic to the fourteenth century reader as to us, but for a different reason. It is romantic to us because it is

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5 Ibid., 129.
medieval; we are not greatly impressed with the ancient touches and take them for granted, while the medieval touches give an incongruity which even make the modern smile at times, but in general are the cue for a sensation of romance.  

Some of the details which might strike the modern are the religious festival in honor of the Trojan relic, Troilus: "catching attrition," Crisseyde discovered sitting in her paved parlor listening to the Romances of Thebes, her protest that she should be reading saints' lives in a cave, her reflection that she is not a nun, and the reference to Jove's Christmas.

There are others too, such as the ecclesiastical matters of bishops and the terminology of penance; the prominence given to fighting on horseback, and a few particularities of household life. But as Professor Young states:

In such medievalizing of ancient matter, Chaucer is, of course, following the precedent of his esteemed Benoit de Sainte Maure and of other romancers; and what surprises one is not the presence of these medieval details but the meagerness of it.

Even in these details, the English poet was definitely lacking in diligence if he wishes us to think of London and of ordinary life. Thus in his medievalizing, as in his archaising, he was attempting to convey not an impression of contemporary actuality, but an effect of glamor and of

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8 Tatlock, The Epilogue, 129.
9 Troilus and Criseyde, I, 153.
8 Ibid., I, 557.
9 Ibid., II, 82-4.
10 Ibid., II, 117-8.
11 Ibid., II, 759.
12 Ibid., III, 150.
13 Young, 43.
All these details were undoubtedly taken for granted and passed over by the medieval. But he was surely impressed with the strangeness of ancient detail. In the Fourth Book, Criseyde, to hearten Troilus, talks to him and plans to talk to her father with blasphemous scepticism about the gods. Later, Troilus himself curses them. Professor Tatlock remarks:

It would have edified a serious medieval to hear a pagan speak of the pagan gods. Such passages are examples of Chaucer's skill in realizing the strange. Criseyde's speech is founded on nothing in Boccaccio but developed from passages in Guido's Historia and Status. Thelain... The docile and small-minded reader would have liked her better for showing disaffection to paganism.

According to C. S. Lewis, "Chaucer approached his work as an 'Historical' poet, contributing to the story of Troy." Mr. Lewis cites a difference between the readers of Boccaccio and of Chaucer which might help us to understand some of the changes in the matter of the ancient and the strange.

Chaucer wrote for an audience who still looked at poetry in the medieval fashion, a fashion for which the real literary units were 'matters', 'stories' and the like, rather than individual authors. Boccaccio wrote for an audience who were beginning to look at poetry in our own way. For them Il Filostrato was mainly a new poem by Boccaccio. For Chaucer's readers, the Book of Troilus was partly... 'a new bit of the Troy story' or even 'a new bit of the matter of Rome.'

14 Troilus and Criseyde, IV, 1397-1411.
15 Ibid., V, 205-8.
16 Tatlock, The Epilog, 131.
17 Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 59.
18 Ibid., 59-60.
For this reason Chaucer's readers will want to know his authorities; and passages where this demand is met are quite numerous. So they find Chaucer excusing himself for not telling more about the military history of the Trojan war and declaring where can be found the missing part of the story, "in Omer, or in Dares or in Dyte." Boccaccio, on the other hand, has merely sketched in a general picture of war sufficient to provide the background for his own story. Again, in the Fourth Book, Chaucer inserts late in the speech of Calkas an account of the quarrel between Phoebus and Neptunus and Lamsadon. All that was really needed for Calkas' argument has already been given; and in Boccaccio there is but a few lines in explanation. Lewis interprets this as an example of Chaucer thinking of his particular audience.

The Greek leaders did not need to be told about Lamsedon; but Chaucer is not thinking of the Greek leaders; he is thinking of his audience who will gladly learn, or be reminded, of the rest of the cycle.

Later in the Fourth Book, Chaucer inserts a note on the later history of Antenor, with the same purpose of appeasing his readers. In the Fifth Book there are found some unnecessary lines from the story of Thebes. Chaucer neatly expresses the spirit in which he does this: "And so descendeth down from gentes olde to Didmede." To Mr. C. S. Lewis, this method of Chaucer is quite the opposite of the ordinary method of the

19 Troilus and Criseyde, I, 46.
20 Ibid., IV, 120-147.
21 Ibid., IV, III, 2.
22 Il Filostrato, IV, xi.
23 Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 60.
24 Troilus and Criseyde, IV, 204.
25 Ibid., V, 1484-1510.
26 Ibid., V, 1511-2.
modern writer. He writes:

The whole matter of Rome is still a unity, with a structure and life of its own. That part of it which the poem in hand is treating, which is, so to speak, in focus, must be seen fading gradually away into its historical surroundings. The method is the antithesis of that which produces the framed story of a modern writer; it is a method which romance largely took over from the epic.27

As an example of Chaucer's transforming urban reality into romantic glamor there is his treatment of what, in the Italian poem, might be called the balcony period of the courtship. Griselda's first favor to Troilus is the permission for him and Pandaro to pass her house and exchange glances with her as she stands in the window.28 These ceremonious calls, repeated we are told, many times,29 suggest, according to Karl Young:

the formality of Italian custom, and may reflect Boccaccio's own experience of Neapolitan life. They were in any case well within the range of ordinary formal social life of the town.30

In the English poem there is no formal 'balcony period' and the two men pay no ceremonious visits to her home to receive her glances. For such activities, Chaucer substitutes two scenes in the manner of medieval romance. Karl Young discusses the first of these two scenes.

Troilus, returning from a successful encounter with the Greeks, rides slowly past Grisyeyle's house on his wounded and bleeding horse, with his helmet removed, his disordered armor gashed.

27 Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 61.
28 Il Filostrato, II, lxvi, lxxx, lxxii.
29 Ibid., II, lxxi.
30 Young, 43.
in twenty places, and his shield bristling with arrows which have pierced it. When she heard the people shout, "Here cometh our joye," and saw this godlike hero lower his eyes in modesty, Criseyde could only gasp, "Who yaf me drynke?" Who will venture to call this ordinary life or modern every day life?31

Professor Robinson further remarks that,

The description of Troilus' triumphant entry has no counterpart in the Filostrato. The original hint for the passage...Chaucer probably got from the Filostrato, Book II, stanza lxxxii...For certain features of the triumph he may have drawn upon Benoit's account of Hector's return from battle. (Roiain de Troie, 1020ff.)...But the best parallel to the episode as a whole is afforded by the account of Aeneas and Lavinia in the Roman d'Eneas.32

Mr. C. S. Lewis has stated that "the Filostrato underwent at Chaucer's hands a process of medievalization."33 Though Mr. Lewis nowhere expressly defines the word, medievalization, its proper interpretation may be gained from the general trend and meaning of his book, The Allegory of Love, and from his article in Essays and Studies. It is obvious that he means the literary rules of medieval romance and literature. Showing how Chaucer was reaching backward to the more perfect interpreters of the medieval tradition, Mr. Lewis writes:

If Chaucer had lived earlier he would, we may be sure, have found just the model he desired in Chrstien de Troyes... The Book of Troilus shows, in fact, the very peculiar literary

31 Ibid. 45.
32 Robinson, 961.
33 Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 56.
phenomenon of Chaucer groping back, unknowingly, through the very slightly medieval work of Boccaccio, to the genuinely medieval formula of Chrestien... The majority of his modifications are corrections of errors which Boccaccio had committed against the code of courtly love... It had not been sufficiently observed that these are only part and parcel of a general process of medievalization.34

Part of this process of medievalization involved, as we have seen, Chaucer's approach to the poem as an Historical poet. But it likewise entailed some revisions as a pupil of the rhetoricians, and as a "firm believer of the good old, and now neglected maxim of Dante: omnis qui versificatur suos versus exornare debet in quantum potest."35 Among the changes effected by Chaucer should be noted the substitution of an address to Thesiphone,36 for Boccaccio's lyrical invocation of his Lady.37 At the beginning of his Second Book Chaucer added an invocation to Cleop and an apology for the defects of his work.38 Then follows almost immediately a description of the month of May, "an innovation which concerned him as a poet of courtly love no less than a rhetorician."39 Further, Chaucer amplified the scene of the morning parting of the two lovers, first by the device of circuitio or circumlocutio. "He then repeated the sense of the whole passage by the device of expolitio... and the theme 'Dawn came' is varied with Lucifer and Fortune Minor until it fills a whole stanza."40

34 Ibid., 58-9.
35 Ibid., 61.
36 Troilus and Criseyde, I, 1-14.
37 Il Filostrato, I, v.
38 Troilus and Criseyde, II, 15-21.
39 Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 61.
40 Ibid., 62.
In the same book, Chaucer inserts sixteen lines of address to Night, during which he secured from the medieval point of view 'some doctryne'.
This further substantiates Lewis' claim "as a poet of love he wanted his alba; as rhetorician he wanted his apostropha." Continuing still further on in the same book, there is an antiphonal insertion of Troilus' alba for which we can find only one line in the Italian poem. In this passage we find one of the most vivid and beautiful expressions that Chaucer ever used.

Accursed by thy coming into Troye
For every bore hath oon of thy bright eyen.

For Professor Lewis this entire passage is of great importance.

This passage is an object lesson for those who tend to identify the traditional with the dull. Its matter goes back to the ancient sources of medieval love poetry, notably to Ovid, Amores, i, 13, and it has been handled often before and better handled by the Provençals.

Therefore it seems apparent that Chaucer's poem does lack fourteenth century urban realism. The removal of the author's presence, the lack of contemporary details, the addition of many ancient and strange elements, the insertion of romantic glamor, the approach to the poem as an 'Historical' poet, and as a follower of the ancient rhetoricians, all tend to give the poem an atmosphere of the strange and the ancient.

41 Troilus and Criseyde, III, 1429-32.
42 Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 62.
43 Troilus and Criseyde, III, 1452-70.
44 Ibid., III, 1452-3.
45 Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 62.
However, although there is so very little of the realism that has been suggested by opposing critics, still this does not mean that the characters, though figures of a romance, are unreal. The personages of the poem are real, living beings. The realism in question is rather realism of background and detail. It would be absurd to deny that Chaucer included any realistic details at all. Quite naturally, Chaucer revealed something of the era and place where he was living, as has already been mentioned. But compared with the wealth of strange and ancient details, it is hardly sufficient to destroy the general impression of a Medieval Romance.

Most obvious are the changes that Chaucer made in this matter from the Italian version of the story. The trend, either conscious or unconscious, was to improve on Boccaccio's work in the elements of the ancient and the strange. What is startling is the fact that Chaucer included so few contemporary details and background in the poem. The poet who so perfectly portrayed contemporary life in the Canterbury Tales could certainly have done a better job of picturing the life and times of England if that were his intention in Troilus and Criseyde.
CHAPTER V

PANDARUS

The character of Pandarus in Chaucer's poem might seem to the reader a stumbling block in the path of the true and traditional Medieval Romance. Karl Young suspects that it is this individual that is the cause of much of the criticism of *Troilus and Criseyde* as part of the romance tradition. He writes:

But the real nullifier of romance in the *Troilus*, it will be said, is Pandarus. It is his scenes which provide the comic criticism, the give and take of actuality, and the scenes of ordinary life going on; and such things in their way comote the modern novel. Even though few may share the extreme view of M. Legouis, that Pandarus degrades Chaucer's story to the level of the fabliau, many will ask whether the quality of romance can truly survive his banter and whimsical reality.¹

There has been much discussion of the character of Pandarus, and he is unfavorably viewed by some of the critics. W. M. Rossetti writes:

The brilliant young man of fashion (as we might term Boccaccio's Pandarus) becomes a bettered middle-aged man of the world; His buoyancy and rapidity of character take on a certain aspect of fatal facility; his scheming approaches nearer to treachery.²

Professor Taine describes Pandarus unfavorably. He writes:

He is a lively rascal, who volunteers for a

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¹ Young, 60.
² Rossetti, v.
Professor Ten Brink considers Pandarus as nothing better than a pimp.

He writes:

To the insipid and somewhat cynical views of an old worldling, Pandarus united a good dose of naivete. And Chaucer makes him push his trade of pimp as naively as possible... He commends his work and carries it triumphantly through with the greatest mastery. He has the necessary talents and the necessary liking for the play of intrigue, and knows well how to hide his roughness under the mask of a somewhat good nature and a paternal recklessness.

Such are several interpretations of the character of Pandarus. Though it seems true that he serves as somewhat of a comic relief in the poem, still he has another important function to perform, to bring the lovers together. And though he might occasionally suggest ordinary life, he hardly nullifies the other romantic elements in his character. As will be shown, he fits in with the element of courtly love in the poem; and where his comedy would interfere with the qualities of Medieval Romance, we find him absent.

First of all, it is hardly necessary to consider him as a middle-aged man. Though Chaucer changes his relation from cousin to uncle, his own actions in the poem do not necessarily make him an older man. There is no

reason why he could not have been an uncle with nephews or nieces not much younger than he. His lively banter and gay activity tend to suggest a younger man. However, this is a mere minor point and of secondly importance with the evaluation of the character of Pandarus in the matter of courtly love, a prime element of Medieval Romance.

Courtly love was merely a social convention, and in Medieval Romances, a literary convention. It was not practised in the real world with approval. Chaucer then was bowing to a romantic convention when he wrote on this subject and when he modified and changed the character of Pandarus he wanted him to fit in as perfectly as possible with the social and literary conventions of the code. Perhaps much of the misconception of Pandarus’ character can be explained by a proper interpretation of the scheme of courtly love.

Pandarus was an essential element in the love affair between Troilus and Criseyde, and he did his job well. Andreas Capellanus would have had a word of praise for his fine work. He is a practical man, but still he is good company and he can "make you so to laugh at his folye, that you for laughter wemen for to dye." Yet on the other hand, he is no mere comedian. He can talk with you far into the night of "many an uncouth glad and deep materse, as freemdesd on, than they been met y-fere." Nor is his nature entirely and solely ironic. We read how he "neigh malt for wo and routhe"

5 Troilus and Criseyde, II, 161-2.
6 Ibid., II, 1188-9.
7 Ibid., I, 582.
at the sight of Troilus' lovesickness; how the "teres braste out of his
iyen" while he pleaded with Criseyde; and when he heard Troilus pleading
for himself in the house of Deiphbus, "Pandare week as he to watre wolde."

The true Pandarus is, in the words of C. S. Lewis, "a lover and a doctor
in Love's law, a friend according to the old, high code of friendship, and
a man of sentiment." Chaucer, who showed himself such a perfect portrayer
of character in the Canterbury Tales, would have hardly included these
qualities of character if Pandarus was to be considered solely as an ironic
character.

The real importance of Pandarus in the Troilus and Criseyde is found
in his role of intermedius. Chaucer was writing in the romantic tradition
and to produce a true Medieval Romance, the code of courtly love had to be
followed. In the first chapter of the De Amore, Andreas Capellanus,
speaking of the nature of love, sanctions the idea of a go-between. He
tells the lover that if his love seems to be getting the best of him, he
may seek help and find such a go-between. At the very beginning of his
book we read:

Nam permittitur amatori sui amoris secretarium
invenire idoneum, quum sequite valent de suo
solatiari amor, et qui et, si contigerit, in
amoris compatiatur adversis. Sed et amatrici
similem conceditur secretarium postulare.

8 Ibid., II, 326.
9 Ibid., III, 115.
10 Lewis, Allegory, 191.
Praeter istos internuntium fidelem de communi
possunt habere consensu, per quem amor osculat
et recte semper valeat gubernari.\footnote{11}

Pandarus is shown as acting in the fashion of a true courtly internuntius.
He tells Troilus that rolling about and weeping is not the easiest way to
be successful in love.\footnote{12} He had better take warning from the example of
Niobe, who weeping for her dead children, was turned into stone, "whos
teras yit in marble ben yseene."\footnote{13} Professor Kirby notes this reference
of Pandarus. "These words are characteristic of the English Pandarus, for
he revels in learned phrases, classical allusions and wise sayings."\footnote{14}

The most striking picture of Pandarus is found at the opening of the
Second Book. The internuntius, who is spurring Troilus on in the quest
of love, has himself been smitten.

\begin{quote}
\begin{verbatim}
  it so bitidde
  As I shal syng, on Mayes day the thrydde
  That Pandarus, for al his wise speche,
  Felt ek his part of loves shotes keene,
  That, koude he nevere so wel of levyng preche,
  It made his heue e-day ful ofte greene.
  So shop it that hym fyl that day a teeme
  In love, for which in wo to bedde he wente,
  And made, er it was day, full many a wente.\footnote{15}
\end{verbatim}
\end{quote}

This occurrence recalls the fact that Pandarus was himself once a devotee
of love, but so very unsuccessfully. When first he appears, he reveals

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item[12] Troilus and Criseyde, I, 694-700.
\item[13] Ibid., I, 701.
\item[14] Kirby, 129.
\item[15] Troilus and Criseyde, II, 55-63.
\end{itemize}
that he has "in love so ofte assayed grevances." Every reader admires a man who though wounded by love still is generous and friend enough to lend aid to a young lover.

Chaucer made numerous additions to the Italian work to improve Pandarus as a true courtly lover. It is significant to note the changes made in the scene where Pandarus goes to Crisseyde and tells her of Troilus' great love for her. Like a true courtly intermuntius Pandarus strives to put Troilus in as fair a light as possible, comparing him with Hector and reminding Crisseyde of the excellent qualities of her lover. Professor Kirby, commenting on this passage, notes,

...the emphasis which is placed on the many qualities which distinguish Hector and Troilus, qualities which are commonplace in courtly literature, and which are present in the typical courtly lover. The frequent attempts which Pandarus makes to justify his role as go-between are important additions which substantiate the impression that the changes introduced by Chaucer are for the most part corrections of and improvements on Boccaccio.

Another improvement which Chaucer makes on the Italian poem is the habit of couching courtly love in the parlance of the Christian religion. Pandarus is the character who most often speaks in this fashion. Thus in choosing Pandarus for this office, Chaucer must have had him in mind as a true conformer to the courtly code. In the scene where Pandarus reveals

16 Ibid., I, 646.
17 Ibid., II, 137-595.
18 Kirby, 141.
his first knowledge of his friend's amour, we read of Troilus' complaint of Love:

The gan I stalke hym softly by hynde
And sikerly, the soothe for to seyne,
As I kan clope ayein now to my mynde,
Right thus to Love he gan hym for to pleyne:
He seyde, 'Lorde, have routhe upon my peyne,
Al have I ben rebell in myn entente;
Now, mea culpa, lord, I me repente.'19

This passage breathes a distinctly religious air. Much condensed, it is the Act of Penance addressed to Cupid. Professor Root remarks that "he addresses Love in language suggested by words which Boethius applies to the supreme God."20

In the meeting of Troilus and Crisseyde at the house of Deiphubus, we find strict conformity to the requirements of the courtly code. Pandarus offers a prayer to Cupid and Venus for the miracle they worked.

Fil Pandarus on knees, and up his eyes
To heaven threw, and held his handes high,
'Immortal god,' quod he, 'That mayst naught deyen,
Cupid, I mene, of this mayst glorifie;
And Venus, thou mayst maken melody;
Withouten hond, me semeth that in town
For this merveille, ich here ech belle sowne.'21

Professor Kirby comments on Pandarus' activity in this scene.

With characteristic vigilance he notes the return of Helen and Deiphubus, and before their entry, speedily arranges for the second meeting at his house. This whole scene has been managed with consummate skill and with remarkable fidelity to the requirement of the courtly love code demanding utmost secrecy in the conduct of the amour.22

19 Troilus and Crisseyde, II, 519-25.
20 Root, 443.
21 Troilus and Crisseyde, III, 183-189.
22 Kirby, 154.
Pandarus is again acting in conformity with the courtly code in the Third Book when he answers Troilus' words of appreciation. After telling Troilus how happy he is to have done something for him, he bids him do nothing amiss. In the two stanzas of philosophizing in the Boethian manner, he tells Troilus always to restrain his talk and his desire. This is genuine courtly love doctrine and entirely in keeping with the rules of Andreas Capellanus. The Court chaplain had decreed: "In amoris exercendo solatic voluntatem non excedes amantis. Amor raro consuetum durare vulgatus. Non solet amare quem nimia voluptatis abundantia vexat." Pandarus entirely fulfills the precepts of Andreas.

Mr. C. S. Lewis interprets the treatment of Pandarus in the light of Chaucer as a poet of doctrine and sentence. Pandarus is being used as a teacher of philosophy and of the code of courtly love. Although a comic character at times, Pandarus is seen as a serious character when he performs these functions. Mr. Lewis writes:

I believe that Pandarus is meant to be a comic character, but not so broadly comic as he appears to some modern readers... The discourse on the contraries, (I, 631-44) the exemplus of Paris and Oenone, leading up to the theme, 'Physician heal thyself,' (I, 582-72) the doctrine of the Mean applied to secrecy in love, (I, 687-93) the sentences from Solomon, (I, 695) are all of them the sort of thing that can be found in admittedly serious passages.

Elsewhere Mr. Lewis considers Pandarus 'inside the magic circle of courtly

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23 Troilus and Criseyde, III, 1618-38.
24 De Amore, Regulae XII, XIII, XXX, 106, 310, 312.
25 Lewis, What Chaucer Did, 64-5.
love, a devout, even a pedantic and lachrymose, exponent of it." Indeed, in his role of intermuntius and teacher, Pandarus is seen not as a nullifier of the elements of Medieval Romance, but rather as quite essential to the code of courtly love. As the exponent of the courtly doctrine, as well as the go-between, Pandarus fits in perfectly with the medieval tradition. In spite of all his jesting, he nowhere ridicules the courtly sentiment which is the essence of a romance. He is certainly serious enough in his dealing with the amorous transactions which he is managing. Professor Young remarks:

What he finds droll is not love, but lovers. He derides his own antics and he derides the manoeuvres of the younger pair. His derision of Troilus and of Criseyde, indeed, has the peculiar charm of making them seem more youthful and childlike — more like the innocently sensuous lovers who dwell in romances.27

It is likewise important to note that Pandarus is not allowed to invade the more radiant scenes at random. Some of the most romantic scenes of the poem present us with no trace of Pandarus. In the first and chief scene in which Troilus rides gloriously past the house of Criseyde, Pandarus is absent. When Antigone sings in the garden, when Criseyde goes to bed in the moonlight and her casement is flooded by the song of the nightingale, Pandarus is not there. In the episode of the consummation of the amour, he is forgotten. He does not appear in the scene of the anamoment in the temple, and he fades from sight as the story approaches its conclusion.

26 Lewis, Allegory, 194.
27 Young, 61.
It seems obvious that Chaucer did not wish any of Pandarus' comedy to spoil the chief romantic scenes of the poem. His comedy is restricted, and his chief role seems to have been that of the internuntius as suggested by the code of courtly love.

The comic touch to the character of Pandarus does not seem to be something original with Chaucer. Precedent for Pandarus' humorous irreverence can be found within the charmed circle of courteous lovers. Mr. Lewis writes:

The comic figures in a medieval love poem are a cautionary concession...a sop to Silenus and Priapus lest they should trouble our lofty hymns to Cupid.28

Mr. Lewis further remarks:

The courtly sentiment is from the outset an escape, a truancy, from the vulgar common sense and from the ten commandments... It protects itself against the laughter of the vulgar...by allowing laughter and cynicism their place inside the poem; as some politicians hold that the only way to make a revolutionary safe is to give him a seat in Parliament. The Duck and the Geese have their seats in Chaucer's Parliament for the same reasons; and for the same reason we have satire on women in Andreas, we have the shameless Yeke in the Rose, we have Pandarus in the book of Troilus and Cressida, and Dinadan in Malory, and Godfrey Gobeline in Hawes and the Squire of Dames in the Faerie Queen.29

Professor Young adds a few more examples to establish a precedent for Pandarus. He writes as follows of comic relief:

It is illustrated in some measure, I should think, by the performance of Kay in the Yvain

28 Lewis, Allegory, 173.
29 Ibid., 172-3.
or in the Moraugia. It is suggested, perhaps, by the hero’s joking knights in the Durmart and the Eneas, and more remotely by the delicate sense of humor of the Queen in the Cligés. In such instances one surmises not so much a concession to the vulgar as a mere momentary retreat from the heady atmosphere of courtliness.

Thus it appears certain that Chaucer is following a definite tradition in including a comic character in his poem. And if in adding this comic character, Chaucer has added some realism, some added sense of ordinary life, Chaucer can turn to his predecessors for justification. Finally, though Pandarus suggests real life through his irony and witticisms, it must be recalled that Chaucer changed his character to more perfectly meet the demands of the courtly code. His function as intermontius, as teacher of courtly doctrine and as a kind and sentimental friend is of great importance to the whole love affair. In these details, Pandarus’ character is in keeping with the romance tradition. Realism and comedy are likewise present in Pandarus, but it does not seem that these qualities are strong and prevalent enough to destroy or essentially lessen the romance elements in the poem. Though Pandarus is real, he is real with the realism of the courtly lover.

30 Young, 61.
CHAPTER VI

PSYCHOLOGY AND ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

The enchanting beauty of the romantic scenes of Troilus and Criseyde, and the fine quality of romantic love which resides in them, must not be allowed to conceal other elements which may not be considered romantic in their effect. One aspect of the Troilus and Criseyde of Chaucer which might be thought to disassociate it from romances is its preoccupation with psychology. The exquisite characterization of Criseyde has often and justly been praised. Through the explicit exhibition of her inner conflicts and through most clever suggestion, Chaucer has conveyed her reflections, her intentions and her most intense emotions. Often there is some doubt as to the motive of the heroine, so complex and subtle is her characterization. Chaucer himself confesses that he is in doubt of her thoughts and motives.

Nought list myn auctour fully to declare,
What that she thoughte when he seyde so.¹

Kan I naught seyn, for she had hym nought rise,
If sorwe it putte out of hire remembrance,
Or elles that she took it in the wise
Of dewete, as for his observaunce;
But well fynde I she dede hym this plesaunce,
That she hym kiste, although she siked sore
And bade hym sitte adoun withouten more.²

But trewe, how longe it was bytwene
That she forsook hym for this Diomede,
Ther is non auctour telieth it, I wene.

¹ Troilus and Criseyde, III, 675-8.
² Ibid., III, 967-973.
Take every man now to his bokes heede;
He shall no terme syneden, out of drede,
For though that he began to woe hire soone,
Er he hire wan, yet was ther more to done.

Professor Young considers this point of psychology one of the chief reasons
for the thesis of the opposing critics.

Beyond question, then, the Troilus is a remarkable achievement in psychological observation,
and it is this element in the poem above all else, perhaps, which has prompted critics to
view it as a modern psychological novel.4

Yet this fact does not nullify the Troilus and Criseyde as a romance.

A similar preoccupation with psychology is among the conspicuous and
persistent characteristics of medieval romance. One of the most recent
expositors of Chretien declares that he is "l'ancetre authentique et
venerable de nos romanciers psychologiques du XIXe siecle."5 Professor Ker
himself admits and comments on this preoccupation with psychology in the
traditional romancier, Chretien.

Chretien...often treats his adventures with great
levity in comparison with the serious psychological
passages; the wonder is that he should have used
so much of the stuff of adventure in poems where
he had a commanding interest in the sentiments of
the personages... Chretien de Troyes is at the head
of the French Romantic School, and his interest is
in the science of love, not in the ancient rude
and passionate stories...not in the 'Celtic Magic'
except for decorative and incidental passages, but
in psychology and analysis of the emotions, and in
the appropriate forms of language for such things.6

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3 Ibid., V, 1086-1092.
4 Young, 58.
5 G. Garden, Chretien de Troyes et son Oeuvre, Paris, 1931, 504.
6 Ker, Epic and Romance, 335-6.
Miss Barrows also recognizes the element of psychology in the Medieval Romances. She writes:

The treatment of character in the society romances is even more conventional than the treatment of plot... The important characters are models of warnings, illustrating psychological theory, and certain principles of fashionable sentiment.

Commenting on the character of the heroine, Miss Barrows continues:

The continuous prominence of the heroine's role is one of the most important characteristics of the medieval society romances... She is intimately connected with the plot, is the center of the psychological interest, and brings with her the social problem and the social atmosphere... The glorification of her beauty and sweetness, of her social graces, and of her wise and loyal efficiency in the service of love, is not infrequently tempered with a recognition of her tendency to caprice and her genius for duplicity... The slave of social environment, hedged round with convention, made timid by danger and weakness, she can circumvent opposition only by subterfuge, can hope for security through care for appearance. Though this excuse is not explicitly stated by the romancers who turn her uncrupulous ingenuity and her fear of scandal to narrative and psychological account, it is implied in their treatment of her situation and their reflection of her social world as a whole. 8

To establish precedent for Chaucer's psychological handling of his heroine, Professor Young quotes the following, as examples of inner conflict:

the lovely sufferings of both Soredamore and Alexander in Cliges, the agitations of Lavinia

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7 Barrows, 85.
8 Ibid., 92-3.
in Enneas, La Fiere's self torture over her rebuke to Ipomedon, and the self-questioning of Amadas, Gervain or Julius Caesar.9

Professor Ker speaks of the romance, Cliges of Chrétien, as "almost wholly made up of psychology and sentiment." 10 As even more obvious examples of psychological handling, Young cites "Gelein's courting of Enide, Guinevere's luring of Lancelot, Renaud's helpless silence before the Dame de Fayel, or Briseida's trifling with Diomede in the Roman de Troie." 11 From these examples, there is an established precedent for Chaucer's characterization. In his cultivation of amorous psychology, then, Chaucer is no innovator; he is maintaining the traditions of romance.

Likewise, there are several minor matters in which we find a resemblance between Chaucer's poem and the traditional medieval romances. One of these is the group of three formal portraits in the Fifth Book. 12 Where Boccaccio gives but a brief description of Diomede, Chaucer provides a much longer one, adding extended portraits of Troilus and Crisseyde. The suggestion for these portraits came undoubtedly from the portraiture in the Roman de Troie. Professor Robinson gives us the literary precedent for these portraits in his notes to these lines in his Collected Works of Chaucer.

The portraits of Diomede, Crisseyde and Troilus, which here interrupt the narrative, are examples of a literary type cultivated chiefly by the

9 Young, 59.
10 Ker, Epig and Romance, 333.
11 Young, 59.
12 Troilus and Crisseyde, V, 799-840.
later Greek and Roman writers and in the Middle Ages. Similar in literary method is the feature-by-feature description of ladies, which is extremely common in medieval love-poetry, and was recognized as one of the regular 'colours of rhetoric.' There are portraits of Diomede, Criseyde, and Troilus in Dares, Benoit, and Guido, and all of these Chaucer doubtless had in mind. But the primary source...was the Frigil Daretis Ylias of Joseph of Exeter. Certain features in Chaucer's descriptions seem to be due to Boccaccio or Benoit.\textsuperscript{13}

It is important to note that in the matter of these portraits, Chaucer improved on Boccaccio in order to more perfectly conform to the details of other medieval romances. Mr. Louis A. Haselmayer, Jr. has written on the origin of these formal portraits.\textsuperscript{14} These portraits, of course, are examples of the type of rhetorical ornament known as the portrait of effectio and in most of the historical romances on the siege of Troy a long series of such portraits is introduced. Mr. Haselmayer considers the only reason for Chaucer's inclusion of these was to "bring his version, in this respect, more into line with the traditional form."\textsuperscript{15}

It seems obvious that Chaucer has in mind a more perfect conformity to the traditions of medieval romance when he included these portraits, especially when one considers that they were not found in Boccaccio's Filostrato. Miss Barrows further substantiates the claim that these portraits are a traditional element of medieval romance.

\textsuperscript{13} Robinson, 947.
\textsuperscript{14} L. A. Haselmayer, Jr., "The Portraits in Troilus and Criseyde," \textit{PQ}, April, 1938.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 137.
A stiff, formal description of a character's beauty, which begins at the head and works down to the feet, including practically the same details, whatever the situation, whoever sits for the portrait, appears sooner or later, nearly always once, and often several times in the course of a romance.16

Beyond this, Professor Young finds a scene in the Troilus and Criseyde, in which Chaucer approaches closely to the realm of poetic magic, that quality which would make the romance that possessed it the perfect and ideal romance. He alludes to the scene in the Second Book, where Criseyde retires to her garden with her three nieces, after Troilus had passed by on horseback.

As twilight approaches, the 'freshe Antigone' sings a love-song composed by a noble Trojan maiden and convinces Criseyde of 'the parfite blisse of love.' A little later, when the stars appear, Criseyde ascends to her bedroom for the night. As she lies there in quiet, reflecting upon the happenings of the afternoon, a nightingale upon a cedar under her window sings a 'ley of love,' in the moonlight, during which Criseyde tranquilly falls asleep, and dreams of a white eagle exchanging his heart for hers. Surely this scene opens the casements directly upon the world of romance.17

The insertion of such a poetic scene, along with the addition of the three portraits, seem to indicate a more faithful adherence to the traditions of the Medieval Romance. The faithfulness of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde in these minor details to the romantic tradition lend weight to the claim that his work remains in the field of true Medieval Romance.

16 Barrows, 105.
17 Troilus and Criseyde, II, 813-931.
18 Young, 57-8.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The interpretation of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* seems to depend in large measure on the critics' point of view. If the reader were to concentrate his attention on the subtle characterization, the irony and the realistic elements, and then briefly to make a comparison with some of the earlier romances, he might be inclined to think that Chaucer had created a new literary genre. On the other hand another reader might emphasize the romantic elements. The treatment of courtly love, of the archaic background and of the fanciful features of the poem, especially when compared with the treatment in Booccaccio's poem, would suggest the traditional Medieval Romance. What then is the correct interpretation of the poem?

Perhaps it can be suggested that Chaucer took the traditional form of the Medieval Romance with all its rules and essential code. Into this he poured the essential parts of the popular story of the two lovers, Troilus and Criseyde; but his genius was such that he saw an opportunity to give new life to the story. The characters, especially Pandarus and Criseyde, he could somewhat enliven. Criseyde could be made more complex and a deeper psychological treatment could be given to her character. An ironic Pandarus seemed to fit more perfectly into the scheme of the story. And all this Chaucer could do without notably interfering with these characters.
as romance personages. Realism likewise could be added to the poem, like a sprinkling of star dust to an already beautiful background, to emphasize that beauty. Chaucer, who showed himself such a master of realism and local color in the Canterbury Tales, could hardly let this opportunity pass without putting his genius to work. But no less than his ability in characterization and in description was his genius in following a traditional form of literature. As he improved the story in its characters, so he also made it adhere more closely to the rules of Medieval Romance.

Chaucer was not the first one to attempt innovations in the romance fields. Before him went Benoît de Maure and Chrétien de Troyes. Clinging to the form of Medieval Romance, they added complex characters and preoccupied themselves with psychology while observing the rules of the romance tradition. With his superior genius, it is no wonder that Chaucer should even improve upon these authors.

It is worthwhile to quickly review Chaucer’s handling of the story in comparison with Boccaccio’s version. Chaucer evidently was using the Italian poem as a source. There are so many passages in Troilus and Criseyde that have been taken almost word for word from the Il Filostrato. Almost a third of Chaucer’s poem is drawn directly from the Italian version. Other sections of the Italian poem have been entirely omitted or changed so that Chaucer’s poem might more closely conform to the code of courtly love or that the element of the ancient and the strange might be stressed. Thus the general framework of the Medieval Romance has been strengthened in Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde.
A final conclusion might be reached in the form of a compromise. In the general build-up and framework of the story, Chaucer has followed the traditions of Medieval Romance. But, following the example of other romancers, notably Chretien de Troyes, he saw that the story could stand a stronger handling, especially in the characterization of the leading personages. This he accomplished by his subtle characterization especially of Crisseyde and his ironic treatment of Pandarus. Certain other details he added which suggest ordinary life and give a touch of realism to the poem. But in spite of this, the romantic glamor and beauty of the poem remains. The result is a Medieval Romance which has been sparked with new life and genius.
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The thesis submitted by William C. McCusker, S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

December 10, 1949

Date

Signature of Adviser