THE RELIGIOUS VIEW OF CHAUCER

IN

HIS ITALIAN PERIOD (1)

by

Naozo Ueno

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Of such an ingenuous story teller as Chaucer, who, because he could so well adapt himself to the situation and the character he was writing that he could without effort conceive any two opposing ideas, could say in one breath both

> Who saved Danyel in the horrible cave
> Ther every wight save he, maister and knave,
> Was with the leon frete er he asterte?
> No wight but God, that he bar in his herte.[1]

and

> But wel I woot that in this world greet pyne ys.
> Allas, I se a serpent or a theef,
> .....
> Goon at his large, and where hym list may turne.[2]

it would be almost vain to try to figure out what his own religion was. He could denounce the world and cusre the cruelty of fate through the mouth of one of his pilgrims, while in another place, another pilgrim is telling a pathetic and beautiful tale of a young martyr and of the Blessed Virgin protecting us all. E. Legouis says:

> "Chaucer's religious feelings...probably kept changing from year to year and almost from hour to hour. There were varying moments in the day when he made fun of the Mendicant Friars, when he prayed with fervour, by preference to the Virgin Mary...when he felt sick of the world and looked heavenward. It is probable that he was about as much of a free-thinker as was possible in his day, living without restraint, but not without remorse, lingering for many years in the

1. Fragment II, ll. 473-6. MLT. (*Man of Law's Tale*).
   All line references are to *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. by F. N. Robinson.
2. I, ll. 1324-7. KnT. (*Knight's Tale*).

> primrose path, and after a contrite old age reaching the pious end to which his disciples have testified."[3]

With this type of objective writer, the acme of whose skill was reached in the history of English literature by Shakespeare, the most one can say about his own religious view, or about his own view of life even, is not religion in its narrow sense. Of course, in Chaucer there is much religious feeling. Only the problem is that Chaucer might be merely repeating some religious cliches of the time or putting himself in the shoes of one of his characters, so that we need not surmise that he is an anti-Wycliffite even when the host, Harry Bailly, declares

> I smelle a Lollere in the wynd,[4]...

or with Lounsbury[5] take him as an agnostic when the summoner scoffs at excommunication,

> For curs wol slee right as assoillyng savith,[6]

meaning that excommunication of church can no more condemn people than absolution can save them. The real religious feeling of the poet can be reached not through taking every utterance of the characters at its face value but through analysing the whole plot and finding out what his conception of the characters' fate is; how he suffers his characters to wend through various phases of human life; and how he reveals his conception of human life in the fortunes of the characters.

In Chaucer, this process of deducing the poet's view of religion by minute delineation of the characters' fate is not so easy as in the cases of other writers, since the only portion of his writings which is decidedly original is the

3. Emile Legouis, *Geoffrey Chaucer,* p. 22.
4. II, l. 1173. MLT.
5. T. R. Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer,* p. 517ff.
6. I, l. 661. GEN. Prol. (*Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*).

Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. Others are classic tales retouched, contemporary Italian tales told in English or even a résumé of a sermon. His tale of St. Cecillia told by the Second Nun closely follows Jacobus Januensis in the *Legenda Aurea,* and Simeon Metaphrastes, who in turn follows early Latin *Acta.* He astonished his Japanese students, to whom the Buddhist parable on the deadly quality of avarice is familiar, by drawing his *Pardoner's Tale* or the three thieves from a Hindoo tale in *Vedabbha Játaka*[7]. The only difference is that our version of *Játaka* tale is that of Sakyamuni predicting the lethal quality of gold and of a farmer finding the prediction only too true. One wonders how Chaucer in the fourteenth century could get in touch with the Indian tale. It is one of the Chaucer riddles left for us but not very likely to be solved by anything short of a miracle; unless something like what happened in the British Museum in 1851 should happen, when the parchment used for lining a fifteenth century book proved to be the list of expenditures in the household of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, among which there was an item concerning the purchase of several articles for Geoffrey Chaucer, then a page in her service. Chaucer can be at once Harry Bailly, Wife of Bath, Criseyda, Pandarus, King of Theseus, and Arcite. There are those among the characters of his works who we feel certain are the embodiment of his own thought, each being a part of himself, showing at least one phase of his variegated and complex interest in life; yet also there are those who, we feel, Chaucer depicted as representative of what is detestable

7. Chaucer's tale of the three thieves consists of two Buddhist parables. One includes the motif of a band of thieves killing each other for the riches until the last one is also killed with poison. This tale is in *Originals and Analogues* (Chaucer Society). The other, which is more familiar to me, is built on the theme "rich is death."

in life, couching his righteous wrath in the sly words of satire. The Canon in the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, the Friar in the *Summoner's Tale*, the Monk in the *Shipman's Tale*, and the Monk and the Friar in the *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* seem to belong to this latter class. We might deduce some of his opinion about the religious world of his time by the curious but not altogether unexplainable fact that those who suffer most his severe attack are more of the clerical world than of laymen. This of course, is only one of the numerous means in which we can know something of his religious attitude.

The literary tradition of his time—the practice of borrowing from other sources—adds much practical difficulty in our investigation of his own thought, not to say of his religious thought. We might be safe in presuming that we can trace his personal view of things first by looking in the lines which are by all evidences supposed to be Chaucer's invention; and secondly, in cases where he quotes from other authors or borrows other author's thought, by looking at the way in which he quotes or borrows,—in other words, how he makes use of it; and in the lines where the thought is not Chaucer's invention but a borrowed one, by finding out if the original author is, by other evidences, supposed to be Chaucer's favorite; thirdly, we can find something of the poet's own view in the words of the characters whom he seems to have held in sympathy. But whether in passages original or inspired from other sources, one infalliable test is its artistic standard—he must be at his best when he is writing about the things he is really interested in.

CHAPTER I

CHAUCER'S SO-CALLED ITALIAN PERIOD

In 1372 Chaucer visited Italy for the first time in his life as the king's special envoy to conclude a trade treaty with Genoa, and began his life-long contact with the Italian poets, especially with his contemporary Italians. In general opinion[8], this journey which extended three or four months over the following year marks the beginning of his so-called "Italian Period," the outstanding writings of the poet during this period being *Troilus and Criseyde*, *Palamon* or the *Knight's Tale*,[9] and the *Legend of Good Women*. However, Kittredge[10], discussing the difference of the meaning of "period" in each of his French, Italian, and English periods, says that not in any two "periods" is the word used with the same connotation. The French period is called so because Chaucer in this period was rather a faithful follower of the French masters than a critical one; the Italian period is called so because here Chaucer was under the influence of the Italian masters and made free use of their works, imbued with their gusto, yet producing things of his own; and the English period is called so because in this period his chief interest lay in English people and English life. Thus, the first period is characterized by the discipline under French literature, the second by

8. "It has long been the fashion to divide Chaucer's poetical activity into three periods,—the French, the Italian, and the English." G. L. Kittredge, *Chaucer and his Poetry*, p. 26.

9. The exact identity of now missing *Palamon* to the *Knight's Tale* is unknown. Robinson's assumption is that the latter is not very different in form and substance from the former, on which Chaucer worked to make it fit for the teller.

10. Kittredge, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–7.

his use of the Italian material in his own way, and the third by his interest in England. Moreover, the first two periods are carried into the last period, ever varying but never extinct.

Strictly speaking—according to Kittredge—Chaucer's periods are four, the extra one coming between the year 1373, which marks the end of his French period, and the year 1380 or 1382, that is, the beginning of his Italian period, which begins with the *Troilus* or the *Knight's Tale.* There is almost ten years of no literary activity between the year 1373 and the year 1380 or 1382—called " the period of transition" by Kittredge—which must have been spent by Chaucer perusing the Italian books after his day's duty at the custom house was over.[11] By the " Italian books," I mean the books of the Roman poets and philosophers, of whom the outstanding figures are Ovid, Virgil, Boethius, Lucan, and Statius, and the books by his contemporary Italian poets, e. g. Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Dante. Of course some of these Roman poets, especially Ovid, he had known and had referred to in his earlier poems. Yet it was in this period of transition or preparation that his view of the world and the fate of human beings ripened and took definite form. In these ten years Boethius set him thinking what " beatitude " means, what we should expect from life, and what freedom there is for us against destiny. And he perused and loved his *De Consolatione Philosophiae* so much that he translated from the Latin original and its French version shortly after 1380. In other words, this Transition Period and the next period—the Italian—are the periods of religious-philosophical thinking when Chaucer, now over forty, took serious interest in the meaning of life before he grew older and came to see life just as it

11. Kittredge *op. cit.,* p. 27 ff.

was, enjoying its phantasmagoria with the deeper understanding of human nature. The period is *pure* in the sense that his mind was intent on solving those questions about fortune, destiny, and beatitude as mentioned above, its purity being the pure sincerity of a thinking man. Around these questions revolve the stories of *Troilus and Criseyde*, and the *Knight's Tale*, which was actually written in the *Canterbury* period but which we can regard as belonging to the Italian period since its prototype, *Palamon*, now lost, was written early in this period.

There is, however, one exception to this religious-philosophical type of work of his Italian period. The *Legend of Good Women*, the only other long poem written in this period, puzzles us because of its return to French literary discipline in spirit and form, all the more so because it was supposedly written after the *Troilus*, sometime between 1382 and 1394, e. g. Richard's marriage to Ann and her death. (In all probability in 1386, when Deschamps sent him some of his poems of the "Marguerite," the poems composed on traditional love of the flower margaret.) We do not know how to account for his return to the French masters, but we at least know he could not have been very happy in his return, since the *Legend* lacks the gusto of the *Troilus* and the *Knight's Tale* and is left one-third unfinished.

Thus, accepting this *Legend* as belonging in spirit to his French period, we can draw a fairly clear picture of Chaucer's state of mind in this period from the *Troilus* and the *Knight's Tale*, both of which are by far works of greater importance. Especially the unity of plot and the author's skill of characterization in the *Troilus* have won critics' evaluation as the work of even higher literary merits than the *Canterbury Tales* from the viewpoint of the novel. Its surprising modernity has been dually apprised by Prof. Ker

in the following sentences;

> "It is difficult to speak moderately of Chaucer's "Troilus." It is the first great modern book in that kind where the most characteristic modern triumphs of the literary art have been won; in the kind to which belong the great books of Cervantes, of Fielding, and of their later pupils —that form of story which is not restricted in its matter in any way, but is capable of taking in comprehensively all or any part of the aspects and humours of life. No other medieval poem is rich and full in the same way as "Troilus" is full of varieties of character and mood."[12]

With the development of the plot and the delineation of the characters we feel that, unlike in his French period, Chaucer is speaking not in borrowed words but in his own words his own conception of life. We can see that by the so-called inner evidence—by the way he borrowed the story from *Il Filostrato* of Boccaccio and made it his own, by his character delineation which stands witness to his view of human nature; in this story we can see how the philosophy of Boethius became Chaucer's philosophy and came to modify his religious feelings and differentiate it from the characteristic religious feelings of the Middle Ages, not because there are numerous quotations from Boethius—a fact, however, worth our study—but because the Boethian idea of life permeates the whole story.

12. "Poetry of Chaucer," *The Quarterly Review*, April 1895, Vol. CLXXX, p. 538.

CHAPTER II

BOCCACCIO'S *IL FILOSTRATO* AND CHAUCER'S *TROILUS AND CRISEYDE*

Let us now see how Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* is different from Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*. The story of Criseyde's faithless act first appeared in the *De Excidio Trojae Historia*. It was supposedly written, if we believe in the preface of its sixth century translation by one Cornelius Nepos, by Dares Phrygius, who lived in Troy during the siege. The story appears also in the *Ephemeris Belli Trojani* by Dictys Cretensis, which remains only in its fourth century Latin translation. But the man who linked together the three separate persons, Troilus, Diomedes, and Briseida, into any relationship as briefly sketched in Dares and Dictys, was Benoît de Sainte-Maure who wrote *Roman de Troie* in French in about 1160. This version lacks continuity. Beginning with Briseida's separation from Troilus, it presents us the picture of Briseida as a heartless flirt, Diomedes much as he is in Chaucer's tale, and Troilus as a person not so tender but rather more intent on vengeance on Diomedes.[13]

When, half a century before Chaucer wrote his *Troilus*, Boccaccio developed *Il Filostrato* from Benoît's *Roman de Troie* and also from Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Trojana*, based on Dares and Dictys, he supplied the story with the first half missing both in *Roman de Troie* and *Historia Trojana* by telling how Troilus fell in love with Criseyde and how Criseyde yielded to Troilus, always in his mind comparing himself to Troilus and his mistress Maria

13. Cf. R. K. Gordon, *The Story of Troilus.*

d'Aquino to Criseyde. But Boccaccio's greatest innovation lies in his creation of Pandarus.

In spite of his evident borrowing from Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato,* Chaucer not once mentions Boccaccio in his tale but suggests an ambiguous author Lollius as his original writer,

> As writ myn auctour called Lollius....[14]

The name Lollius, he believed, was that of an actual classical historian. He also mentions Lollius in his list of famous historians of Troy in *House of Fame* together with Homer, Dares, and Tytus (Dictys). How he conjectured the name we do not know, but his ignoring of his indebtness to Boccaccio for the story seems to have its motive in Boccaccio's being his contemporary. In the literary practice of Chaucer's time, a reference to an ancient writer was thought to add more authority than one to a contemporary poet, however famous the contemporary might be. Chaucer's borrowing and his digression from *Il Filostrato* we can see in some detail in the following comparison.[15]

Il Filostrato	*Troilus and Criseyde*
Canto 1, st. 1-6 Invocation to his lady Maria d'Aquino in lieu of the Muses. Declaration of Boccaccio's intention to tell the grief of Troilo, because the poet himself is a lover.	Bk. I, ll. 1-56 Invocation to Fury. Chaucer's intention to tell the grief of Troilus as an outsider.
St. 7 Siege of Troy by the Greeks and its cause.	ll. 57-63 Do.

14. *Troilus and Criseyde,* Bk. I, l. 394.
15. *Il Filostrato,* tr. by Hubertis Cummings.

St. 8-11 Calchas' flight to the Greek camp. His widowed daughter Criseis whom he leaves in Troy.	ll. 64-98 Calchas' flight to the Greek camp. His widowed daughter Criseyde whom he leaves in Troy.
St. 12-15 Criseis' suppliance before Hector in the effect that she might be spared from punishment because of her father. Her high status in Troy.	ll. 99-133 Do.
St. 16-17 The dubious battle between Troy and Greece.	ll. 134-154 The dubious battle between Troy and Greece. Citation of Homer, Dares, and Dictys as authorities.
St. 18-19 Springtime. Fair Criseis standing at the door of the Temple of Palladium.	ll. 155-182 Do.
St. 20-25 Troilo's presence among the crowd. His scorn of love.	ll. 183-266 Do. Chaucer's advice not to scorn love.
St. 26 Troilo casting his glance on Criseis.	ll. 267-273 Do.
St. 27-28 Criseis' beauty.	ll. 274-294 Do.
St. 29-30 Troilo falling in love at first sight.	ll. 295-315 Do.

St. 31-32 Troilo leaving the place love-sick.	ll. 316-329 Do.
St. 33-57 Troilo tormented by love's agony. His bravery to win Criseis' favour. His feigned good spirit and the world knowing nothing of his love-sickness.	ll. 330-547 Do. *Canticus Troili.* His fear lest the world should know of his love.
Canto 2, st. 1-5 A Trojan youth Pandaro finding him in lament and asking why.	ll. 548-567 Troilus' uncle Pandarus finding him in lament and asking why. He asks if it is fear of the Greeks.
	ll. 568-581 Troilus' answer that it is not fear. His refusal to tell the cause of sorrow.
	ll. 582-595 Pandarus asking if it is love.
St. 6-8 Troilo answering that his cause of sorrow is love.	ll. 596-616 Troilus admitting that it is love, but wishing to be left alone.
St. 9-15 Pandaro offering help, though he himself is blind with love, and asking Troilo to disclose his lover's name.	ll. 617-721 Pandarus offering help, though he is unfortunate in his love. Citation of examples. Pandarus asking Troilus to disclose his lover's name.

	ll. 722-760 Troilus refusing to disclose.
	ll. 761-819 Pandarus encouraging T., giving examples of patient love.
St. 16-26 T. telling that he loves Criseis. P. praising her beauty and virtue.	ll. 820-935 T. telling that she is Criseyde. P. praising her beauty and virtue, and blaming T. for having hitherto scorned love.
St. 27 P. encouraging T., telling no woman lives who does not want to live full amorously.	ll. 936-1008 T. expressing his regret. P. encouraging T., telling that she is only human.
St. 28-33 T. saying that he holds no vile intention, and thanking P., who leaves.	ll. 1009-1071 Do.
	ll. 1072-1092 T.'s bravery at the field.
	Bk. II, ll. 1-49 Prohemium.
	ll. 50-207 May. P. going to C.'s house and talking of T.'s fame as a warrior and perfect knight.
	ll. 208-252 Other women leaving them. C. asking P. what he came for.

St. 34-44 P. calling on C. and in a sheltered place telling of someone of good fame and high ranks loving her.	
St. 45-46 C. asking his name. P. telling it is T.	ll. 253-385 P. telling of T.'s love, and arguing to reward his love.
St. 47-51 C. astonished, telling of her wish to be left alone.	ll. 386-427 C. weeping and reproaching P. for talking her into a love affair.
	ll. 428-497 C. at a loss what to do. Her compromise.
St. 52-64 P. telling C. how he came to know T.'s love for her.	ll. 498-588 Do.
St. 65-68 P. taking leave.	ll. 589-596 Do.
	ll. 597-651 C. seeing T. pass her house, and feeling love for T. begin to take form in her heart.
St. 69-78 C. thinking back and forth. Thinking of her own youth and T.'s beauty and fame. Beginning to love him.	ll. 652-931 C. thinking back and forth. Thinking of her own youth and beauty and her free status. Her niece's song of love. Song of nightingale, and dream.

St. 79-83 T. passing under C.'s window, where she stands and notifies him of her love.	
St. 84-107 At P.'s suggestion, T. writing a letter. Full context of his letter.	ll. 932-1092 At P.'s suggestion, T. writing a letter.
St. 108-127 P. going to C. and handing her T.'s letter, which she reads. C. writing an answer after much persuasion. Full context of her answer.	ll. 1093-1246 P. going to C., and handing her T.'s letter, which she reads. C. writing an answer after much persuasion.
	ll. 1247-1302 P. arranging so that T. passes under her window.
St. 128-132 Both exchanging letters but making no progress in love. T. growing uneasy.	ll. 1303-1393 Do.
St. 133-143 C. telling P. that on the night of the fête she will meet T. in her chamber and be T's.	
	ll. 1394-1757 Dinner party held by P.'s clever arrangement in Deiphobus' palace, to where both T. and C. are invited. T. feigning sickness and retiring to a chamber. C., ignorant of

	the plot, being led to the chamber by P.
	Bk. III, ll. 1-49 Prohemium.
	ll. 50-217 In P.'s presence T. pledging his service to C., who accepts it. C. leaving the palace.
Canto 3, st. 1-20 P. pledging T. to secrecy in order to protect her reputation. T. assuring him.	ll. 218-420 P. asking T. to keep everything secret in order to protect her reputation, and promising further service. T. assuring him. P. leaving the palace.
	ll. 421-546 For some time both keeping their love platonic.
	ll. 547-616 P.'s plan to bring the lovers together. P. inviting C. to dinner at his house. C. coming, unaware of his plan.
	ll. 617-693 Sudden rain. C. compelled to stay for the night in P.'s house.
St. 21-23 C. asking T. to come to her house at night.	
	ll. 694-952 P. leading T. into C.'s chamber under a false pretext.

	ll. 953-1127 Lovers' small trouble.
St. 24-27 T. stealing into C.'s chamber.	ll. 1128-1582 P. leaving.
St. 28-52 Love's joy. Parting in the morning. (dawn song)	Love's joy. Parting in the morning. (dawn song) P. coming in the morning to talk with C.
St. 53-63 P. calling on T., who thanks him.	ll. 1583-1666 Do.
St. 64-89 The lovers meeting again.	
St. 90-94 T. distinguishing himself as a warrior. T.'s song of love.	ll. 1667-1820 The lovers meeting several times. Do. Do.
	Bk. IV, ll. 1-28 Prohemium.
Canto 4, st. 1-2 Calchas asking King Priam to exchange C. for Antenor, and getting permission.	ll. 29-140 Do.
St. 13-41 Trojans agreeing with the exchange. T., knowing this, swooning.	ll. 141-343 Trojans agreeing with the exchange. T. not daring to do anything lest it should betray their love. His outcry against Fortune.

St. 42-77 P. trying to comfort T. His suggestion of kidnapping C. T.'s refusal.	ll. 344-658 Do.
St. 78-86 Trojan ladies gathering in C.'s house on hearing the news. C.'s indifference to their chat.	ll. 659-730 Do.
St. 87-94 C.'s grief.	ll. 731-805 Do.
St. 95-108 P.'s coming and arranging for the lovers' meeting at night.	ll. 806-945 Do.
	ll. 946-1085 Troilus' discourse on predestination.
St. 109-167 Their meeting at night. C.'s plan to return in ten days.	ll. 1086-1701 Do.
Canto 5, st. 1-10 Diomede coming to take C. T. coming to see her off.	Bk. V, ll. 1-71 Do.
	ll. 71-196 Diomede offering C. his service.
St. 11-39 Exchange with Antenor. T.'s parting words. His grief and P.'s consolation.	ll. 197-427 Do.

St. 40–49 T. and P. going to Sarpedon's where they stay for five days. Still no consolation for T.	ll. 428–504 Do. Staying for a week.
St. 50–71 T.'s lament before C.'s now empty house. Dear memorise of C.	ll. 505–686 Do. *Canticus Troili.*
Canto 6, st. 1–8 C. unsuccessful in her plan.	ll. 687–770 Do.
	ll. 771–840 Description of C. and Diomede.
St. 9–34 Diomede courting.	ll. 841–1015 Do.
	ll. 1016–1099 C. false to T. The love token given by C. to D.
Canto 7, st. 1–20 On the 10th evening, T. waiting for C. but in vain.	ll. 1100–1225 Do.
St. 21–22 Hector and other brothers worrying for T.'s health.	ll. 1226–1232 Do.
St. 23–24 T.'s dream of C.	ll. 1233–1309 Do.
	ll . 1310–1422 T.'s letter.
	ll. 1423–1435 C.'s answer.

St. 25-32 T.'s interpretation of the dream.	ll. 1436-1533 Cassandra's interpretation of the dream. T.'s anger and denial.
St. 33-48 T. trying to commit suicide. Stopped by P.	
St. 49-77 T.'s letter to C.	
St. 78-83 Urged by Deifebo to war.	
	ll. 1534-1582 Troy losing the battle. Death of Hector.
St. 84-106 Cassandra insinuating about T.'s love of C. T.'s denial and anger.	
Canto 8, st. 1-7 C.'s answer.	ll. 1583-1645 C.'s second letter.
St. 8-24 The incident of the coat.	ll. 1646-1750 Do.
	ll. 1751-1806 T.'s desperate fight of revenge. Chaucer's own comment.
St. 25-27 T.'s death.	ll. 1807-1820 T.'s death.
	ll. 1821-1834 His soul's flight to heaven.

St. 28-33 Lesson to young people.	ll. 1835-1869 Prayer.
Canto 9 Epilogue. Address to Maria d'Aquino.	

As may be clear even from such a simple comparison as given above,[16] Chaucer makes a great innovation in the story so that the whole story revolves around the central theme, e. g. the mutability of Fortune, the vainness of both joy and agony in this life, and the all-pervading hand of providence as suggested by Boethius.[17] He did that through introducing new elements into the characters of the three main persons; and we are going to see in detail his characterization, but mainly in Criseyde.

Benoît's Briseida in his *Le Roman de Troie* is beset by the disadvantage of appearing on the stage after the fourth act, in other words, the story begins with her parting from Troilus, the main interest being laid on how Diomede comes to win her, how she falls faithless, and how she

16. The table is made with a view of giving an idea of how Chaucer changed the arrangement of events from Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*, as to his indebtedness to Boccaccio in his lines Skeat gives the following list,

Total of lines in *Troilus*	8239
Adapted from the *Filosrato* (2730 lines, condensed into)	2583
Balance due to Chaucer	5656

17. Cf. In α MS., Phillips 8250, which shows greatest indebtedness to Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* and so undoubtedly the earliest manuscript, there are lacking Troilus' song of love (III, 1744-71), his soliloquy on Free Will (IV. 953-1085) and the account of death. Yet this does not back Prof. Root's contention that the poem was published before Chaucer had finished his work. On the other hand, it is impossible that the poem was published without at least the first two passages which from the central theme and are alluded to elsewhere, the only explanation being to attribute it to scribal error. (Aage Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition*, *op. cit.*, p. 169ff.)

regrets being false to Troilus amid the general resentment of the Greek women.

Being thus deprived of the most beautiful part of her emotion—her love of Troilus, which Chaucer tells so sweetly —she becomes only an example of faithlessness that a medieval homily takes up for reproof. Where the brightest part of her life should cast a lot of light on her character, Benoît mentions nothing except her personal beauty.

> "Briseida was graceful; she was not small, but yet not very tall. She was more beautiful and more fair and more white than a lily or than snow on the branch; but her brows were joined, which a little misbecame her. She had very beautiful eyes and was very charming in speech. She was very pleasant in manner and sober in bearing...."[18]

This traditional description of her medium height and her joined brows Chaucer follows, and adds some lines of his own invention.

> Criseyde mene was of hire stature,
> Therto of shap, of face, and ek of cheere,
> Ther myghte ben no fairer creature.
> .....
> And, save hire browes joyneden yfere,
> Ther nas no lak, in aught I kan espien.[19]
> (Bk. V, l. 806 ff.)

And he arouses some contradiction (undoubtedly not deliberate on his side) through his effort to follow at the same time Boccaccio's portrayal of Criseis as a tall Latin beauty. Boccaccio says,

> This Criseis was tall—of stately height
> Where to her members were proportioned well.

18. R. K. Gordon, *op. cit.*, "Benoît de Sainte-Maure" p. 5.

19. Criseyde's joined brows are mentioned by Dares, Joseph, Benoît, and Guido, but only the last two regard the trait as a *lak*. (Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 947)

(*Il Filostrato*, Canto I, st. 27)

Which Chaucer had in mind when he wrote,

> She nas nat with the leste of hire stature,
> But alle hire lymes so wel answerynge
> Weren to wommanhod,...(Bk. I, l. 281 ff.)

Benoît supplants the tender description of Troilus' courtship and Criseyde's surrender in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* with an account of her humiliation in the Greek camp because of the scandal, thus giving very high stress to her shame.

> "Often now she heard herself spoken of; the damsels made great mock of her. They hated her deeply and wished her much ill; they loved her not as they had been wont to do. She had done shame to them all. That would always be a reproach unto her."[20]

This Chaucer wholly ommits, because his intention is not to put shame on Criseyde as a wanton woman. But Benoît's *Le Roman de Troie* is at most a primitive attempt to bring the three unrelated persons in Dares into a link which ties them all in a semblance of romantic tragedy.

Comparison with Boccaccio's Criseis will help us more in finding Chaucer's conception of Criseyde.

Boccaccio's Criseis has its prototype in his mistress Maria d'Aquino, a voluptuous beauty of Latin stock who likes flirtation and is easily won, whereas Criseyde is a woman of a meditative type, hard to win. On first receiving the letter from Troilus, both begin to think of their own youth and beauty which will be simply wasted unless they accept love, but they think of it in different ways. Criseis thinks,

> "Young am I yet, noble and blithe and fair,
> Widowed indeed, but rich and still admired,—
> Ney even loved,—childless and free as air;

20. Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

May I not then by love again be fired?
(Canto 2, st. 69)

As furtive water gives a sweeter taste
Than wine that's drunk too copiously, to one,
So is love's joy, that hides long unembraced
By any husband, the sweeter felt when won.
'Tis meet then thou, sans proving thee less chaste,
Receive this prince so sweet to look upon,
Whom God hath yielded thee by sov'reign grace,
And to his ardent love grant him a fairer place."
(Canto 2, st. 74)

Her sensuality is apparent. She does think of her own fame which will perish if her affair with Troilo is made known. But such consideration occurs to her only once, to be swiftly overcome by her amorous thought about the gallant knight of royal blood. Thus she intimates to Troilus her feeling by putting her right hand over her breast and looking at him with a sincere look when the latter rides past her window (Canto 2, st. 82), and it is she who makes the first move toward physical union—by telling him through Pandarus when to steal into her house and where to hide himself until the proper time comes (Canto 3). She is the kind of Italian belle to whom a "passing knave who at my door will stare...." (Canto 2, st. 39) and an adventure or two is no uncommon experience. And the logical conclusion that can be drawn from all this is that it is no wonder that Criseis should turn false to Troilo once she is separated from him by circumstance. Certainly the woman who yields to Troilo with so little resistance will fall for Diomede with as little resistance.[21] That is what Boccaccio was afraid of when he thought of his young and beautiful Maria during his absence.

21. Cf. Bid him (Troilo) be sage—and, when the time draws nigh, /I'll do whatever will his pleasure satisfy. (Canto 2, st. 140)

Quite different is Criseyde. In this concern Legouis suggests,

> "Chaucer cannot understand the southerner's conception of life, in which love is exalted and woman despised."[22]

If love should be beautiful, it need be sincere on both sides. Chaucer's Criseyde never fails to be sincere, innocent, and virtuous. Again and again she resists her own feeling, wavering between her natural coyness and her sympathy toward Troilus who, her uncle says, will simply wane if she rejects his love. There occurs in her mind the thought of her own youth and her possibility of love, which is swiftly replaced by the fear of love's wretchedness. (Bk. II, l. 666 ff.) Like Criseis, she is afraid to lose the liberty she now enjoys by yielding to him.

> ..."Alas! syn I am free,
> Sholde I now love, and put in jupartie
> My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee?"
> (Bk. II, l. 771 ff.)

Chaucer here introduces three things to conquer her prudence with love. (1) Song of her cousin Antigone in praise of love. (2) Song of nightingale, "...a lay / Of love, that made hire herte fressh and gay." (Bk. II, 11. 921-2), which further leads to (3) her dream of a white eagle plucking out her heart and putting his own in its place without causing her any pain.

Again, the whole event of the palace, where Criseyde is brought to Troilus' chamber and exchanges words of love for the first time, and the manner in which Criseyde is led to meet Troilus in Pandarus' house by the clever devices of Pandarus, are Chaucer's, although Prof. Young points some notable resemblances—the concealment of the lover by a go-between, ushering him on a pretext of jeal-

22. Legouis, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

ousy, use of rings and such—between the *Troilus* and Boccaccio's *Filocolo*. All these devices are used to show that Criseyde yields only because of the lover's fervent courtship and the clever plotting of Pandarus, since, whatever her love may be, her sense of virtue and her shyness can never get the better of her love but for the external temptation,—in this case in the form of Pandarus. Thus in sharp contrast to Criseis' elementary passion, Criseyde's character stands out as charmingly subtle and reserved. Kittredge in his *Chaucer and His Poetry* says,

> "Cressida is marvellously subtilized, baffling alike to us and to herself. Quite as amorous as her prototype, she is of a finer nature, and has depths of tender affection that no Griseida could fathom."[23]

This lovely lady Chaucer does not intend as an example of a wanton woman to be held in contempt long after her death. He sympathetically avoids mentioning all such bitter prediction about her posthumous notoriety, as made by Dares. Not to mention her trying position among the Greek women, he says,

> Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde
> Forther than the storye wol devyse.
> Hire name, allas! is punysshed so wide,
> That for hire gilt it oughte ynough suffise.
> And if I myghte excuse hire any wise,
> For she so sory wos for hire untrouthe,
> Iwis, I wolde excuse hire yet for routhe.
> (Bk. V, 11. 1093-1099)

as if he is loath to tell the tale of her betrayal. The following excuse has no parallel in *Il Filostrato* but is hinted by Benoît's *Le Roman de Troie* and Guido's *Historia*.

> And treweliche, as writen wel I fynde,
> That al this thying was seyd of good entente;

23. Kittredge, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

> And that hire herte trewe was and kynde
> Towardes hym, and spak right as she mente,...
> (Bk. IV, 11. 1415–1418)

But once he has set on telling "The double sorwe of Troilus.../ In lovynge, how his adventures fellen/Fro wo to wele, and after out of joie...."[24] he must needs tell.

Criseyde makes repeated requests to her uncle not to let Troilus make advances, though we should refrain from laying too much importance on her prudence, which is largely due to the codes of the courtly love. The following words of Criseyde to Troilus are Chaucer's invention.

> "A kynges sone although ye be, ywys,
> Ye shal namore han sovereignete
> Of me in love, than right in that cas is...."
> (Bk. III, 11. 170–73)

> "Myn honour sauf, I wol wel trewely,
> And in swich frome as he gan now devyse,
> Receyven hym fully to my servyse....
>
> "Bysechyng hym, for Goddes love, that he
> Wolds, in honour of trouthe and gentilesse,
> As I wel mene, eke menen wel to me,
> And myn honour with wit and bisynesse
> Ay kepe...."
> (Bk. III, 11. 159–166)

Previous to this, on first being told by her uncle of Troilus' fervent love, she replies;

> "And here I make a protestacioun,
> That in this proces if ye depper go,
> That certeynly, for no salvacioun
> Of yow, though that yet sterven bothe two,
> Though al the world on o day be my fo...."
> (Bk. II, 11. 484–489)

which also is Chaucer's original, or at least has no parallel in *Il Filostrato*, although some passages regarding her re-

24. *Troilus and Cryseide*, Bk. I, ll. 1–4.

servation of honor appear in Canto 2, st. 121 of the latter. Her answer to Troilus' first letter shows herself as a paragon of virtue.

> ...but holden hym in hande
> She nolde nought, ne make hireselven honde
> In love; but as his suster, hym to plese....
> (Bk. II, 11. 1222-1224)

The code of the courtly love that a knight should serve his lady and protect her honor without even asking for a kiss prevails those passages.[25] She knows that she is her own master, free to do anything she likes, but of such good social standing that she might jeopardize it unless she be very careful about her conduct. And yet she goes to her uncle's house upon his invitation.

> ...she gan to hym to rowne,
> And axed hym if Troilus were there.
> He swor hire nay, for he was nut of towne....
> (Bk. III, ll. 568-570)

Chaucer's comment here is a fine example of his double talk.

> Nought list myn auctour fully to declare
> What that she thoughte whan he seyde so,
> That Troilus was out of towne yfare,
> As if he seyde therof soth or no;
> But that, withowten await, with hym to go,
> She graunted hym,... (Bk. III, 11. 575-580)

She thinks that in all probability Troilus will be there; but since love now is getting better of her sense of virtue, she of her own accord steps into the trap her uncle sets for her. She is not forced but tempted.

This lady, fair, noble, intelligent, and prudent, turns unfaithful to Troilus. Chaucer's description of all these

25. Courtly love, however, was not after all platonic. Cf. H. O. Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind*, vol. I, chap. XXIV.

virtues of hers and her love of Troilus is sweet and glorious, even to the point of putting us at a loss to find the reason why she betrays him. Legouis differs from Kittredge when Legouis makes comment that Criseyde's betrayal seems incongruous; that her purity, maiden-like innocence and candour make her later conduct inexplicable,[26] while the sensuousness of Boccaccio's Criseis, who may change her lover as many times as she likes, snugly fits into her unfaithful act. Legouis, however, overlooks two important keywords: Fortune, and Criseyde's impressiveness; the whole story is the story of Fortune, which in Chaucerian theology serves under destiny, which in turn serves under Providence, one and absolute power. The story tells how Fortune makes prey not only of Troilus but of Criseyde, and how each of the three main characters responds to Fortune.

However, prior to the discussion of Fortune we see one weakness in Criseyde's character. We have seen how different Criseyde and Criseis are. We see that the motive power in both cases of betrayal is different. In the case of Criseis' unfaithful conduct, her own sensuousness has much more power than Fortune has; whereas with Criseyde, Fortune plays a larger part in a different way. It works on one trend—or, let us say, weakness—of her character which, unlike the sensuousness of Criseis, is in itself not a sin or a motive power of such strength as to be able to form one's own fate, but which, when moved by a greater power, can lead one to calamity—I mean her susceptibility to impressions. We have seen how in every case the first move is not taken by Criseyde but by Pandarus, Troilus, or even Diomede, and how she tries to fight against her impulse, is moved again by the suitor's agony,

26. Legouis, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

and resists again, until at last she yields herself.[27]

Shannon, in his *Chaucer and the Roman Poets* holds that the character of Criseyde originated from that of Helen in *Heroides* of Ovid (XV and XVI), to whom Chaucer owes much for the matter and substance of his poems.[28] The similarities he counts for the support of his theory are:

1. Helen is a married woman. Criseyde, a widow. Neither Helen nor Criseyde is blind to the consequences.
2. Both at first pretend that they wish to be let alone.
3. They both insist at first that they would rather protect their here-to-fore unspotted fame.
4. Both say that men's words are said to be false and that women are too credulous; they are not going to be tempted.
5. Both argue that after all they are only human and can not resist love.
6. Both know that if they sin, the fault is their own.
7. Both suggest to their lovers that they had better dissemble their love since there have been rumours about them.
8. Both are inexperienced in love.
9. Helen says she will be defamed in history if she yields to Paris: Criseyde, after her betrayal, says she knows how her shame will be on everybody's tongue thereafter.
10. Helen agrees with Paris' argument that they are united by Fate; Criseyde is moved by Diomede's persuasion that Troy is a doomed city and there is no use returning there.
11. The mental processes of Helen and Criseyde are similar.
12. Helen and Criseyde are both untrue, Helen to her marriage vow and Criseyde to her pledge to Troilus.

Indeed they are similar in the points mentioned above. However, there is one very important difference; their respective conception of love. In Helen's case her love of Paris at once means unfaithfulness to Menelaus. All the long confession of her inner struggle with the thought of sin leads up to her elopement with Paris. She may well

27. Cf. Bk. V, ll. 1067–8 & Bk. II, ll. 1246–74.
28. Edgar Finley Shannon, *Chaucer and the Roman Poets*, p. 158ff.

hesitate before the illicit advances of Paris.[29] Whereas, in the *Troilus*, we are told very little about Criseyde's psychological process when she becomes attached to Diomede, all the emphasis being laid on her dealings with Troilus. Her affair with Troilus is never haunted by the thought of sin, and if she halts and is secretive, it is only out of her maidenly (a queer epithet for a widow, yet it is true.) coyness and codes of the courtly love. Her sin begins only when she turns untrue to Troilus. But the part into which Chaucer put his main force and imagination is not that of her betrayal but of her sweet character, her and Troilus'

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29. Cf. Ovid, *Heroides and Amores*, (The Loeb Classical Library), ed. & tr. by Grant Showerman.

Heroides, XVII. Helene Paridi (Helen to Paris).

ego nescia rerum
difficilem culpae suspicor esse viam. (ll. 145-6)

(I, ignorant of the world, dream that the path of guilt is hard).

ipse mihi quotiens iratus "adultera!" dices,
oblitus nostro crimen inesse tuum!
delicti fies idem reprehensor et auctor. (ll. 217-219)

(You yourself, how often in anger will you say to me: "Adulteress!" forgetful that your own reproach is linked with mine! You will be at the same time the censor and the author of my fault.)

The epistle form to which Ovid resorts for telling the story of Helen and Paris sets Helen in disadvantage: Helen looks like a shamelessly outspoken woman in her letter to Paris, though there is the gap of a thousand and three hundred years between Ovid's time and Chaucer's.

Munera tanta xuidem promittit epistula dives
ut possint ipsas illa movere deas;
sed si iam vellem fines transire pudoris,
tu melior culpae causa futurus eras. (ll. 66-68)

(Your letter, to be sure, promises gifts so great they could move the goddesses themselves; but, were I willing to overstep the limit of my honour, yourself would have been a better cause of fault.)

...et tu sine coniuge dormis,
inque vicem tua me, te mea forma forma capit;...(ll. 179-180)

(You are without companion for your sleep, and your beauty takes me, and mine in turn you.)

joy in love, sorrow in parting, and the hero's lament.

Then the question arises, "Why all the complexity about keeping it secret?" Medieval society, in which Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde seem to have lived, held the life of chastity recommendable for a widow, yet it did not prohibit her from marrying again.[30] The Wife of Bath

> Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve,
> Withouten oother compaignye in youthe,—
> (Gen Prol, ll. 460-1)

Criseyde, in such high social position as to be invited to dinner at Deiphebus' palace, will be in no great difficulty in marrying into the Trojan royal family, if it is her wish. The answer to this is the idea of medieval courtly love, which separated love and marriage on the basis that in the former a knight serves his lady with all the respect and ardor expected of a true knight but in marriage a woman is not an object of love.[31] Criseyde declares her sovereignty in the passage once quoted;

> "A kynges sone although ye be, ywys,
> Ye shal namore han sovereignete
> Of me in love, than right in that cas is...."
> (Bk. III, 11. 170-2)

which reminds us of the tale of the Wife of Bath about all women wishing to keep their sovereignty in their married lives. The medieval idea that a knight should serve his lady with the same ardor and piety with which he worshipped the Virgin Mary had given rise to some of the terms which are definitely religious but are used to denote love between man and woman. For exam-

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30. G. C. Crump & E. F. Jacob, *The Legacy of the Middle Ages*, ed.

31. Prof. Young, in his *Aspect of the Story of Troilus and Criseyde*: (*Studies in Language and Literature*, No. 2, 1918) gives a minute explanation about Criseyde as a widow and Criseyde as an eligible object of the courtly love. Here I will quote those passages that have direct bearing with the topic under discussion.

ple, Criseyde says,

> "Thow shalt be saved by thi *feyth*, in trouthe."
> (Bk. II, l. 1503)

"feyth" here meaning Troilus' love. Other instances are:

> "Here may men seen that *mercy* passeth right...."
> (Bk. III, l. 1282)
>
> Yet Pitee, thurgh his stronge gentel myght,
> Forgaf, and made *Mercy* passen ryght....
> (LGW. Pr., ll. 161-2)
>
> For gentil *mercy* oghte to passen right.
> (Kn T., l. 3089)[32]

(This, however, did not hinder the lovers from making physical union, provided it is kept secretly.)

In *Flos amoris* or *Ars amatoria* written not far from the year 1200, the writer, Andrew the Chaplain, sets the thirty-one codes of courtly love, in which are included the following codes:[33]

> (2) Who does not conceal, cannot love.
> (13) Love when published rarely endures.

Concealment being thus the primary requirement of the courtly love, Criseyde naturally seeks secrecy although, unlike the case of Helen, her emotions are never harried by any thought of sin. Had Chaucer given us full account of her affair with Diomede, it might be something like Helen's trend of thought in her affair with Paris; but as it is, Chaucer skips it, leaving us only with the knowledge of the sweetness and helplessness of this 'sely womman.' Even after her misconduct Chaucer tries to arouse our sympathy by revealing the inner thought of this erring woman.

> But trewely, the storie telleth us,
> Ther made nevere woman moore wo

32. Italics by the present writer.
33. Taylor, *op. cit.*, vol. I. p. 592. Cf. W. G. Dodd, *Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower*, p. 6.

Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus.
(Bk. V. ll. 1051-3, Source: *Roman de Troie*)
"Al be I nat the first that dide amys,
What helpeth that to don my blame awey?
(ll. 1067-68. Chaucer's invention)
But syn I se ther is no bettre way,
And that to late is now for me to rewe,
To Diomede algate I wol be trewe.
(ll. 1069-71. Chaucer's invention)
And with that word she brast anon to wepe.
(Bk. V, l. 1078. No parallel in *Il Filostrato*. Suggested by *Roman de Troie*)

And here is another difference from Boccaccio's Criseis, who never repents. Even the resolution of Briseida in *Le Roman de Troie* to keep faithful to Diomede is motivated by entirely different psychology.

> My heart would never have thought of wavering or changing, but in this place I was without counsel and without a friend and without a loyal champion....Though I have wrought folly, I have won the game. I shall have joy and gladness, even as my heart was in great sorrow ....If all the world is happy and my heart sad and troubled, it profits me nothing.[34]

In sharp contrast to the self-justifying words of this unrepenting woman stands the childish avowal of Criseyde: "I have erred once, but will never again. I will be faithful to Diomede," which is foolish yet pathetic. This kind of woman errs after all her thinking back and forth since her weak will can not follow reason. Meaning well, wanting no man an evil, she brings tragedy on men and repentance comes too late.

34. Gordon, *op. cit.*, "Le Romand de Troie," p. 20.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF FORTUNE IN THE *TROILUS*

Like the thread that linkes together a number of pearls, the figure of Fortune as an agent of Destiny runs through this story of love and sorrow. Even before sending his first love letter to Criseyde, Troilus admits man's helplessness when Fortune is against him, saying,

> Ful hard were it to helpen in this cas,
> For wel fynde I that Fortune is my fo;
> (Bk. I, ll. 836-7. No parallel in Boccaccio)

which is followed by Pandarus' discussion in her defiance. Immediately after the opening lines we are told that Fortune presides over every turn of things in the battle field.

> The thynges fellen, as ther don of werre,
> Bitwixen hem of Troie and Grekes ofte;
> (Bk. I, ll. 134-5. No parallel in Boccaccio)

The passage together with the later prophecy by Diomede that Troy is a doomed city, sets the whole tone of the story. The numerous allusions to Fortune can be, I think, with advantage grouped into the following items.

1. The heavy rain on the night Criseyde is invited to dinner at Pandarus' is caused by Fortune planning the conjunction of the crescent Moon, Saturn, and Jupiter in the Cancer.

> But O Fortune, executrice of wyrdes,
> O influences of thise hevenes hye!
> (Bk. III, ll. 617-8)

2. Once the hero and the heroine are united, Fortune offers them several more opportunities.

> Soon after this, for that Fortune it wolde,
> Icomen was the the blisful tyme swete
> That Troilus was warned that he soolde,

Ther he was erst Criseyde his lady mete;
(Bk. III, 11. 1667–70)
And many a nyght they wroughte in this manere,
And thus Fortune a tyme ledde in joie
Criseyde, and ek this kynges sone of Troie.
(Bk. III, ll. 1713–5)

3. Troilus, at the news of Criseyde's being sent to the Greek camp, points out that the calamity is the work of Fortune. This is where Chaucer borrows most from Boethian theory, but of this we will see later.

4. In Criseyde's absence, Troilus often imagines her back, only to awake to the realization of her absence, for Fortune has doomed that he should suffer.

But weylaway, al this nas but a maze.
Fortune his howve entended bet to glaze!
(Bk. V, ll. 468–9)

5. Troilus and Pandarus wait in vain for Criseyde's return, since Fortune wants to make fools of them.

...but longe may they seche
Er that they fynde that they after gape.
Fortune hem bothe thenketh for to jape!
(Bk. V, ll. 1132–34)

6. Cassandra refers to her brother Troilus' tragedy as being the work of Fortune, as have been the cases of ancient kings.

...how that Fortune overthrowe
Hath lordes olde;...
(Bk. V, l. 1460–1)

7. Fortune has doomed the City of Troy.

Fortune, which that permutacioun
Of thynges hath, as it is hire comitted
Thorugh purveyaunce and disposicioun
Of heighe Jove,...
.....
Gan pulle awey the fetheres brighte of Troie
Fro day to day, til they ben bare of joie.
(Bk. V, l. 1541 ff.)

8. All the travail of Troilus will not avail since Fortune has set his course wrong.

> Gret was the sorwe and pleynte of Troilus;
> But forth hire cours Fortune ay gan to holde.
> (Bk. V, ll. 1744-5)
> But natheles, Fortune it naught ne wolde,
> Of oothers hond that eyther deyen sholde.
> (Bk. V, ll. 1763-4)

Parallelism of part of Troilus' complaint about Fortune in 3 and the first half of 7 in the above-mentioned division to Canto 4, st. 25 and Canto 8, st. 25 of *Il Filostrato* respectively does not contradict conclusion that Chaucer gives much more important part to Fortune than Boccaccio, throwing new light on her function.

THE THREE TYPES OF REACTION TO FORTUNE

Since Chaucer intends the story to revolve around the theme of Fortune, the character delineation of the three main persons in the story is made so that they represent three different types of reaction against her power, though, of course, each character is really alive with individuality. The theme is just not how misfortune falls on happy lovers. It is how Fortune makes a prey of one of them, taking advantage of her weak character, while the other makes a vain struggle to fight her.

1. Criseyde

We have seen through the analysis of Criseyde's character that the only weak point in her character is tender-heartedness, a truly feminine trait which in itself is no vice at all, yet which makes her yield to Diomede almost against her will.

As is customary with this type of character, Criseyde is blind to the power of Fortune except at the very end where she expresses her wish that everything will pass,

however sad or ignoble it may be.

> "But al shal passe; and thus take I my leve."
> (Bk. V, l. 1085. Chaucer's invention)

From the time she is notified by the Trojan authority of her exchange with Antenor to the time of her departure, her spirit is bolstered up by the false belief that she will be able to work on the avarice of her father and talk him into sending her back. Not agreeing with Troilus' suggestion of elopement because of fear of publicity, she makes a minute plan as to what to do once she is in the Greek camp—a fact that, beside being pathetic, proves her inability to see the real situation,

> Have here another wey, if it so be
> That al this thyng ne may yow nat suffise.
> My fader, as ye knowen wel, parde....
> (Bk. IV, l. 1366 ff. No parallel in Boccaccio)

The inference of these passages, I believe, is that she is ignorant of what Fortune is setting on her. Kittredge says,

> "This effet of complex unity in Cressida's character is heightened, with extraordinary subtlety, by a trait which I almost fear to touch, lest I blur its delicate clearness with a critic's clumsy finger. It is the trait of religious skepticism. Her father is Apollo's priest, but she has scant reverence for his sacred office, and little faith in the revelations that the deity vouchsafes. Oracles, she protests, are ambiguous always; the gods speak ever in crafty double meanings, telling twenty lies for one truth. Perhaps, indeed, there are no gods at all, save those that shape themselves in the dark corners of man's timid soul. "Primus in orbe does fecit timor."
>
> "Eke drede fond first goddes, I suppose."
>
> I am very anxious not to be misunderstood. This is doubt, not dogma. Cressida is fighting with

> fate, not laying down the law. Torn from her lover by external forces that she cannot resist, she swears to return, in vows that "shake the throned gods," but it is not to the gods that she trusts in her exigency. A woman's wit is to be wiser than the powers that govern the world."[35]

However, Criseyde is not "fighting with fate," since the prerequisite of fighting is the consciousness of the opponent (which in this case is Fate). Criseyde is utterly ignorant of her frailty of will and the existence of Fate, which is to Chaucer almost the same with Fortune. Her allusion to the dubious power of gods referred to by Kittredge concerns only such classical gods as Apollo and other deities, which have nothing to do with Fortune as Chaucer conceived it. Ignorant of Fate, she tries to comfort herself with the false prospect of rosy future.

> "Ye sen that every day ek more and more,
> Men trete of pees; and it supposid is
> That men the queene the Eleyne shal restore....
> (Bk. IV, ll. 1345–8)

In the Greek camp it dawns on her only too late that her tragedy is caused by her failure to see through future,

> "To late is now to speke of that matere.
> Prudence, allas, oon of thyne eyen thre
> Me lakken alwey, er that I come here!
> On tyme ypassed wel remembred me,
> And presen tyme ek koud ich wel ise,
> But future tyme, er I was in the snare,
> Koude I not sen; that causeth now my care."
> (Bk. V, ll. 743–9. Chaucer's invention)

the allusion being to Purg. XXIX (Dante) where Prudence is described as having three eyes with which to see through past, present, and future. Soon she resolves to escape the Greek camp by night. However, nothing being

35. Kittredge, *op. cit.*, pp. 135–6.

so far from her nature as strong will, she also fails to carry this into effect.

> But God it wot, er fully monthes two,
> She was ful fer fro that entencioun!
> (Bk. V, ll. 766–7)

From her feeble effort to make plans whereby to return to Troy, and the fact that there is no mention of Fortune or Fate in her words, it is clear that she can not see who is behind all the unfortunate events.

2. Pandarus

Pandarus furnishes an illustration of how a man of worldly knowledge thinks of Fortune. The young and buoyant nobleman in *Il Filostrato* undergoes a great transformation in the creative hands of Chaucer, emerging as an old man of the world whose greatest pastime is to give advices to the young people about love yet who is so luckless in his own love that, when asked "How ferforth be ye put in loves daunce?" (Bk. II, l. 1106) by Criseyde, he has to answer, "I hoppe alwey byhynde!" (l. 1107)

Apart from the charm of his frequent allusion to the English proverbs (the first sign of Chaucer's interest in things English) his chief role in the tale is to give realistic and comic relief to this otherwise traditional romance. We are delighted by such realistic lines as,

> With that she gan hire eighen down to caste,
> *And Pandarus to coghe gan a lite,*[36]
> (Bk. II. ll. 253–4)

where we see realism face to face with romanticism; or by Chaucer's sly humour in those lines where Pandarus answers to love-sick Troilus,

> He(T.) seyde, "Frend, shal I now wepe or synge?"
> Quod Pandarus, "Ly stylle, and lat me slepe,"
> (Bk. II, ll. 952–3)

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36. Italics by the present writer.

or by the aptness of his question when he is speaking of the letter sent by Oenone to Paris,

> "I woot wel that it freth thus be me
> As to thi brother....
> (Bk. I, ll. 652–3)

Since Paris is Troilus' brother no remarks are more affective to give reality and local color to the conversation than the allusion.

In spite of his advice to Troilus that the latter should take another woman after Criseyde's departure, I think Pandarus is at heart noble. He never tires of serving his lady,

> "What? shold he therfore fallen in dispayr,
> .....
> Or slen hymself, al be his lady fair?
> Nay, nay, but nvere in oon he fressh and grene
> To serve and love his deere hertes queene,..."
> (Bk. I, ll. 813ff. Chaucer's invention)

He really loves Troilus, as the poet himself comments,

> Save Troilus, no man he loved so. (Bk. 11, 1. 1404)

No coward can utter the following words to his friend when he advises his friend to elope, and leave Pandarus to take the consequences,

> Lat nat this wrecced wo thyn herte gnawe,
> But manly sette the world on six and sevene;
> And if thow deye a martyr, go to hevene!
>
> "I wol myself ben with the at this dede,
> Theigh ich and al my kyn, upon a stownde,
> Shulle in a strete as dogges liggen dede,
> Thorugh-girt with many a wid and blody wownde,
> (Bk. IV, ll. 621–7)

which he really means.[37]

37. Legouis says Pandarus is "repulsive" and is "a corrupter of virtue." (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 128) The epithets are more suitable for Shakespeare's Pandarus than Chaucer's. The inquiry he makes before being instrumental to their union as to whether Troilus' intention is honorable (Bk.

With this kind of man, pure at heart but full of worldly knowledge, tragedy loses its deeper meaning, for he avoids seeing what is sad and grievous, and compromises partly through his inability for deep thinking. He is so tender-hearted that he cannot stand seeing other people grieve. If there is a man grieving, he says, "Hey: Take it easy, Bud. This is not so sad as you think. This will pass soon, and meanwhile, why don't you seek joy elsewhere?" Fortune is the favorite topic of discussion between Troilus and Pandarus. His general contention is that since things shift with the turn of Fortune's wheel, no sorrow can last long. There is no wind that blows no man good. In this contention he takes the part of Fortune who, in Boethius' *Consolation*, speaks to the same effect in her own defence against the blame laid on her fickleness.[38] Pandarus says to Troilus,

> "Woost thow nat wel that Fortune is comune
> To everi manere wight in som degree?
> And yet thow hast this comfort, lo, parde,
> That, as hire joies moten overgon,
> So mote hire sorwes passen everechon.
>
> "For if hire whiel stynte any thyng to torne,
> Than cessed she Fortune anon to be.

III, l. 246 ff.) is proof enough. As tot he appropriateness of such a figure in a poem conforming to the spirit and precepts of courtly love, Dood and Young give affirmative replies, while Kittredge and Lawrence answer in the negative.

38. That Chaucer intends Pandarus to take the part of Fortune in the discourse on her mutability, or even act in her role is clear from the fact that Pandarus addresses Troilus in the same terms used by Fortune in her address to Boethius. Compare Bk. I, ll. 730–1.

> "What! slombrestow as in a litargie?
> Or artow like an asse to the harpe.... ?"

to the *Consolation*, Bk. I, pr. ii, "...he is fallen into a litargye, which that is a comune seknesse to hertes that been desceyved," and Bk. I, pr. iv, "Felistow ... thise thynges, and entren thei aught in thy corage? Artow like an asse to the harpe?"

Now, sith hire whiel by no way may sojourne,
What woostow if hire mutablite
Right as thyselven list, wol don by the,
Or that she be naught fer fro thyn helpynge?
Paraunter thow hast cause for to wynge."
(Bk. I, ll. 843-54)

His view is that the power of Fortune is not absolute but relative, being dependent on the cowardice of her victim.

Thenk ek Fortune, as wel thiselven woost,
Helpeth hardy man to his enprise,
And weyveth wrecches for hire cowardise.
(Bk. IV, ll. 600-2)

His optimism is such that when his unsuccessful courtship has made him a laughing stock at the court, he can reply,

...for any hevynesse,
Hope alwey wel; (Bk. I, ll. 970-1)

although we have to take into consideration the situation in which it is said. He is trying to cheer up Troilus.

He is not unaware of Fortune's power. At the news of the Trojan authorities deciding for the exchange, he says in dismay,

"O mercy, God, who wolde have trowed this?
Who wolde have wend that in so litel a throwe
Fortune oure joie wold han overthrowe?"
(Bk. IV, ll. 383-5)

The next words of his are taken directly from the *Consolation* Bk. II, pr. 2, where Fortune defends her own cause.

"For in this world ther is no creature,
As to my dom, that ever saw ruyne
Straunger than this, thorugh cas or aventure.
But who may al eschue, or al devyne.
Swich is this world! forthi I thus diffyne,
Ne trust no wight to fynden in Fortune
Ay propretee; hire yiftes ben comune."
(Bk. IV, ll. 386-92)

Previous to this, Pandarus advises Troilus not to drink

the joy of love to the full,

> "...but tak it nat a-grief,
> That I shall seyn, be war of this meschief,
> That, there as thow brought art in thy blisse,
> That thow thiself ne cause it nat to misse.
>
> "For of fortunes sharpe adversitee
> The worste kynde of infortune is this
> A man to han ben in prosperitee,
> And it remembren, whan it passed is.
> (Bk. III, ll. 1621-28)

the last four lines being a slightly modified translation of "Nam in omni aduersitate fortunae infelicissimum est genus infortunii, fuisse felicem," in the *Consolation* Bk. II, pr. 4, which also appears in Dante, *Inf.*, V, 121-23, (Paolo and Francesca episode.)

Is Pandarus, then, a sage who sees through life with the serenity that comes from the realization of the vainness of everything in this world, and, who, like Boethius, finds beatitude in cutting himself free from the worldly pleasure? I would not say so. Those words of his about Fortune's gifts being common, the misfortune lasting not very long, and happiness also lasting not very long, come from his common sense rather than profound philosophical conviction. He understands Fortune only in her lower sphere of function, realizing her neither as the purifier of human nature, nor as the executor of providence. That is why he is helpless before grief-stricken Troilus at the final catastrophe. Here the usually talkative Pandarus is surprisingly reticent.

> "My brother deer, I may do the namore."
> (Bk. V, l. 1731)

With this short comment, he takes leave.

3. Troilus

Troilus' change from his prototype Troilo is not great. He is the same gallant knight. There is some change,

however, in that he is more gentlemanly, ever loving Criseyde even after he is convinced of her faithlessness, because to him, the fault lies not in the woman but in Fortune who takes hold of everything; and he is far from accusing her. What is in *Il Filostrato* only a hint about the strong hand of Fortune reigning over mankind and the conventional complaint about her cruelty Chaucer develops into a full discussion of her way with mankind. Troilo does feel the figure of Fate foreshadowing him even at the beginning. And when the real calamity approaches, Troilo's brief meditation over the blow Fortune unreasonably inflicted on him is turned by Troilus into detailed analysis of her ways, of man's impotence against her power and of Predestination. (Bk. IV, l. 260 ff.)

Troilus' complaint can be summarized into the following items:

1. What has he done to deserve such punishment? (Bk. IV, l. 260ff. Same as *Il Filostrato*, Canto 4, st. 30)
2. If envy of the lovers' joy is the cause of Fortune's cruelty, why does she not take Troilus' life, or his father's or his brothers'? (Bk. IV, l. 274 ff.)
3. Discourse on Predestination. (Bk. IV, l. 958 ff.)

Of the three characters in the tale Troilus is the only one to realize the power of Fortune to the full, neither being blind to it as Criseyde is, nor trifling it as Pandarus does. His deep awareness of her cruelty, her unreasonableness, and the existence of Predestination keeps him from putting blame on Criseyde. We know that Chaucer makes him suffer and lament profusely one reason because there is a code of the courtly love, demanding that a knight in love should suffer. There is another code: Never hold the lady-love in scorn or wrath. Troilus does not hold Criseyde in scorn or wrath partly because of this, but more so because he sees through the event and is too wise not to know that the tragedy is not caused by one or

any number of persons but by the ruling hand of Fortune. Thus when at last the undeniable proof of her faithless conduct is given him, he expresses his undying love of Criseyde:

"Ye han me cast; and I ne kan nor may,
For al this world, withinne myn herte fynde
To unloven yow a quarter of a day!"
(Bk. V, ll. 1696–8)

while Troilo says:

"O Criseis mine, where is thy loyalty?
Thy faith? thy love? desire of fervid ray?
.....
"Who will hereafter trust in any vow,
Have faith in Love or woman ever more
Seeing such perjury as I see now?
(Canto 8, st. 12–3)

There is another important difference between Troilo and Troilus. Chaucer pictures Troilus as the character purified and made noble through the agonies he has to suffer. At the very last, when his soul leaves his body and makes the heavenward flight, he attains the full statue; for now he can see the folly of human beings and afford to smile at his own agony and at his erring lady on this earth.

And whan that he was slayn in this manere,
His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
Up to the holughnesse of the eighte spere,
.....
And in hymself he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste;
And dampned al oure werk that folweth so
The blynde lust, the which that may nat laste,
And sholden al oure herth on heven caste.
And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
Ther as Mercurye sorted hym to dwelle.
(Bk. V, l. 1807 ff. Taken from *Teseide*)

Now he is free from the hands of Fate.

(to be continued)

ABBREVIATIONS

CHAUCER'S WORKS

Adam	*Adam Scriveyn*
Anel	*Anelida and Arcite*
Astr	*A Treatise on the Astrolabe*
Bal Compl	*A Balade of Complaint*
BD	*The Book of the Duchess*
Bo	*Boece*
Buk	*Lenvoy de Chaucer ta Bukton*
CkT	*The Cook's Tale*
ClT	*The Clerk's Tale*
Compl d'Am	*Complaynt d'Amours*
CT	*The Canterbury Tales*
CYT	*The Canon's Yeoman's Tale*
Form Age	*The Former Age*
Fort	*Fortune*
FranklT	*The Franklin's Tale*
FrT	*The Friar's Tale*
Gen Prol	*The General Prologue*
Gent	*Gentilesse*
HF	*The House of Fame*
KnT	*The Knight's Tale*
Lady	*A Complaint to his Lady*
LGW	*The Legend of Good Women*
MancT	*The Manciple's Tale*
Mars	*The Complaint of Mars*
Mel	*The Tale of Melibee*
MercB	*Merciles Beaute*
MerchT	*The Merchant's Tale*
MillT	*The Miller's Tale*
MkT	*The Monk's Tale*
MLT	*The Man of Law's Tale*
NPT	*The Nun's Priest's Tale*
PardT	*The Pardoner's Tale*

ParsT	*The Persan's Tale*
PF	*The Parliament of Fowls*
PhysT	*The Physician's Tale*
Pity	*The Complaint unto Pity,*
PrT	*The Prioress's Tale*
Purse	*The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse*
Rrm	*The Romaunt of the Rose*
RvT	*The Reeve's Tale*
Scog	*Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan*
SecNT	*The Second Nun's Tale*
ShipT	*The Shipman's Tale*
SqT	*The Squire's Tale*
Sted	*Lak of Stedfastnesse*
SumT	*The Summoner's Tale*
Thop	*Sir Thopas*
Tr	*Troilus and Criseyde*
Ven	*The Complaint of Venus*
WBT	*The Wife of Bath's Tale*
Wom Nob	*Womanly Noblesse*
Wom Unc	*Against Women Unconstant*