

**DIVINE INTERVENTION OR DEADLY DISEASE?
CHAUCER'S TROILUS AND THE MEDIEVAL TRADITION OF LOVE**

by

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ABSTRACT

Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, written in the fourteenth century, is a tale of two lovers and their doomed romance. This essay aims to discuss their relationship, the influences on the character of Troilus, and how Chaucer came to write his own version of the tale, a story that has been told in numerous versions in the past, one that has ranged from entirely allegorical to realistic, from metaphorical to literal. An analysis of the various texts that preceded Chaucer's poem will be attempted, and an effort to explain how the characters vary by virtue of their station will also be explored. A discussion of the allegorical French writings and the literal Italian writings that contributed strongly to Chaucer's tale are included, and a breakdown of the various texts he knew and borrowed from are used. Chaucer was a prolific writer, a strongly educated man who translated various texts from their original language into Middle English. Such an effort aided in increasing his knowledge of these works, and the result is a series of similarities between his writing and these stories. He alters the traditional story from Benoit and Boccaccio by including a lover, Troilus, who both succumbs to the god of Love and suffers the disease of love. I will show how he took the well-known tale of the doomed Troilus and made it his own, through the contributions of Guillaume de Lorris, Benoit de Saint Maure, and Giovanni Boccaccio. I will demonstrate the changes Chaucer made to the story and how he made the tale his own. Through the imagery of love as a disease, as well as the inclusion of the literal character of Cupid, Chaucer puts his own spin on the age-old tale, giving Troilus and his relationships both more depth and more content than

previous versions have. My thesis focuses on the act of Troilus falling in love, contrasting it with Criseyde's love. Troilus's love is more old-fashioned, while Criseyde's love is more natural and more easily appreciated. Chaucer's Troilus, more dependent on courtly love conventions, is different from the earlier versions of the character because of the influence of Cupid; his love affair with Criseyde is both more romanticized and more realistic, because her side of the love is unaffected by outside forces, while his involves supernatural influence, and together they create a relationship, and a story, unlike any previously told in late medieval England. This contrast allows us to appreciate the decision Chaucer made in following both the old-fashioned and romanticized ideals and a more modernized and realistic form of love.

Chapter 1
A TROILUS PRIMER

Epic battles; a doomed lover in a doomed city; hope won, hope lost; love, betrayal, heartbreak, and death. Chaucer's *Troilus* was not the first time the tale has been told, nor was it the last. Written in the late fourteenth century, *Troilus and Criseyde* is Chaucer's interpretation of the previously-told story of Troilus, the son of King Priam of Troy, and Criseyde, the daughter of a traitor who defects to the Greeks. The tale, set during the Trojan War, involves love, a romantic affair, complicated friendships, betrayal, heartbreak, and the eventual death of Troilus. Chaucer tells us from the beginning that Troilus is doomed to die for his love, but he chooses to tell the story even with the outcome foretold. This tale has been told by others, both before Chaucer and since, but always with differences that make each unique to the author.

Troilus is a prince of Troy, son of Priam and Hecuba, brother of Hector and Paris. He is a young man who is known for his horsemanship and his prowess in the art of the sword. Pandarus speaks highly of him in Book 2, calling Troilus "Ector the secounde" (2.158) and saying that he is one "in whom . . . alle vertu list habounde,/As alle trouthe and all gentillesse,/Wisdom, honour, fredom, and worthinesse" (Riverside 2. 159-61). Pandarus discusses his abilities at length, taking up over six stanzas to tell of his prowess and fearlessness in the face of danger, of how his enemies flee at the

sight of him, and how his sword and shield are strong as his arm. His skills on the battlefield are renowned, and he is well-known in Troy for his strength.

While Troilus is a strong fighter, he is also known as a man who disregards love as being of no importance, and who scorns lovers for their emotions; he is a man of the sword, not of the heart. The story is set in the heart of the Trojan War; Troilus's city is under siege by the Greeks, and every day the Trojans go out to meet the Greeks on the field of battle. Troilus proves his worth as a knight again and again in the war, and it is clear that he is essentially the epitome of masculinity. Chaucer writes, "But Troilus lay tho no lenger down, / But up anon upon his stede bay, / And in the feld he pleyde tho leoun; / Wo was that Grek that with hym mette a-day!" (1.1072-75). Such a description is one of strength and skill, for woe be it on any enemy who crossed his path after Love made Troilus his servant. Love brings out the nobility in a person, even in a prince.

Troilus's eventual love interest is Criseyde, a beautiful widow and the daughter of a man who defected to the Greeks. She is under the protection of Hector, Troilus's brother, securing her safety within the walls of the city. Her uncle, Pandarus, still lives in Troy, and often visits her, as both an advisor and a friend. Criseyde lives a relatively quiet life in her home with her servants, all female, and spends many a long hour in the garden. She does not see Troilus as being anything more than Hector's brother at the beginning of the tale, and does not admit to feelings for him until Pandarus has intervened and convinced her of his worthiness as a knight, a very masculine man, and a hero, all aspects of his personality that attract Criseyde's

attention and make her believe that he is worthy of her attention. She is not a meek woman who will accept the advances of just any man; she desires romance and love, but only from a worthy man, a strong, capable hero who can sweep her off of her feet but also treat her as an equal. She has been reading epics, tales of the past with knights and honor and romance, and she craves the ability to live in that time and experience that type of life, living as an equal with a man who treats her as a lady.

Chaucer's "take" on the tale includes Cupid, the God of Love, who pierces Troilus with a dart, causing him to fall in love with the beautiful Criseyde. Cupid's influence on Troilus is what causes the change from a young man who mocks lovers and the emotions they feel to one who is literally sick with grief at the thought that his feelings might be unrequited. The tale of love begins at the feast of the Palladian, when Troilus is first struck by Love's arrows. He calls lovers "veray fooles, nyce and blynde" (1. 202). It is this exclamation, this line of thought, that puts him in the sight of Cupid, for his punishment is to become just like those lovers he had but so recently mocked. He thinks calling them fools is appropriate, for "And with that word he gan caste up the browe, / Ascaunces, "Loo! Is this naught wisely spoken?" (1. 204-205). He has no shame, no feelings of negativity or remorse for how he feels and how he treats those who have fallen in love. It is because of this that Troilus, a very masculine character, goes from being a young man who is emotionally immature and who is scornful of lovers and the emotions they feel, particularly those who are ill with love and desire for their significant other, to one who is deeply in love with a woman he hardly knows, a woman who is arguably one of the least likely to have attracted his

attention before, and who is certainly not a safe choice for a lover, given that she is a widow and the daughter of a man who betrayed his people and left the city for the opposing forces. He may be mature in the ways of battle and fighting, a respected knight, but when it comes to love he is quite young and inexperienced. Troilus's position as prince means that he should not be fraternizing with the enemy, such as it is, and his social situation just adds to the layers of complications that surround his relationship with Criseyde, specifically their love affair, when it finally is allowed to develop. Troilus and Criseyde fall in love with each other, for him because of the intervention of Cupid and for her because of the intervention of her uncle, Pandarus, and her own feelings towards the idea of a courtly romance.

Although Chaucer's Middle English version of the story of Troilus is the best-known in the English-speaking world, the tale really originated with the twelfth-century French writer Benoit de Sainte Maure, a writer especially interested in the story of Troy and a prominent author in the tradition known as the "roman antique." His *Roman de Troie* presented a brief version of the Troilus and Criseyde story, though Benoit's name for her is Briseida or Briseis. For the sake of this story, she is Briseida. Her character is arguably more real than even Chaucer's Criseyde in that she has flaws that are made evident, particularly a unibrow. While it is a minor detail, it was important enough for Benoit to mention. Chaucer does vaguely reference it late in the story, but Benoit brings it up in the beginning, telling how it is a flaw in her beauty. His Troilus is a very fleshed-out character, one with great disdain for the people around him who fall in love, a great fighter, and one who falls in love with

Briseida with some help from Cupid. Benoit's work is more closely related to Chaucer's in many ways than that of Boccaccio. He has more allegory in his writing, something that Chaucer borrowed from, and his story is more attuned to the romance side of it than Boccaccio's. Neither piece, however, has the extensive consummation scene that Chaucer includes.

Giovanni Boccaccio, an Italian writer, wrote a version of the same tale. In his piece, Criseida, a beautiful widow, is the daughter of a traitor, just as in Chaucer's work. Like Chaucer, Boccaccio's Criseida is saved from danger by Hector. Boccaccio's Troilo falls in love with Criseida at the festival of the Palladium, as with Chaucer, but he does so without the direct intervention of Cupid. Troilo uses Pandaro as a go-between after he realizes that his friend wants to help him. Boccaccio's Troilo bears little resemblance to the character of Amant in *The Romance of the Rose*, and instead appears to be a much more literal person, rather than one that has connections to the allegorical world.

There is oftentimes a comparison made between Chaucer and Boccaccio in their take on the stories, with the idea being that Chaucer's version was much less misogynistic than Boccaccio's. Donald Howard says "what Chaucer *really* did to *Il Filostrato* was everywhere to enhance and vivify, to make each scene and the poem as a whole more dramatic and more extravagant, to make it more pagan, more shocking, but at the same time more moral and more Christian" (Literature and Sexuality, 442). From the way in which their relationship came to be to the effect of Criseyde's forced departure, the changes in various aspects of the story are clearly part of artistic and

authorial liberty. While all have the same basic relationship, the cause of Troilus's affections, the way in which they became involved with one another, and the effect of Criseyde's return to her father, all change the outcome of the story in their own way. Chaucer's writing shows influence from both the romanticized and allegorically-inclined French romances and the more literally-oriented and realistic Italian writings. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun wrote *The Romance of the Rose*, an entirely allegorical piece that outlined the story of Amant, an allegorized Lover, and the love he developed for the Rose, his allegorized lady-love, as brought about by Cupid, the Roman god of Love. Giovanni Boccaccio wrote *Il Filostrato*, a story that, while mentioning the influence of Cupid at least vaguely, relied more heavily on human nature and realism to tell his tale.

Chapter 2

THE ART AND RULES OF COURTLY LOVE

The idea of courtly love was a common one throughout medieval times. Love was not the type we know in modern times, with dating, physical intimacy, a trial and error period that follows some basic set of rules but nothing set in stone. The modern audience usually thinks of courtly love as involving knights in shining armor, damsels and princesses who are courted by those knights, princes whisking princesses off into the sunset on the back of a white horse. The fairytale relationship that we think of is far from logical, but it is certainly something that strongly contrasts the modern relationship and what we consider to be love. Courtly love was the courting that we do not always see today, with rules of behavior, limited levels of intimacy that were permitted, and a set of norms that determined who could say what when and what certain actions and reactions meant. Alfred David said that “Chaucer has made the doctrine of courtly love a part of the polytheism of the people in his ancient world” (David 567), making it much more important than some may think, as it is an integral part of his writing and the world of *Troilus*. David goes on to tell us that “[in *Troilus and Criseyde*] the tenets of courtly love are explored more deeply than by any other poet except Dante, and thus Chaucer’s use of them is no longer an adaptation of an established literary convention but an original reinterpretation” (David 567). It is

impossible, therefore, to say that courtly love is not important in Chaucer's work. It is an integral part of the storyline, and it explains the behaviors of the characters to a certain degree, especially that of Troilus. Alfred David says that Troilus "is, of course, sincerely in love, but his speech, his doing, and his "chere"... must be attributed to custom. At the beginning of his love, Troilus assumes the courtly manner as a sacred obligation" (David 572). Troilus is expected to be a courtly lover; his behaviors are required by social norms and expectations that prevent him from acting in a way that does not befit his station or the situation he finds himself in. It is this side of him, that of the courtly lover, that I focus on.

Courtly love often involved the man courting the woman, coming to her in certain ways, talking to her, bringing her gifts where necessary, and always making sure to behave in such a manner as to avoid insulting her or bringing doubt to the honor of the lady. While there were no real written rules it was a relatively strictly constrained practice, for women always had to worry about their honor and reputation, no matter their feelings towards the men in question, and they had to be careful to conduct themselves in an appropriate fashion, especially while in public. Donald Howard points out that "it is hard to know how much prudery medieval readers felt about secretive sexual conduct between unmarried people. As much as courtly love appeared to encourage adulterous affairs, the church continued to preach chastity" (Literature and Sexuality, 450). He goes on to say that "married ladies were concerned for their reputations – the fear of gossip gave pause even to Boccaccio's lusty heroine" (450). While Criseyde is no longer married, it still leads one to wonder

what the reaction would have been to her behavior. Certainly it is not entirely unheard of to a modern audience, but when the influence of the Church is taken into account, it is difficult to imagine extramarital sex as being an acceptable practice. While the sexual act itself may not have been commonplace or readily accepted by Christians, Howard tells of how “courtly love” allows for such behaviors. He says that “high-born men of the late Middle Ages had mistresses, observed customs of *courtoisie* towards ladies, wrote poems and sang songs about love, and heard or read romances in which love was a major theme” (451-52). He calls courtly love “a social game, a nervous revolt against Christian ascetical precepts, an allegory” (452). He was not alone in his thinking. One medieval writer in particular, Andreas Capellanus, saw the absurdity in the idea of courtly love, also known as refined love.

Andreas Capellanus wrote extensively on the subject of refined love, though his writings were intended to be taken ironically. He wrote of the interactions between men and women of different stations, including amusing script-like dialogues of the expected conversations. If the “rules of courtly love” that Andreas laid out were actually followed, the interaction between Troilus and Criseyde would probably be akin to the seventh dialogue he wrote, in which “a man of the higher nobility speaks with a woman of the simple nobility” (Art 91). The dialogues are fanciful, with language that is heavily skewed toward flowery words and flattery. It does, however, mention the God of Love many times, showing that, while in jest, Cupid still plays a role. In one script, the woman says “Men find it easy enough to get into Love's court, but difficult to stay there, because of the pains that threaten lovers; while to get out is,

because of the desirable acts of love, impossible or nearly so” (71). Amant, the main character of *The Romaunt of the Rose*, feels the pain of Love's influence when he is shot by the five arrows; while the pain of the wounds is tempered by the “precious oynement” (Riverside Romaunt B.1899), there is still discomfort involved, for nothing can be enjoyed as thoroughly if there is not some sort of pain to balance it out.

The extent of the power of Love is shown when the woman says, “for after a lover has really entered into the court of Love he has no will either to do or not to do anything except what Love's table sets before him” (Art 71). Cupid has a very strong grip on the lives of mortals; once he chooses to shoot you with an arrow, it never leaves. Amant knows this, for he says the five arrows “never wole be take away” (B.1910). The ointment is all that is keeping him alive, and he will never be able to escape the power of the five arrows that wounded him. No mortal can resist Cupid's influence, nor can they escape him once they have been compromised.

Andreas did not view love as being something to strive for any more than the clergy did. While he did not say explicitly that love was a disease, he did call it an “inborn suffering” (Art 28) and was vehemently opposed to the idea that it was a wonderful emotion. His writings seem to indicate that he felt that courtly love was too regulated, too formulaic, and that it should not be constrained or forced to fit within a series of norms. Lovers were foolish, scared, and had far too many individual fears to be counted, something that Ovid agreed with, and it was not particularly beneficial for anyone to be in love with another.

Chapter 3

TROILUS AND CRISEYDE VS. TROILUS AND BRISEIDA

Chaucer wrote his version of the story of Troilus and Criseyde after reading many other renditions of the tale. *Le Roman de Troie* is one such version, written by Benoit de Sainte Maure. The French story is quite lengthy and focuses more on the Trojan War than the relationship between the lovers, but it provided an important series of background information and bases for the characters that Chaucer drew up in his romance of love. One of the most striking details of *Le Roman de Troie* and that description of Briseida, Benoit's Criseyde, is her description. She is of medium height, with beautiful pale skin and gorgeous eyes. It does, however, mention a flaw in her appearance, something I find rather strange. Her eyebrows are apparently unbecoming, something that Chaucer does not mention in his version. Criseyde is described as being perfect, a true lady, and to have something as obviously unattractive as a unibrow is highly unlikely.

The description of the characters in this translation of *Le Roman de Troie* is also much more in-depth than in Chaucer's adaptation. Troilus's description in particular is quite lengthy and the narrator nearly waxes eloquent about his virtues and appearance and knightly skills. He appears to be more masculine in Benoit's story, and his actions, at least in the beginning, are more focused on the fighting arts instead

of the loving arts. He does not swoon over Briseida because of the God of Love or anything else. He proves himself in jousting, fights on the field with other knights, and nearly gets killed trying.

The love between Troilus and Briseida is not well-developed in this version. He goes from being a noble fighter who is incredibly handsome to being madly in love with Briseida, with his feelings requited. There is no wooing, no Pandarus-like character to act as a go-between, and no influence from the gods to make this romance happen. It just occurs seemingly randomly.

Another random love interest is that of Diomedes and Briseida. She scarcely leaves the company of Troilus before Diomedes leaps at the chance to flirt with her. Perhaps it is damaged pride. After all, it was Troilus who could not be beaten in the tournament. But perhaps it is just the type of love that all men seek, that perfect love that comes at first sight. He is a virgin who has never felt about anyone else the way he feels about Briseida, and he longs to kiss her and hold her. He jumps on that opportunity as soon as she leaves Troy, even as the tears still stream down her face. At least she is honest with him, telling him that she cannot love him right now. He does not give up, nor does he see the need to back off entirely.

Diomedes seems to be more immature a lover than Chaucer's Troilus. He steals a glove from her and swears that he will serve Love and no one else until Love gives her to him. He insists that she shall be his prize, and he constantly asks her to be with him. He tries to win her favor by taking Troilus's horse in battle, but that backfires dramatically when Briseida chastises him for his actions and says that it is not that of a

knight. Eventually, however, she comes to love him. She is fickle, a quality not really emphasized by Chaucer. The other tale goes into greater detail about the relationship between Briseida and Diomedes, but it also brings in Briseida's guilt over betraying Troilus and her fear that nothing positive will ever be written or sung about her again. She chose Diomedes because she could no longer have Troilus. She admits that she still loves Troilus and had to give him up due to circumstances beyond her control.

In the end, no one seems to achieve what they want. Troilus is beheaded by Achilles and has his body dragged about the battlefield from the tail of the horse. Briseida is mocked and gossiped about for the rest of her life, and Diomedes may or may not have died from his wounds. Regardless, he should at least be happy because he wins Briseida in the end, for what it was worth. He probably never has her in the carnal sense but he wins her love.

Chapter 4

TROILUS FALLS IN LOVE

Now that we have seen the development of the story from Benoit to Boccaccio, and the influence of Andreas's writings on the romance genre, let us take a look at the character of Troilus himself, and how he changes in the various versions of the story. Troilus undergoes many changes throughout Chaucer's story. He starts out in Book 1 as a cynical man, one who does not believe in lovers or in the emotion of love in general. It is possible to construe that he is haughty, cruel, immature and harsh before, given his apparent change at the end of the first book, though there is also the argument that he is always the picture of chivalry and that the description simply means that he is even more chivalrous. He falls in love not by his own accord, but rather at the hand of the god of Love, who strikes him down for his rash words in the beginning of the first book, when he is described as having "scorned hem that Loves peynes dryen" (Riverside Troilus 1.304). He scorns Love and Love retaliates. Troilus is "ful unwar that Love hadde his dewllynge . / Withinne the subtile stremes of hire yen" (1.305-6), and that mocking Cupid is not the best decision. Troilus sees Criseyde when he comes to the feast of the Palladion in the beginning of the tale. Like Amant, he is smitten immediately upon seeing Criseyde, his Rose, and being targeted by Cupid. He is unaware that Love has had a hand in this, but that does not stop him

from leaving the temple and roaming about, trying to apologize for his misdeeds and to pray for success in his pursuit of Criseyde. He rapidly changes his attitude towards those who are “Loves folk” (1.319). In only a few lines, Troilus goes from scornful of lovers to being obsessed with Criseyde to the point that he cannot stop thinking about her. Troilus now sees those servants of Love to be in a good position, for he says “Lord, wel is hym that may ben of yow oon!” (1.350). Troilus is no haughty gentleman now. He is a nobleman, a prince, and yet he would be happy to simply be one of Criseyde's servants, for all he desires is “to serven hir, yet myghte he falle in grace, / Or ellis for oon of hire servantz pace” (1.370-71). Charles Muscatine says that “Troilus represents the courtly idealistic view of experience. While there is nothing mechanical or schematic about Chaucer’s way with him, it is clear that he is conceived and constructed almost exclusively according to the stylistic conventions of the courtly tradition” (David 567). He is the epitome of courtly lover when he is under the influence of Cupid. Gone is the scornful male who mocked lovers; in his place is a perfect example of the ideal.

He then spends a great deal of time besotted with Criseyde and bemoaning his fate of eternal loneliness and abandonment. He is convinced that he will die without her but he similarly believes he can never have one so perfect as she. Bringing in Pandarus to help him may give him hope, but it is not perfect by any stretch. Pandarus is both a dose of reality and an escape from logic. Pandarus tells him to get his head in order and to start thinking logically, but he also goads Troilus on and encourages this seemingly random and groundless infatuation. The ending of Book 1 of *Troilus*

and Criseyde emphasizes the drastic change in his behavior. The narrator tells how he is now the most gentle, the most kind, the best knight around, and he no longer makes fun of people, nor is he cruel or harsh. It says:

For he bicom the frendlieste wight,
The gentilest, and ek the mooste fre,
The thriftiest, and oon the beste knight
That in his tyme was or myghte be;
Dede were his japes and his cruelte,
His heighe port and his manere estraunge,
And ecch of tho gan for a vertu chaunge (1.1079-85).

He matured suddenly, but it is difficult to believe that he truly has changed. This does go back to the argument that the description was simply reiterating his behavior, not implying a drastic alteration.

Troilus as a lover is uncertain and immature. He is so smitten with Criseyde that he is uncomfortable with being around her but so sure he will die if he is not. This idea of dying for lack of love is not uncommon to medieval thought; love was a disease, and such a death would be understood. He is worried about making a fool out of himself but still insists on being near her and seeing her. He flatters her, adores her, and focuses entirely on her to the point where he is obsessed. Chaucer tells us that

...thanne felte this Troilus swich wo
That he was wel neigh wood; for ay his drede
Was this, that she som wight hadde loved so,

That nevere of hym she wolde han him taken hede,

For which hym thoughte he felte his herte blede; (1. 498-502)

He cannot tolerate or accept the thought of her loving someone else; it is enough to make his heart bleed, and he does not even know her. This obsession leads to a romance, but it also destroys him. It is her betrayal that drives him to go into battle again without thinking, thus causing his own demise. A Trojan War-era Romeo, Troilus cannot bear to be without his Criseyde, even though he is so unsure of himself, so nervous, but also so completely engrossed in his love for her that he cannot think, sleep, or eat without her being around. He is not the only one who feels this way, though he goes about it in a different manner than others of the period.

Troilus's character changes from being a young man who wants to fight for glory and for fun, a man who sees something that he wants and is determined to get it, to a man who is jaded and jilted, depressed and angry. He has lost his love, Criseyde, and he is so upset about it that he becomes reckless and irrational. In the interim period, however, he is the epitome of courtly lover, a concept that helps bridge the gap between the other two behavioral extremes and explain his actions and the decisions he makes in regards to Criseyde. Otherwise, there would be no character growth evident throughout the story, nor would we see the changes and understand the ending of the story.

Chapter 5

DIVINE INTERVENTION: THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

The Romance of the Rose, an allegorical piece written in two parts by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun in the mid to late thirteenth century, tells the archetypal story of love. Written as a dream sequence, this work follows the journey of Amant, or Lover, who is also the dreamer or the “I” of the narrative, in his quest to pluck the Rose. Chaucer knew this work intimately, having translated it into Middle English, and it was a strong influence on his writing throughout his career. Guillaume’s depiction of Amant’s being struck by the god of Love’s arrows was perhaps the most influential version of a lover’s being struck down by an outside force – the mighty God of Love. Chaucer might well have had Guillaume’s depiction in mind when he composed his unique passage of Troilus’s falling in love.

Chaucer’s depiction of Troilus falling in love shares many characteristics of Guillaume de Lorris’s tale. *The Romance of the Rose* begins in the month of May, when Amant was twenty years old, “whan that Love taketh his carriage / Of younge folk” (Riverside Romaunt A. 22-23). May is the

tyme of love and jolite,

That al thing gynneth waxen gay,

For ther is neither busk nor hay
In May that it nyl shrouded ben
And it with newe leves wren (A. 52-56),

May is the month when everything falls in love and becomes gay and bright and happy. It is fitting, then, that Amant should find an object of desire to strive for. When Amant sees the Rose in his dreaming mind, he begins his journey to find it. He first encounters a garden with images of Hatred, Felony, Villainy, Covetousness, Avarice, Envy, Sorrow, Old Age, Pope-Holiness, and Poverty. He studies them, for they shall stand in his way on his quest. He then meets more pleasant figures, Idleness and Diversion, Joy, Courtesy, and the God of Love, the one with the power to bring love and hate to a heart,

...that can devyde
Love, and as hym likith it be.
But he can cherles daunten, he,
And maken fokkis pride fallen;
And he can wel these lordis thrallen,
And ladyes putte at lowe degree, (A. 878-883).

Cupid does not discriminate; his power extends to all people, men and women, lords and ladies. He is not, as some modern images have him portrayed, a very young boy, but was rather a beautiful young man. He is described as being:

... lyk no knave ne quystroun;
His beaute gretly was to pryse.

But of his robe to devise
I drede encombred for to be;
For nought clad in silk was he,
But all in floures and in flourettes (A. 886-91).

He is a beautiful figure, clad in flowers and unlike any normal male in his looks. Sweet Looks, his companion, holds his bows, one to deliver love, one hatred. Even the arrows are named for virtues or sins: Beauty, Simplicity, Openness, Company, and Fair Seeming all wounded, but with positive results. The other arrows “were also blak as fende in helle” (A. 974). They are Pride, Vylanye, Shame, Wanhope, and Newe-Thought. These arrows are “were allee five on oon maneere” (A. 984). These arrows are all horrible, harsh creations that bring pain and misery, and are all shot from the same bow, “the foule croked bowe hidous, / That knotty was and al roynous” (A. 987-88). The other arrows, the virtuous ones, wound their targets in different ways, and are much less hurtful and destructive.

The God of Love also has other companions; Beauty and Wealth, Generosity, Openness, Courtesy, and Youth all stay with him. This contrasts strongly with the other garden figures, the ones who create conflict in hearts and destroy young love. This allegorical deity is featured prominently throughout the story, being the one who induced the emotions in Amant in the first place. The story continues with Amant taking advice from Reason and Ami, both of whom turn him in different directions than he necessarily feels is correct. Fighting off Greed, Fraud, Jealousy, and all other negative forces who wish him ill, he lays siege to the Castle of Love and, with the help

of the companions of the God of Love, and those things necessary in order to be a good lover, Amant succeeds in plucking the Rose and finally reaching his goal. He proves himself worthy of the Rose, ignoring the temptations that he faced and succeeding in defeating all obstacles.

Amant does not fall in love simply by virtue of it being May, nor by choice. The God of Love has a strong influence on his situation, and it was his intervention that gives Amant his obsession with the Rose. Cupid targets him after he chooses the bud of the rosebush that “more unto my pay / Than only other that I say” (B. 1721-22) and then shoots him with Beauty, then with Simplicity, then Courtesy. Love creates a wound that cannot be healed, that draws no blood. Amant sits by the rosebush and is cured of his ailments and his pains simply by virtue of being next to the object of his desires. Love then shoots him with Company, and, like Troilus, Amant swoons (56). Fair Seeming, the final arrow,

“The which in no wise wole consente
That ony lover hym repente
To serve his love with herte and alle,
For ony peril that may bifalle” (B. 1881-1884),

and it is this arrow that brings Amant down completely, the final step toward falling in love, feeling both the sweetness and bitterness of love. Cupid brings about the love in Amant, just as he does in Troilus, and it is this otherworldly power that separates Chaucer's take on the tale, for Cupid's intervention is not present in Benoit's version, nor is it as prominently displayed in Boccaccio. Amant is at first simply a man who

lusts after a rose, but he becomes, like Troilus, one who is a servant of Love, who will do anything to please him and have that which his heart longs for, no matter the consequences. They swoon, defying masculine norms, but still they have desires and will do anything it takes to fulfill them.

The allegory of this tale far exceeds that of Chaucer's work, but the influences on his writing from Guillaume de Lorris's piece is undeniable. Ami parallels Pandarus in many ways, offering both helpful and misguided advice throughout the tale and not necessarily keeping Amant's best interests in mind. He is a presence that aids Amant in his journey, though he is certainly not entirely benevolent. Amant, like Troilus, falls in love with the Rose when he has never laid eyes on it before; the image was a dream, nothing more, but still he fights to pluck it before the end of the dream. His obsession is overwhelming. The sexual undertones are clearly intentional; just as Troilus consummates his relationship with Criseyde, so Amant plucks his Rose.

Amant begins to feel the effects of Love in a different way. He feels the way one ought to feel in the month of May: amorous and loving. For him, dreaming about the Rose is more an effect of the time of year, rather than the God of Love piercing him with his arrows as punishment. Nevertheless, he becomes obsessed with finding the Rose and fulfilling his dream that he will do anything to get there. He faces heavily fortified castles that he must siege in order to succeed in his quest. He faces countless adversaries who want to impede his quest and hold him hostage. He ignores the temptations placed before him. He is not quite as hard-headed as Troilus is, nor as naïve, though he does have his moments. He will take advice from Ami but he does

not follow it religiously, though he is as stubborn as Troilus when he refuses to listen to Reason, instead choosing to follow the advice of Ami and potentially hurt himself in the long run. He faces so many problems on his journey but still manages to succeed, something that Troilus only did in part.

Amant reaches his goal and that is essentially the end of it. It is crude, in many ways, but he achieves his goal of getting the Rose and that is that. Once he has plucked the Rose he awakens; all of the obstacles that he had to overcome in order to get to that point, all of the problems he faced and the foes he vanquished, are finished, and beyond that he has no other reason to continue. He succeeds in finding the Rose and achieving his goal of plucking it, and the rest is history.

Chapter 6

LOVE AS DISEASE AND THE ROLE OF CUPID

One of the key aspects of the stories being analyzed in this thesis is the encounter of the main characters, primarily Troilus, with Cupid, the God of Love. The allegorical interpretations of such encounters cause drastic changes in the meaning of various actions throughout the story, and they could alter the depth of the feelings portrayed later. Each of the three main authors that I am studying, Benoit, Boccaccio, and Chaucer, have varying interpretations of the role of Cupid in the budding relationship between Troilus and Criseyde.

Benoit does not even mention the God of Love in his work. It almost seems as if he has no need for Cupid; I had originally thought that Troilus is more human in Benoit's piece but he is, in fact, much more romanticized than in Chaucer's version. Benoit's Troilus is more idealized and romanticized than Chaucer's in his manner, his stature, and his appearance. Benoit describes him as “not insolent or haughty, but light of heart and gay and amorous” (Benoit 6). He goes on to further describe him as being a wonderful person, always putting others at ease with his kindheartedness. Troilus's description in particular is quite lengthy and the narrator waxes eloquent about his virtues and appearance and knightly skills. He appears to be more manly in this story, and his actions, at least in the beginning, are more focused on the fighting

arts instead of the loving arts. He does not swoon over Briseida because of the God of Love or anything else. He proves himself in jousting, fights on the field with other knights, and nearly gets killed trying. There is no mention of the actions that make him appear to be cruel at first glance in Chaucer's tale. Benoit does, however, say that Troilus has a problem, that his love for Briseida is an affliction. That ties back into the idea that love is a disease, which can be interpreted as an off-shoot of the idea of the God of Love. Humans do not control when they fall in love, or with whom. It happens regardless of their desires, and there is nothing that they can do to change it. This was a common theme in medieval times, characterized by overwhelming emotions and feelings that cannot be controlled, as well as an inability to eat or sleep.

Cupid has a completely different effect on Diomedes, though to be fair, he did not directly interfere in that relationship, not in such a way as is described earlier when Cupid intervenes with Troilus. Diomedes seems to be more immature a lover than Chaucer's Troilus. He steals a glove from Briseida and swears that he will serve Love and no one else until Love gives her to him. He insists that she shall be his prize, and he constantly asks her to be with him. He tries to win her favor by taking Troilus's horse in battle, but that backfires dramatically when Briseida chastises him for his actions and says that it is not that of a knight. Eventually, however, she comes to love him. She is fickle, a quality that Chaucer's narrator downplays, possibly even denying entirely. The other tale goes into greater detail about the relationship between Briseida and Diomedes, but it also brings in Briseida's guilt over betraying Troilus and her fear that nothing positive will ever be written or sung about her again. She

chooses Diomedes because she can no longer have Troilus. She admits that she still loves Troilus and has to give him up due to circumstances beyond her control. That relationship is quite different from the ones in either of the other two pieces; Troilus is affected by Cupid in such a way as to fall deeply and desperately in love with Criseyde in so as to render him unable to function at times without her. Even with this tone of immaturity, he still manages to seem romantic when he does it, even to a more cynical reader, but Diomedes's "love" seems selfish and childish more than immature; it has a more negative connotation than that of Troilus. He is obsessed with her, much like Troilus, but he seems to be cruelly obsessed, almost as if he is stalking her, though not quite as negative as that. Troilus has love from her in return and never seems to force her to love him, but Diomedes's love is clearly not the same.

Boccaccio takes full advantage of Troilo's encounter with Cupid and uses it as an explanation for his sudden feelings for Criseida. He makes it truly love at first sight, for Troilo was mocking lovers and then "it happened by chance that, through the crowd, his wandering eyes lighted on the place where the charming Criseida, under a white veil in a black habit, was standing" (Boccaccio 26). He had no way of knowing that Cupid was about to strike him down with his "darts" of love. No one can resist the arrows of Cupid, regardless of their previous feelings. Boccaccio shows Criseida as a beautiful woman, slightly proud, but properly in mourning. It is this woman that Troilo falls helplessly in love with, despite his past views of lovers and his thoughts on the topic of such emotions. This is much more similar to Chaucer's piece than Benoit's work is. There is argument that Boccaccio's writing is misogynistic; that could be an

influence on his use of Cupid, for in this case it is not a woman who controls the feelings of a man, nor is she the one who holds the power. It is a supernatural power that comes in the form of a male deity who decides if and when a person falls in love, and with whom. Perhaps there is a connection here to a hint of misogyny, perhaps not.

Chaucer's Cupid also uses arrows to pierce Troilus's heart and cause him to fall in love. The sight of Criseyde is enough to turn his heart from stone, mocking lovers everywhere, into one full of emotion, especially after Cupid fixes his beams upon him and chosen to strike him with darts of love. Chaucer draws more upon Boccaccio for this part than on Benoit, though he is still taking a large step away from the entirely allegorical story of *The Romance of the Rose*. Criseyde goes from being just another woman at the Feast of Palladian to being “likynge to Troilus / Over alle thing” (1.310-11), something that he desperately desires. That would not have happened if it had not been for Cupid's interference. He may have had lustful thoughts towards her, being a young male, but he certainly would not have had emotions with depth to them, not without risking being deeply hypocritical in his actions, having merely minutes before mocked lovers for their folly. Cupid's interference suggests that Troilus's love is not genuine, but it more strongly suggests the depth to which those feelings run, intentional or not. Troilus may not have decided of his own volition to fall in love with Criseyde, but he certainly will not give up on her without a fight, not with the influence of a god in his life.

The Suffering of Troilus

Chaucer's Troilus suffers unduly from the disease of love. The idea of love as a disease is not a new one; on the contrary, it dates from as early as the fifth century in a story formerly attributed to the late antique Christian poet Dracontius. While the story of Perdica, the *Ægritudo Perdicae* ("Perdica's sickness"), does not necessarily relate to the typical idea of love as a disease – it contains an incestuous love rather than a socially acceptable romantic love – it is nevertheless the earliest known example of lovesickness as a disease and an affliction. Perdica is a young man who is struck down by Cupid for not paying homage to him, specifically for ignoring him and Venus when giving gifts to and worshipping the other gods in the Pantheon; as a result of Cupid's intervention, Perdica falls desperately in love with his mother. The fact that the story includes Hippocrates, a well-known and highly respected early physician, indicates the existence of a disease of some sort in the narrative, rather than simply a mental and emotional condition.

The medieval perception of love as a disease varies greatly throughout the medieval period, though the symptoms themselves are similar regardless of the work or era. Mary Wack, who first discovered that the medieval idea of love sickness was more than metaphorical, describes the symptoms as including sighing, sleeplessness, and wasting away from a refusal to eat; Galen, who is extensively discussed by Wack, specifically says that the afflicted person is sick or pale and sleepless or fevered from love (Wack 7). Those who suffer from love are also said to have often-moving eyelids and are unable to concentrate or be rational. The sudden onset of these "symptoms"

are certainly reason for them to be considered part of a disease, for there is rarely any reason or visible causes behind them. Andreas Capellanus, the twelfth-century codifier of ideas about love (with a mostly negative slant on the emotion), says that love is an “inborn suffering derived from the sight of an excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex” (Art 28). It is characterized by irrational fears of inadequacy and worries that the object of their desire may leave them for various reasons.

While the symptoms themselves remain relatively constant throughout various narratives, the source of them is under constant scrutiny and there is never truly a consensus as to why a person is afflicted or how he or she can be healed, if it is indeed a disease or condition. However, Wack describes the sources of love as a disease when she says “at the root of lovesickness lies an unfulfilled, sometimes unspeakable desire that may be incestuous or otherwise socially unacceptable. Yet the mind and body are such close partners that bodily symptoms reveal what the patient represses” (Wack 5). This train of thought does seem to be one general consensus amongst early medieval writers; while they may not be able to agree upon the source of the patient's condition, whether it be a disease, a supernatural intervention, or the result of some sort of immorality, the commonly accepted idea is that it is found in the mind, not the body, but because the mind and body are so deeply linked, it is impossible to separate them from each other, and thus what affects the mind affects the body as well. Wack points out that it is “not a distinct disease, but one of a number of psychological conditions that can powerfully affect the body” (9). The disease of love is not

something that can be caught from another, but is rather part of a mind-body connection that cannot be severed and treated as a typical illness of the body.

Troilus shows all of the symptoms of a lover in mental and physical distress in Chaucer's retelling of the tale. It is said that he went to his room to be by himself after having been struck by Cupid's arrow, then "first he gan to sike, and eft to grone, / And thought ay on hire so, withouten lette, / That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette" (1.360-62). He could only lay on his bed and think about her, nothing else. He also "brende" for her (1. 448), which relates back to the idea of fevered desires associated with lovesickness. Troilus has, before the first book is even halfway completed, at least two of the symptoms commonly accepted as being part of lovesickness. Troilus's affliction "refte hym love his slep, / And made his mete his foo, and ek his sorwe / Gan multiplie, that, whoso tok kep, / It shewed in his hewe both eve and morwe" (1. 484-87). Now he is not only burning with desire and consumed with thoughts of her, but he has grown pale and listless and cannot sleep. He is, in effect, the epitome of a love-stricken medieval knight, having shown all of the commonly accepted signs of this malady.

Pandarus, Chaucer's best friend and confidant and Criseyde's uncle, seems to agree with some medieval scholars as to how to cure this disease is; while this idea goes against everything that the clergy believes, some scholars have said that "therapeutic intercourse" and "frequent coitus" are the cures for love. Pandarus recommends that Troilus have Criseyde as a way of curing himself, after waxing eloquent on her virtues. By offering to help Troilus in his quest to win Criseyde's

heart, Pandarus is providing Troilus with a way of escape from the torment he is feeling, temporary though it may be. While it is not exactly “therapeutic intercourse,” it is certainly an outlet and a way of briefly giving him hope and a reason to continue living; Pandarus points out that dying will only hurt Criseyde or give her reason to mock him, and that is the last thing on Troilus's mind.

The medieval perception of love as a disease was not simply an abstract idea of feeling depressed because of unrequited love. People were expected to pine for their lovers and suffer both in mental and physical health. Refusing food and starving to death for their love was perfectly acceptable. Troilus, however, discusses how he will surely die if Criseyde does not love him; for a modern audience, it seems to be a metaphorical death. His melodramatic exclamations are to be taken with a grain of salt by the modern reader, but for Chaucer’s time, and especially in literary fictions, death from love would have been an acceptable way to exit this “mortal coil”. The idea of dying for love, whether literally or metaphorically, was certainly not unknown to the medieval audience.

Troilus is no exception to the bipolarity of love as a disease and the rapid changes in emotions that come as a result of it. One minute he is happily scornful of the lovers he sees, laughing at them and insulting them and refusing to acknowledge the power of love, and the next minute he is struck down by Love himself and forced into a life of temporarily unrequited love that eventually leads to his death. What pleasure is there in his love for Criseyde? Carnal pleasure, perhaps, but he spends his days pining for her, making himself ill, fainting in her presence, and has very few

opportunities to act on his feelings and consummate their relationship. It is true that Criseyde eventually loves him too, but it is still not the same. She does not die with her love for him, which leads the modern audience to wonder if she is not, in fact, as deeply in love with him as he is with her. Perhaps it is because she is not struck down by Cupid's arrows, and instead falls in love the "normal" way, if influenced by another. Or perhaps it is because she falls in "like" that only feels as if she is falling in love, and that is proven to her when she is torn from his arms and forced to return to her father. Pandarus does, after all, push for her to return Troilus's feelings, so it is not something that she decided entirely on her own. Faced with the idea of living alone, without Troilus, for the rest of her life, she reconsiders her feelings and accepts another into her heart and her mind. Troilus never considers the possibility of finding another, so this could be love in the medieval thought: it is a disease that cannot be cured, an affliction for which there is no remedy. This is the punishment that Love brings down upon him, and is in no way a normal event. How, then, is he to escape the tangled feelings and deep emotions that run through him?

Chapter 7

CRISEYDE AND LOVE

The character of Criseyde in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* is one who has been debated thoroughly by scholars, and is a strong influence in the tale. Is she a villain? A victim? Controlling? Submissive? Manipulative? Or is she simply along for the ride? While there is no generally accepted consensus on her true motives and personality, there are two main camps in regards to that, one that says she is to be admired and one that says she is pathetic, a victim of her own station and gender who allows decisions to be made for her and never shows any “spine”. These arguments are analyzed and considered in my research, leading me to make my own decision on her character and motives without fully complying with any pre-determined arguments.

I used to be part of the second camp, the one which thought she was simply along for the ride and never took the initiative to make decisions for herself or do anything to change her own future. She was supposed to be a widow and the daughter of a traitor, so who was she to make decisions for herself? Gretchen Mieskowski is in this camp as well. She says that Criseyde is a “weak, inconsistent, ineffective reflection of the men in her story” (Mieszkowski 109). She goes on to say that Criseyde “is never shown making a plan and carrying it out or giving her word and

honoring her commitment to it” (109). It is characteristics such as these that make her impossible to truly admire in the eyes of some scholars, and she is not to be considered a heroine, or even a strong character in general. Rather, she is a victim of her life circumstances, one who is content to be such; she does not strive to better her situation or take the initiative to be more like the men in her life, and she allows them to make decisions for her and control her life. That is in line with the feminist theory that she is an “emblem of passive femininity whose submissive nature makes her vulnerable to the machinations of ruthless men” (Behrman 315). Criseyde seems, in the eyes of these thinkers, to have no redeeming qualities, nothing to make her admired or special. She is a character who may be important (for no romance is complete without a love interest) but beyond her role as lover, there is little to use in order to prove her worthiness.

The other main line of thought is where I currently stand. I do not believe that she is an overly strong character who needs to be admired for every action she takes, but I do believe she uses what strengths she has to better her situation. It may seem that she is content to sit with her female friends and read in the garden, and at first glance that is entirely correct. However, it is when we look deeper that we see how she actually acts to better herself and her station. She does not sit idly by when her father defects, nor does she wait for her doom to set upon her. Instead, she seeks out the protection of a powerful man so she could be safe. Some with a more modern perspective would argue that this is precisely why they do not consider her to be honorable or a strong female, but such a way of thinking is, in many ways, illogical.

She has to find a male to protect her, preferably one who holds some position of power, because without it she has no chance of surviving in the patriarchal society that is ancient Troy. She cannot protect herself by virtue of her status as a widow. She is a woman, so her power is already limited. She is a widow, so she does not have a husband to offer her some protection, and she is the daughter of a traitor. By all rights, she is lucky to have been allowed to live at all, and her quick thinking and clever decision to accept Hector's protection quite possibly proves decisive in her sojourn in Troy. The real strength of a person lies in their ability to know when to ask for help.

To say that Criseyde is without fault would be misguided. She is a woman who is driven in part by her sense of duty and in part by her desires. She makes many logical decisions in regards to her own situation but she is a romantic, one who desires to be part of the world of love and happiness. She is a confident, strong woman who has ideas and opinions and does not sit by demurely and allow life to happen to her. She acknowledges that courtly love is a "game" (Behrman 320-21) and knows that she has to follow the rules to a certain extent. She has no choice but to accept Troilus, for, much though she would rather fall in love of her own accord, she is in a tenuous position in Troy and to rebuff the affections of a prince is to destroy any chance she has of a future. She has no idea, unlike Cassandra, who foresees the future that the city is doomed to fall at the hands of the Greeks. Her thoughts are on the present and immediate future, certainly, but she is still focusing on the far future, and she plans for love and happiness for the rest of her life, not solely the coming weeks.

One important thing to keep in mind is the danger that Criseyde faces in consorting with Troilus. She is, in a sense, between a rock and a hard place, because she cannot rebuke him, but to accept his advances could prove disastrous. Criseyde knows that “engaging in the game of courtly love, particularly with the son of a king whom her own father deceived, may result in the destruction of her carefully constructed sanctuary” (Behrman 321), but it would be equally dangerous to refuse him. “Troilus's unsolicited advances upset the pleasant life she has led since her father's defection” and she knows that such advances “effects her ruin” by forcing her to make a decision (321). Regardless, she comes to love Troilus in her own way, once she learns to accept the rules of the game of courtly love to an extent, and she learns just how much she can “tweak” them to suit her own needs. Behrman discusses these tweaks when she points out how Criseyde effectively reverses the roles she and Troilus play. She is not the submissive lover that is to be expected of a female. It is she who makes the first move when they are about to consummate their relationship when she “therwithal hym kiste” (3. 1350), a move that surprises Troilus and shows her to be at least partly dominating, rather than being an entirely submissive person, as one might expect from a medieval woman. Assertiveness is not a quality we often associate with the women of that time, but Criseyde demonstrates at least a bit of this in her actions towards Troilus.

One aspect of her personality that separates her from the conventions expected of women at the time is her desire for an equal. She does not want a lover to treat her as a lesser; she is not one to bow down and accept that she was beneath another, and

her pride may contribute to certain aspects of her relationship with Troilus, primarily her taking the initiative in the consummation scene. She seems to be the epitome of the modern woman in many aspects, because she wants to be able to discuss politics, modern events, the war, literature, and other topics that are not typical of women of the time. Just as today's women seem to be, Criseyde's desires lie in having a man who treats her as a human being, as a person, not as a commodity. It is not surprising that she was largely unsuccessful in finding a man who thought along the same lines as her, but women were objects, not people; they were to be objectified and regarded as important only as figures of beauty. If one was simply an object of beauty, one was valuable; there are other ways to be have value, but a beautiful woman is worth more in certain situations than a less attractive one. Criseyde is different from the normal female in so far as her desires were for an equal, but only if she needed to have a man. She did not seek out a man simply to have one. Romance is desired, not control, not added protection. She has Hector for protection, so why does she need another man for that?

Women are not expected to be intellectuals. They are supposed to be sitting in the garden reading romances, poetry, or other feminine literature. Instead, she is with her women reading a "geste" about "the siege of Thebes" (2. 83-84). Behrman points out that "Criseyde's choice of reading material reveals her intellectual curiosity as well as her attachment to the heroic ideal," and goes on to explain Criseyde's further difference from the typical female because she "wishes to understand the workings of the public domain and to grasp the significance of her nation's own war" (Behrman

319), something that is decidedly out of the norm. This is another example of why she is not content to simply sit back and watch the world go by; if there is information she can learn, she will seek it out. She will not be a willing pawn of the patriarchal society that she resides in, and instead will seek out her independence as much as she is able. As a widow, she has a “newfound autonomy” (319) that she did not have when she was married. She does not immediately desire to remarry, as many women might, because then she will once again have someone to “check mat” every decision she makes (2. 754). While she does not have certain powers as a widow, she is no longer under the control of a man to the full extent of a wife under a husband, and such freedom, in her eyes, is to be coveted and enjoyed, not thrown away at the first chance of finding a new husband.

Criseyde's feelings for Troilus are genuine. She loves him in her own way, but perhaps that is the point: it is in her own way. She is being somewhat logical while still allowing herself the potentially girlish emotions of love. She does not fall head over heels in love with Troilus right from the start, but she does allow herself to develop feelings for him. That would indicate that her love for him is true, albeit quickly developing. It may seem fast to modern sensibilities, almost akin to a Vegas wedding, but it is not as unrealistic as the love that Troilus has for her. Chaucer explains this sudden rush of emotions that Troilus has for Criseyde by having Cupid shoot Troilus; the logic behind this is sound, in the eyes of the medieval world, but it still does not sit well with modern sensibilities. Troilus's emotions are justified by virtue of the God of Love deeming it necessary for him to fall in love with Criseyde.

That does not, however, mean that Criseyde should fall in love in return. Cupid has no interest in using his darts on her, and this makes her emotions more genuine, for there is no outside influence on her transition from simple citizen to love interest and then lover. It is true that she is influenced into loving him because of the intervention of Pandarus, but he is a human, a man, and a mortal, not a divine being. Criseyde's feelings could be an example of a situation that often happens in adolescents now, where one person likes another and the other finds out about it and starts to develop feelings in return. Are those feelings real? Would they have occurred regardless? There is no way to tell. It is sufficient to say that she was not strictly influenced because of a supernatural or paranormal event or intervention, and instead was given the opportunity to decide for herself in as close a way as possible.

That brings up the interesting question of just how deep her feelings for him are. She does not pine after him as much as he does for her, nor does she go back to him when she said she would. She does not die as a result of the end of their relationship, but she is upset about having to leave. She is angry with her father for making that deal, but she does not make any real attempts to return, at least not from what we could see. She does not end up bedridden because of her feelings for Troilus, nor is she untouched when they were parted. That makes us wonder, how deep are her feelings for him? I maintain that she was “in like” and thought she was in love, as per the medieval ideology, as far as we can ascertain. She did have true feelings for him that were untarnished and uninfluenced by otherworldly powers, but they were not the love that Romeo and Juliet felt for each other, nor Tristan and Isolde. They were

simply human, and perhaps this is why it is easier for some people to relate to Criseyde, even if they do scorn her a bit for being easily walked upon and influenced. The fact that Pandarus controls the situation to such a degree is bothersome to some people, but to others it is simply a friendly uncle playing matchmaker. I stand in the middle; while I do see Pandarus's influence on the situation as being problematic, I think he is trying to make both his friend and his niece happy, and if that means that he has the opportunity to better himself socially and politically, so be it. I think that he probably has ulterior motives but that his concern for his niece's happiness and well-being probably outweighs said motives, and he probably just wants to make her happy, even if it is only temporary. He seems to me to be more of a doting uncle and a good friend than a creepy old man, which is a description given by some when he is present during the consummation scene in Chaucer's tale. Regardless, he wants to be helpful and he wants his friends and family to be helpful, and I believe that his presence is important to the story, because he is a human influence, not a supernatural one, and it helps to balance out Cupid's interference in the process of falling in love.

The differences between what Troilus feels and what Criseyde feels cannot be denied or discounted. They both love, but in their own way. Perhaps Troilus would not have died if it had not been for Cupid's arrow, because he may still have loved Criseyde but it may not have been such a deeply intense feeling for him. Or perhaps his age has something to do with it; he is a young man, not older and experienced. Criseyde is not necessarily older either, but she is certainly experienced in at least some ways, given that she was married and subsequently widowed. It is safe to

presume that she is not naïve to the ways of the world and of men. Troilus may have been involved with women, but he has never been in love before, at least not as far as we can tell. His scorn for lovers would indicate that he has not yet felt the same emotions for anyone else. It is perhaps this that makes it easier to accept Troilus's relationship with Criseyde more easily than the later love story *Romeo and Juliet*, by William Shakespeare, where Romeo jumps from loving one woman to the point of illness to loving another without warning. Troilus's feelings are obviously not entirely his own, but at least he does not switch from one woman to another without justification beyond the sudden appearance of a beautiful woman. He is influenced by Cupid, not his own mind, and that is important because it provides evidence to support at least some acceptance of the veracity of the emotions on some level.

Chapter 8

FIN

The transition from an allegorical French-influenced writing style to a more literal Italian-influenced one in Chaucer's tale is clear, but he takes elements from both types and makes a story all his own. While he did have strong influence from pieces he translated himself, such as *The Romance of the Rose*, Chaucer also puts his own twist on the story. The character of Troilus is one that is entirely his own. A strong knight who starts out as masculine as can be, only to be cut down by Cupid's strength, the fighter who becomes a lover, a young man who is forced to grow up quickly, going from immaturely infatuated to deeply despondent in a matter of days, Troilus has many layers that are progressively more complex. The allegorical undertones of the story contrast well with the more literal aspects of it; Cupid causes Troilus to fall in love, but it is the actions of men that destroy him. Cupid brings Criseyde to Troilus, but men separate them. It is up to Troilus to keep them together, and he fails. While Amant does have to undergo many challenges to reach the Rose, and he could theoretically fail, he is not without divine intervention of sorts; he has assistance from supernatural forces, and without them, he probably would have failed. Cupid does not leave him high and dry after he incapacitates him, but he also does not hold his hand along the way and guide him through every obstacle, eliminating the

need for him to work and suffer. Chaucer's Cupid brings Troilus to his knees for Criseyde, but it is almost as a punishment, not as a reward. After that, Troilus is on his own.

The other tales all end in similar ways to Chaucer's version, but his take on the story demonstrates just how deeply the changes he chooses to make affect the outcome. Without the influence of *La Romaunt de la Rose*, Chaucer's Troilus would probably not have fallen so far, and his conscious decision to make Criseyde's love entirely human brought a sense of empathy to the story that would otherwise have been lost.

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