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The authorial manipulation of language in Chaucer's "Troilus"

Woehling, Mary-Patrice, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1991

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THE AUTHORIAL MANIPULATION OF LANGUAGE IN CHAUCER'S TROILUS

by

MARY-PATRICE WOEHLING

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1991

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

26 April 1991
Date

Robert O. Payne
Chair of Examining Committee

26 April 1991
Date

Joseph Wittreich
Executive Officer

Robert O. Payne
Martin Stevens
Frederick Goldin
Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

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This dissertation is dedicated "For love of mayde and moder" (*Troilus* 5.1869).

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the instances of authorial manipulation in Chaucer's Troilus. One of the subjects of the Troilus is the manipulation of language. Chaucer uses various rhetorical devices through the voices of his narrator, his major characters, and the old books that the narrator claims as his sources in order to control the language and the narrative.

The strategy I will follow is a form of reader-response criticism grounded in modern poetics and medieval rhetoric to examine what is present in and absent from the text in order to determine what Chaucer says about language. I have referred to Todorov's theory of poetics, as Robert Jordan did in Chaucer's Poetics and the Modern Reader (a work which does not address the poetics of the Troilus). In Todorov's theory, "two attitudes" exist in literary analysis--poetics and interpretation (Introduction to Poetics 3-8). Todorov writes:

> It is not the literary work itself that is the object of poetics: what poetics questions are the properties of that particular discourse that is literary discourse. Each work is therefore regarded only as the manifestation of an abstract and general structure, of which it is but one of the possible realizations. Whereby this science is no longer concerned with actual literature, but with a possible literature in other words, with that abstract property that constitutes the singularity of the literary phenomenon: literariness. (6-7)

In the first chapter of Chaucer's Poetics and the Modern Reader, Jordan discusses the Jamesian concept of fiction and Todorov's approach to "literariness." The Jamesian method demanded that the verbal nature of the text serve only as a means of presenting the story without calling attention to its rhetoric (Chaucer's Poetics 9-10; 13; 16-17). As Jordan points out, "Chaucerian narrative, in highlighting its textuality, its composed quality or 'literariness,' invites primary emphasis on the verbal medium" (16). Jordan describes the nature of the self-reflexive text:

> A self-reflexive text stresses both its verbal autonomy and its contingent character as a product of its composer. It draws attention to its intermediate status, as narrative, between story and narrating. By highlighting this disjunction, a self-reflexive text compromises one of the cardinal principles of realist poetics: it violates the continuity of the poetic imagination and openly invites us to suspend the suspension of disbelief. A self-reflexive text expands beyond realism to include both illusion and dis-illusion. In contrast, a nonreflexive text cultivates the illusion that narrative dissolves into story; it ignores by poetic fiat, so to speak, the textuality of the medium. (16-17)

Jordan uses Todorov's theory to discuss Chaucerian narratives as rhetorical constructs. (He also adapts some of Gérard Genette's vocabulary. See Chaucer's Poetics 15-16.) In emphasizing rhetoric, Jordan observes,

> Rhetoric provides the basis for a poetics of uncertainty--or to put it more positively, a pluralistic poetics--because of its primary and always manifest presupposition that

> language is conventional and inevitably ambiguous. . . . (10)

Jordan does not analyze the Troilus, yet this stress on self-conscious rhetoric, on the poetics of the text as distinct from interpretation, is particularly applicable to the Troilus. This dissertation seeks to fill a need for a close reading of the Troilus in relation to the self-reflexivity of its poetics. My intention is not to summarize the narrative, but to follow the text and examine its self-conscious language.

Language is a potentially treacherous medium. An author may manipulate his materials, but a reader may respond to his story in a way the author did not anticipate. In discussing Chaucer's textuality, H. Marshall Leicester considers a deconstructionist reading of Troilus 1.393-99. This is the famous stanza in which the narrator gives the exact words of Troilus's song, a lyric that is merely paraphrased in the narrator's source, Lollius, who is himself a fiction. Concerning his deconstructionist reading, Leicester comments that "Chaucer seems to have anticipated such a reading and done it himself in his own writing" (17).

If we agree with Leicester that Chaucer viewed his own text as open to a deconstructionist reading, we must consider Chaucer's views of history and poetics. The Troilus is poetry to us, but it was both poetry and history to Geoffrey Chaucer. According to Robert O. Payne,

Chaucer followed the traditional medieval outlook that "poetry is a process of manipulating language so that the wisdom evolved in the past will become available, applicable, and operative in the present" (Key of Remembrance 89).

What is the intention of the poem? Chaucer manipulated his text, and he was quite capable of making it say what he wanted it to say. His narrator protests that he only follows his source; yet Lollius is a make-believe auctour, and Chaucer manipulated the Filostrato to create his own version of the story. Yet Chaucer seems to have been aware that his "entente" (a word conspicuous in the text) may be misunderstood by the reader. H. Marshall Leicester, using an image from Derrida and Plato, has commented, "At the end of the poem Chaucer calls attention to the textual phenomenon of absence, the way a text is a kind of orphan, bereft of its maker, and equally uncertain of its destination, of who will receive it and how" (18). Leicester cites 5.1786 and 1798 to support this point. Chaucer's intention is to tell Troilus's story; yet his intention binds him to what he believes to be history and to the potential vagaries of language. As Payne has noted, the medieval writer was responsible for remaining true to his source, but he could select the form of his own rendition (Key of Remembrance 73-78). Chaucer could choose his form and manage his language, but that language is open to

reinterpretation by a reader.

Chaucer's narrator is a manipulator of language. He tries to manage a story that will ultimately pass from his control. Chaucer, however, manipulated the narrator. According to Talbot Donaldson, "Chaucer . . . manipulated a narrator capable of only a simple view of reality in such a way as to achieve the poetic expression of an extraordinarily complex one" ("The Ending of Troilus" 99; cited by Salter 281). Through his narrator, who is only too aware that language is not a fixed medium, Chaucer manipulates his story, knowing that he could control his choice of words but not his reader's interpretation. Much academic energy has been spent in attempts to discover the meaning of the Troilus. Perhaps its meaning is unknowable. In discussing the audience's involvement with the story, R. W. Hanning notes that "Chaucer constantly leaves clues lying about his text which invite us to draw multiple conclusions . . . which . . . make a definitive interpretation of the poem intentionally impossible" ("Audience as Co-Creator" 20; cited by Leicester 18). Donaldson notes:

> For the moralitee of Troilus and Criseide (and by morality I do not mean 'ultimate meaning') is simply this: that human love, and by a sorry corollary everything human, is unstable and illusory. . . . The meaning of the poem is not the moral, but a complex qualification of the moral. ("The Ending of Troilus" 92)

Using Derrida's terminology, H. Marshall Leicester

remarks:

> The "scene of writing" seems to have made Chaucer sharply aware of "oure tonges <u>différance</u>," of the way language itself (because it is a medium, not meaning itself) both defers our access to final meaning and inscribes its own ability to keep generating new meanings endlessly into the gap it creates; and this can be a matter for uneasiness. (23-24)

The narrator never forgets his text. The <u>Troilus</u> is not a comment merely on love won and lost; it is an examination of language, of the "forme of speche" which is subject to change through time. Yet language, a changeable medium, is the only means Chaucer had of reading and recording history. An author could manipulate the language of his story, but time could alter the meaning of his language. As Payne notes:

> For Chaucer, although the agencies of poetic effect were sadly inseparable from language and therefore also from linguistic erosion, the art of poetry itself--not a language but a way of managing language--was a weapon in the eternal human battle against time.
>
> But it was, again sadly, a weapon exclusively of man's own forging, and wrought of materials whose nature was itself of time, and therefore treacherously corruptible. (<u>Key of Remembrance</u> 85)

Language changes. The <u>Troilus</u> looks back upon a "historical" past and looks to a literary future. The difficulties of language are easily depicted with the difficulties of love. We have noted that Donaldson considered the "<u>moralitee</u>" of the poem to be the "unstable and illusory" nature of "human love." Language is a human tool. Like love, it is unstable; when we see

language in Saussure's linguistic terms of sign, signified and signifier (Course in General Linguistics 65-78; 120-22), language becomes illusory in the sense that a word in itself is meaningless unless it is understood to signify something. According to Saussure:

> The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. Since I mean by sign the whole that results from the associating of the signifier with the signified, I can simply say: the linguistic sign is arbitrary. (67)

A love story is an appropriate means of presenting the complexities of language because courtly love is a game played through language. In a discussion of a fifteenth-century reading of the Troilus, Lee Patterson notes, "Medieval discussions of literature habitually draw an analogy between literary and sexual seduction" (329). Throughout the poem, love is described as a form of ensnarement; but in a work filled with references to ensnarement, language is the ultimate snare.[1] In the Troilus, love is enmeshed with language because not only is language a means of attaining love, it is also a means of preserving the love story in narrative form. This blend of love and textuality has been noted by Karla Taylor: "So many of the lines which refer most immediately to the love affair also comment on the poem itself that this conflation of love and poetics constitutes an important aspect of the 'idea' of Troilus and Criseyde" ("Proverbs and the Authentication of Convention"

278). The problem that the Troilus presents is that love and language are changeable, a fact of which the narrator and poet remind the reader. The poet is ensnared by his language, his sources, and, to a degree, his audience. His language is changeable, his sources are possibly inaccurate, and his readers are potential misreaders:

> Ye knowe ek that in forme of speche is chaunge
> Withinne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
> That hadden pris, now wonder nyce and straunge
> Us thinketh hem, and yet thei spake hem so,
> And spedde as wel in love as men now do;
> Ek for to wynnen love in sondry ages,
> In sondry londes, sondry ben usages. (2.22-28)[2]

Within this stanza, Chaucer meshes the themes of love and language. Just as Chaucer manipulates his language through the narrator, the characters manipulate one another. Several critics (Carton, Dinshaw, Travis, and Leicester among them) have noted the importance of reading in the Troilus. For some critics, the characters view other characters as texts. Dinshaw sees Criseyde as a text that is read by men (Chaucer's Sexual Poetics 28-64). Robert Hanning makes an interesting comment on characters who "gloss" other characters. Hanning uses "gloss" in the sense of to deceive through flattery. (This is only one possible meaning of this word.) Whereas Dinshaw sees the male characters viewing Criseyde as a text, Hanning shows Criseyde as a glossator. If "to gloss" can mean to flatter decep-

tively, "people can . . . be . . . the object of the verb 'to gloss.'" Hanning continues:

> And this fact becomes in Chaucer's hands a potent symbol for the dehumanization inherent in the practice of deceit and manipulation. People thus "glosed" are reduced to the status of texts that the wily glossator can "explain" (i.e., control) as he pleases. ("I Shal Finde It in a Maner Glose" 40)

Language, characters, history--all can be manipulated. If language, the very medium through which we know history, is altered, so too is our view of the past. The Chaucerian narrator is particularly troubled by the ultimately transitory nature of language and its consequences for history. He prefers to blame his story on his sources. At first, he stresses that he repeats his story as he has learned it from his authorities. By Book IV, however, he suggests that the sources may have lied about Criseyde (4.19-22).

This uncertainty of knowledge is expressed in the vocabulary of the <u>Troilus</u>. For example, various forms of the verb <u>connen</u>, such as <u>kan</u> or <u>koude</u>, appear throughout the text. The <u>Middle English Dictionary</u> lists several definitions of <u>connen</u>, including: "To have ability . . . or skill"; to "know how (to do sth.)"; "To be in a position (to do or be sth.)"; to "be possible or right under the circumstances"; "To have mastery of (a skill), be versed or competent in (a craft, occupation, activity)"; "to know or understand (a language)"; "To know or have mastery of (a field of learning, a body of

doctrines, etc.)"; "To know (particular things, facts, or truths)"; "To experience (an emotion, trouble, etc.), know from experience; feel or be (happy, sad, angry, etc.)." The word kan, then, is not limited to intellectual knowledge. It may suggest a craftiness, an ability to manipulate, to create. It may even suggest an emotional reaction. When kan or koude appear throughout the Troilus, these shades of meaning are present, giving very subtle gradations of meaning to the text. Throughout this discussion, the forms of connen must be considered in all of their ambiguity when they appear in the text of the Troilus. In some instances, only one meaning is possible. In others, the ambiguity of connen is essential to the context.

The Troilus is reflexive. It constantly reminds the reader of the text as well as the story. Chaucer was familiar with medieval rhetorical theory; the most famous evidence for his knowledge is his quotation of a passage from Geoffrey de Vinsauf's Poetria Nova in Troilus 1.1065-71. The Poetria Nova is itself a highly reflexive work. In a discussion entitled "Absolute Reflexivity," Alexandre Leupin analyzes this element in the Poetria. The Poetria illustrates the various rhetorical doctrines within its own text; it "manages to erase the boundary between doctrinal 'content' and the practice of writing" (Barbarolexus 19). Both David Aers and Robert Jordan have discussed re-

flexivity in Chaucer; neither critic, however, has analyzed the Troilus. To Aers, reflexivity in Chaucer concerns the subject of the tale rather than its text; in contrast, Jordan employs poetics as described by Todorov to stress the analysis of the text. According to Aers, "Reflexive imagination returns reified texts and authorities to their human speakers, disclosed with their inevitable limitations and partial interests" (Creative Imagination 83). The authority of the auctours is questioned. Jordan, on the other hand, is more concerned with the text: "A valid Chaucerian poetics must take account of the intellectual dimension of Chaucerian narrative and its undisguised self-consciousness about the making of make-believe" (Chaucer's Poetics 21; see Jordan's comments on Aers's discussion 17-18). Both views, different as they are, are crucial to a discussion of reflexivity in the Troilus. The text not only comments on itself as a text, but it questions the authorities from which it allegedly springs.

The Troilus is not so much a tragedy as it is a study of the futility, frailty, and endurance of language. The Troilus presents the metamorphosis of language through the metamorphosis of love. By equating love and language, Chaucer plays with paradox: the ephemeral nature of that which endures.

[1] Images of bondage and imprisonment appear throughout the poem and have been studied by Stephen A. Barney and Thomas A. Van. See Barney, "Troilus Bound," Speculum 47 (1972): 445-458; Van, "Imprisonment and Ensnarement in Troilus and the Knight's Tale," Papers in Language and Literature 7 (1971): 3-12.

[2] Geoffrey Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde, ed. Stephen A. Barney, in The Riverside Chaucer, 3rd ed., edited by Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987): 473-585. All subsequent references to the Troilus and to other works of Chaucer's are to this edition unless otherwise noted and are cited in the body of the dissertation.

CHAPTER ONE

One of the subjects of the *Troilus* is the manipulation of language. Chaucer uses various rhetorical devices through the voices of his narrator, his major characters, and the old books that the narrator claims as his sources in order to control the language and the narrative. Both language and love are capable of being manipulated; the manipulation of love is predicated on the manipulation of language.

Book I is the book of knowledge, and in the textual world that is the *Troilus*, very little is certain. The *Troilus* emphasizes that because of the ambiguity of language and the possibility of misinterpretation, very little exists that can be known completely. Text, tale, history, love, characters that are themselves constructs of the text--all are built from language.

Any form of communication--oral, written, or physical--is subject to interpretation. The *Troilus* opens with two interpretive acts of the narrator and Calkas. The narrator interprets his source in order to convey his story; he will, however, protest that he is translating his material from an authority and is not responsible for the story. Nevertheless, the act of translation must assume some interpretation in that the translator is also a reader. Bloomfield has noted that "Chaucer never lets the reader doubt for long that he is the narrator and interpreter of the story" (79). One of

the medieval concepts of poetry described it as a means of making the knowledge of the past available to present experience (Payne, Key of Remembrance 89). The narrator functions not only as an interpreter of language but as one who passes on or carries over a past experience into the present. Dieter Mehl comments on this type of interpretive practice.

> At almost every crucial point in his narrative Chaucer insists on the fundamental difference between the traditional material and his treatment of it. This makes Troilus and Criseyde an almost classic example of the technique of 'interpretation' in the medieval sense of the word. The poet embellishes his material; he invests it with fresh meaning--or, rather, he tries to rediscover its real meaning. (Geoffrey Chaucer: An Introduction to His Narrative Poetry 67)

The narrator interprets the story for us throughout the poem; indeed, his narration is the scope of the poem. The second act of interpretation made in the Troilus is that of Calkas, who understands Apollo's message as a portent of Troy's destruction (Troilus 1.64-77). The narrator's interpretation provides the frame for his tale; Calkas's anticipates the fall of Troy, a part of history that takes place beyond the narrator's artistic frame. The narrator's interpretation looks back at history through his sources. In contrast, Calkas's interpretation sees what will take place.

The Troilus ends with interpretation: the reader is left to interpret the entire story. The reader sup-

posedly knows the bones of the tale from its beginning: Troilus's love affair will progress from misery to joy to tragedy. However, the reader may remain uncertain about the flesh of these bones and may be unsure of the way he or she should read certain passages or even the poem as a whole. When the reader reaches the end of the *Troilus*, he or she will probably have questions about its meaning. One of the many ironies of the *Troilus* is that the only character who seems to possess foreknowledge and to use it is the traitor Calkas. The reader has foreknowledge about the end of the story, but that foreknowledge does not necessarily help with an interpretation. It appears that in Troy, as well as in Eden, knowledge can be treacherous.

As much as he is concerned with his story, Chaucer emphasizes the act and art of *telling* that story. Although he refers to sources, he is not merely recounting the tale; he is recreating it. The narrator is a construct that allows him to comment upon his own storytelling and to make the reader aware of the text as the medium through which the story exists.

> The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
> That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye,
> In lovynge, how his aventures fellen
> Fro wo to wele, and after out of joie,
> My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
> Thesiphone, thow help me for t'endite
> Thise woful vers, that wepen as I write.
> (1.1-7)

As Martin Stevens has noted, the beginning of the

Troilus is not so much a proem to Book I as it is an introduction to the entire work ("Double Structure" 165-66). The preoccupation with language that haunts the *Troilus* is evident from this first complex stanza, which encapsulates Chaucer's trinity of writer, audience, and story. When we disentangle the inverted, Virgilian order of the first sentence, we see that grammatically the infinitive *to tellen* is stronger than the complement of the infinitive, the *sorwe* of Troilus, because *to tellen* functions as a predicate nominative. Since a predicate nominative is identical to the subject of a sentence, *to tellen* equals *purpos*, the subject of the sentence. By extension, *to tellen* becomes one of the subjects of the *Troilus*. Moreover, *to tellen* receives special emphasis in that it is the first rhyme word. As Evan Carton remarks, "To write, read, or act in *Troilus and Criseyde* is to be a partner in the polygamy of speaking and hearing that at once makes up the poem and constitutes its main subject" (49). The first sentence of the *Troilus* tells us something about the narrator. His *purpos*, his *raison d'etre*, is to tell a story. He exists to relate a text of which he is a construct.

The end rhymes of the first stanza give the reader a very good idea of the content of the entire work: *tellen*, *Troye*, *fellen*, *joie*, *fro ye*, *t'endite*, *I write*. The first end rhyme, *tellen*, and the closing couplet

refer to language both oral and written. The fro ye and I write emphasize both audience and author by their placement at the ends of their respective lines. The broken rhyme fro ye particularly highlights the audience by making that audience, whether a solitary reader or a listening group, aware that they are involved in the telling of the story. (Of course, Chaucer may have been kidding the rhyme, with the epic name of Troy paired with the broken rhyme fro ye.) The rhymes Troye, fellen, and joie are sandwiched between the first line and the last three, which refer to the audience and the act of composition. The Troye-fellen-joie sequence gives the audience the fall of Troy without the narrator's ever having mentioned it.

In the first stanza we find the first instance of the famous Troye/joie pairing of the Troilus. Although joie in this stanza refers to Troilus's aventures, it will refer to the city the last time that its name appears as an end rhyme in the poem (5.1546-47). The rhyme word that will ultimately refer to Troy is appropriate in this reference to the Trojan prince. That the fates of Troy and Troilus are bound together is a well-known point of criticism. R. Allen Shoaf writes the prince's name as "Troylus, principally to insist on the very close relationship between Troy and Troylus" ("Dante's Commedia and Chaucer's Theory" 83, note 1).

The rhyme _joie_ is crucial to the first stanza because it is the rhyme word of the central line of the stanza. _Joie_ is found not only in the center of the first stanza but in the center of the _Troilus_. Book 3, the central book, contains the consummation, the pinnacle of Troilus's joy. The word _joie_ or a variant appears many times throughout the consummation, at 3.1228, 1253, 1310, 1320, 1351, 1379, 1404, 1407, 1413, 1442, (in the last lines of an apostrophe to night: "For now, for thow so hiest out of Troie,/Have I forgon thus hastili my joie!"--a sentiment which could be said of Criseyde by Troilus in Book 5), 1450 (again a rhyme with _Troye_), and 1509.

The first stanza is a miniaturized version of the structure of the poem. It begins and ends with references to language and the art of writing, and joy is at the center of it. The concluding couplet in this stanza is itself remarkable. One reason for its interest is the expression _I write_; the narrator has not begun to blame his sources. _I write_ also clarifies that the narrator is writing the story, not merely telling it as the first line may imply. Derek Brewer has discussed orality and literacy in Chaucer ("The Reconstruction of Chaucer" 3-19). Brewer comments, "Reading _Troilus_ in solitude becomes . . . a fictional literate experience of the reception of oral poetry in itself, of being directly addressed by the poet" (14).

Moreover, for Chaucer the language from the very start is an agent in the tragedy: "Thise woful vers, that wepen." The idea of living, changeable language is present throughout the poem. Note, for example, 2.22-23, in which the narrator mentions the fact that speech may change within a thousand years.

The most unusual element of the first concluding couplet is the invocation of Thesiphone. Why does the narrator invoke a fury instead of a muse? Unlike a muse, who serves as an inspiration, a fury is a doer. Morton Bloomfield notes that Thesiphone's role is analogous to the narrator's:

> She is responsible for the torment of humans, but she weeps for her actions. She is also in a sense the invoker himself who puts himself in his poem in a similar role. Chaucer is also a sorrowing tormenter who is retelling a true tale, the predestined end of which he cannot alter. (80)

As the avenger, Thesiphone, like a storyteller, must be mindful of past deeds. She needs a long memory. The memory of the past, the recounting of history, will be a theme throughout the _Troilus_. If Thesiphone as an avenger remembers past things, her presence hints at remembrance in the _Aeneid_. Note Vergil's verb in his invocation of the muse:

> Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso
> quidve dolens regina deum tot volvere casus
> insignem pietate virum, tot adire labores
> impulerit. Tantaene animis caelestibus irae?
> (1.8-11)[1]

The command memora, meaning recount or recall, suggests remember. Memora combines memory and language in a command to recount a story from the past. Payne comments in The Key of Remembrance about the medieval view of history:

> History had its most real and its only fruitful existence in the minds of men, so that the first thing we must note in considering Chaucer's uses of the past is that the past was for him primarily an intellectual phenomenon which continued in remembrance just so long as it could be made meaningful to experience. (64-65)

Memory is the mother of the muses. Without remembrance there would be no stories. Vergil does not invoke a fury, but he describes a furious goddess in a story that unfolds "saevae memorem Junonis ob iram" (Aeneid 1.4)--"because of the remembering anger of cruel Juno." Aeneas is impelled to undergo great difficulties because of Juno's mindful anger. Troilus is impelled to love because of the "despit" (1.207) of the God of Love. The beginning of the Troilus, then, has a subtle echo of the Aeneid: both open with fury and a memory of the past rendered in poetically structured language.

Chaucer's reference to Thesiphone continues into the second stanza, bringing with it another memory of the Aeneid: "To the clepe I, thow goddesse of torment" (1.8). The Latinate inversion of the subject pronoun I to form an enclosure with thow recalls a similar enclosure ("ego te") in the fourth book of the Aeneid.

Aeneas promises to remember Dido:

> Tandem pauca refert: "Ego te, quae plurima
> fando
> enumerare vales, numquam, regina, negabo
> promeritam, nec me meminisse pigebit Elissae
> dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit
> artus. (4.333-36)[2]

The "Ego te" of the above passage has three words on each side of it, just as the "I thow" of the Chaucer line has. The "Ego te" enclosure of the Aeneid occurs in a passage about a broken love that will soon be a memory. Chaucer writes a memory of a love that is doomed to be broken. (The Aeneid will again be echoed at Troilus 5.1765-67, in which the narrator declares that if he had wished to write about Troilus's arms, he would have discussed his battles--quite different from the "Arms and a man I sing" assertion that begins the Aeneid.[3])

The classical resonance of the prologue is maintained until the middle of the second stanza.[4] With the words "as I kan" (1.11), the narrator qualifies his ability and also gives us the first of many kan expressions in the Troilus. The word kan may potentially have a number of meanings ranging from being able to do something or knowing how to do something; it may mean to know information (see above 9-10). The expression here may mean "as I know how to help lovers" or "as far as I am able to help lovers": the narrator will soon announce that he is an unlikely lover. He may have intel-

lectual knowledge about the art of love, but he has no practical experience. We do not know this fact about the narrator when we read the first kan. It is not until we read the narrator's self-deprecating remarks in the third stanza that the kan of l.11 takes on a derogatory tone.

The narrator reminds us of a rhetorical rule: one's expression should suit one's story (Barney, Explanatory Notes to Troilus in Riverside Chaucer 1025, note to lines 12-14). By referring to his own delivery, the narrator has accomplished two things. First, "he dramatizes his own telling of the tale," acting as if an audience were present (Brewer 14). What Brewer refers to as "telling" is close to what the narratologist Gérard Genette calls narration. Translated into English as narrating, it is the expression used "for the producing narrative action and, by extension, the whole of the real or fictional situation in which that action takes place" (Genette 27; see also translator's note, 27, note 2). Medieval rhetoric and twentieth-century narratology merge. At this point, the narrator has foregrounded his act of telling. The narrator's second achievement in referring to his own physical expression is that he has placed himself with in the narrative action, if not within the action of the story. He has given himself the freedom to comment not only on the story but on both his narrating and his language. As

Robert Jordan has noted about the Troilus, we must remember that "the poem is about the teller as well as about the tale" (Chaucer and the Shape of Creation 97).

The third stanza continues in the voice of the poet-not-lover, who in his seeming incompetence declares that he is one who serves the servants of the God of Love (1.15). He has adapted the papal title "the servant of God's servants." The term seems to be used in all humility, but there is scarcely anything humble in appropriating a papal title. This is the paradox of the narrator: if he is a simpleton, he is extremely complicated.

Whereas the third stanza refers specifically to the narrator, the fourth is addressed to lovers--the audience--asking them to remember their misfortunes in love. The Troilus will not be merely a recounting of an old story; the audience's sympathy in their remembrance of loves past helps determine their interpretation of the poem. Judith Ferster has noted the medieval realization that an audience may bring meaning to the literary text:

> Furthermore, since the typical medieval mode of composition was the rewriting of old works, the power of readers to reshape a work while retelling it would have been clear to educated audiences that knew one or more of a work's ancestors. Writers themselves demonstrated the reader's power to transform a poem and thus showed that reading can be a kind of rewriting. (10)

For the last five stanzas of the proem (1.22-56), the narrator focuses on his audience of lovers, asking them to pray for other lovers. Mark Lambert sees the reference to the audience at 1.22-46 as a request for audience involvement in the creation of the work:

> Moreover, the poem will come into being, or the poet wishes it to come into being, not through the efforts of purposeful writer and helpful fury alone; Troilus and Criseyde should emerge from a context of common and loving human effort. The writer will try to 'don gladnesse' to lovers, but his chosen audience should themselves contribute to the work by praying; praying both for other lovers, and for the poet himself. . . . ("Telling the Story" 61)

The narrator requests two favors of his audience. He asks them to remember their own former problems with love (1.24-28) and to pray for those like Troilus and for the narrator as well (1.29-35). These initial requests suggest the audience-reader's relation to the story and the narrator's own modus operandi because the audience is to use their memory of their own experiences in love to interpret the text. The text as history will be relative to present experience, but the audience must interpret the past by using their own experience. The relationship is circular: the past gives meaning to present experience, but the memory of experience helps a reader to interpret the historical past. In discussing Chaucer's inclination to allow his readers to bring their own meanings to his text, Ferster comments, "'Meaning' . . . is produced not merely by authors, but

by a dialectical relationship between authors and audiences" (11; for other commentary on the audience's involvement with the narrative, see Hanning, "Audience as Co-Creator" 19-21). The love story may enrich lovers, but lovers bring something to the story.

Payne notes that in the remaining stanzas of the proem "the narrator invokes alternately the joys and the sorrows of love"--an "alternation in tone" that will appear throughout the _Troilus_ (_Geoffrey Chaucer_ 84). The narrator asks his audience to pray for those who are happy in love as well as those who are miserable. These intentions parallel themes in his own text. Indeed, writing is part of the narrator's plan for the salvation of his soul. He intends to pray for Love's devotees, write about their sorrows, "lyve in charite," and have compassion on them _as if he were their brother_ (1.47-51). Note that as he sympathizes with lovers, he has excluded himself from their ranks. Praying for lovers and living in charity provide him with consolation for his lack of a grand passion, but consolation is not everything. During the consummation of Troilus and Criseyde's love, the narrator will become so enchanted by his own descriptions that he will wonder why he never sold his soul for such an experience (3.1319).

In the last stanza of this proem (1.50-56), the narrator pulls himself away from his own commentary and announces that he will turn directly to his "matere"

(1.53), the love story of Troilus and "Criseyde,/And how that she forsook hym er she deyde" (1.55-56). This stanza serves as a bridge between the narrator's introductory material and the beginning of the story proper; it is also the first example of the narrator's movement from commentary to story, a self-conscious transition that will appear frequently in the text. The narrator's comments provide a way of bringing the reader into the creation of the text. He asks his audience to listen to the story "with a good entencioun" (1.52). None of his frustration with his sources has surfaced; the reader has yet to encounter and sort through the mass of self-reflexive rhetoric that comprises the poem and threatens to exist beyond the narrator's control. The narrator tells his audience the conclusion of the story in the concluding couplet of this stanza. The audience knows the conclusion. Pandarus will even tell Criseyde that a "tale is al for som conclusioun" (2.259). It is not so much that the audience will wait to hear the end of the tale as it is that they are asked to observe the creation of the text. The couplet not only tells the conclusion of the story, but the narrator may possibly use the rhyme to slant the reader's opinion of Criseyde. The Criseyde/deyde rhyme may suggest that Criseyde, as well as Troilus, is doomed. The first and last references to Criseyde's name occur in rhymed couplets in which the second rhyme is deyde. The first instance of

Criseyde's name refers to her death, but the final <u>Criseyde/deyde</u> couplet will be concerned with Troilus's death (5.1833-34). Moreover, this final reference occurs immediately before the narrator's exhortation that young people turn from the world's vanity. Troilus and Criseyde's love may be doomed, but this point does not prevent their story from being meaningful to present experience.

The narrator continues to steer his reader with a summary of an old story that everyone knows. The tale of the fall of Troy "is wel wist" (1.57). By acknowledging that the story is well-known, he has placed the audience in the priveledged position of sharing some background material with the narrator. The audience becomes even more involved with the story because of this shared knowledge. Knowledge is to be a key point in the poem, especially because the narrator bolsters his story with sources and insists that the sources are responsible for the tale. He knows only what he has read in old books, which may or may not be true. The audience may or may not know all of the old books the narrator mentions, but at least they are lovers and are thus able to relate to the tale.

Like the first stanza of the proem to Book 1, the first stanza of the story proper gives part of the tale of the fall of Troy in end rhyme: <u>stronge/wente</u>; <u>longe/stente</u>; <u>entente/Eleyne/peyne</u> (1.57-63). The narrator

asked his audience to listen to the tale "with a good entencioun" (1.52); now we are told of the "entente" of the Greeks to destroy Troy. The Troilus is obsessed with intentions, both of the characters and of the narrative, which is concerned about telling the story. The Greek intention for revenge for the abduction of Helen provides the basis for the story of the Trojan War. Furthermore, the Eleyne/peyne rhyme is itself suggestive. It appears in a closing couplet, just like the Criseyde/deyde rhyme in the previous stanza that concluded the proem. The proximity of Criseyde/deyde to Eleyne/peyne may not be coincidental. Noting the similarities between Eleyne and Criseyde, Baswell and Taylor comment:

> Through literal association in the plot, through overt comparisons, and through subtler parallels with moments in Helen's own history, Criseyde is endowed with aspects of the Trojan queen's beauty but also burdened with implications of her infidelity and historical disastrousness. (302)

Baswell and Taylor add that Criseyde is unlike Helen in that Criseyde responds emotionally to "the joy and the misery she . . . helps create" (302)

Medieval writers supported their views by citing authorities. The Troilus, an extraordinarily self-reflexive text, frequently mentions authorities. True, Lollius, the alleged source of the story, is nonexistent. Nevertheless, sources are necessary for history. A writer's difficulty is in sorting the good sources

from the spurious. Not only the authorities of the Troilus but the authorities in it are questionable. Pandarus is an authority on love who has never kissed his lady; the narrator of the love poem dares not love; and Calkas, a man of considerable knowledge, commits treason because of his knowledge. In the first stanza of the story proper (1.57-63), the narrator summarizes the war up to the beginning of his own story. Since the story of the Trojan War is well known, the audience assumes that the narrator's story is within a historical framework. There is some authority for this tale. The following stanza (1.64-70) brings us from the general background of the war to a specific, important element in Chaucer's story. We are told that in Troy there was

> Dwellynge a lord of gret auctorite,
> A gret devyn, that clepid was Calkas,
> That in science so expert was that he
> Knew wel that Troie sholde destroied be,
> By answere of his god, that highte thus:
> Daun Phebus or Appollo Delphicus. (1.65-70)

Calkas does not guess what will happen; he knows what will happen. He is a very good interpreter of signs. Calkas, like the reader of the Troilus who already knows the conclusion, has foreknowledge. Throughout Book 1, the words wise, wiste, unwiste, konnyng, and their variants appear in clusters. The word wise appears in Troilus with different meanings, such as "manner" or "capable of judging truly" (OED). The words dede drede, and rede appear frequently. In the Troilus, rede appears as a noun meaning "advice"; the word also

functions in the senses of "to read" and "to advise" (MED, s.v. rēd and rēden). The words wiste, wise, and rede are first used in reference to Calkas (1.76, 79, 83); they will be echoed in the description of his daughter, Criseyde ("unwist," 1.93; "rede," 1.96). The juxtaposition of the descriptions of Calkas and Criseyde at first appears to contrast them. However, father and daughter will appear to be very much alike by the end of the poem. Both Woods (30-34) and Price (316) note the similarity between Criseyde and her relatives.

Calkas, then, is an authority or divine who interprets the gods' messages. It is significant that Calkas knows his information through Apollo's "answer," a word that appears twice in this description of Calkas (1.69; 72). Calkas had to ask a question to receive an answer. The first treachery in Troilus, Calkas's defection, occurs because of an act of interpretation. The words Chaucer uses to describe the sources of Calkas's knowledge are not particularly benevolent. The methods of calkulynge and sort may have been part of a ritual to Calkas, but a medieval Christian would have considered them superstitious, if not sinister. These means require the interpretation of an ambiguous answer.

Calkas, the "forknowynge wise," fulfills his "purpos" to cross to the Greek camp; the Greeks honor him because they "trust that he hath konnynge hem to rede" (1.79; 83). Notice the vocabulary in which

Calkas's knowledge is emphasized. Like the narrator, Calkas has a purpos. Both the narrator and Calkas are interpreters, and they create their purposes on their translations--the narrator on the fictional Lollius, Calkas on the messages of the gods.

Before the reader is introduced to Criseyde, he or she must read a stanza about a subject that touches both Criseyde and her father--rumor. By mentioning rumor so early in the poem, Chaucer is preparing us for the many other rumors that will be generated in the text. Some rumors are true; some are false. Most, if not all, are potential texts. (See especially Criseyde's complaint at 5.1058-68: books will destroy her reputation, and she will be "rolled . . . on many a tonge.") Calkas's actions have become the subject of rumor. "Gret rumour gan" (1.85). The treason of Calkas "was spoken," and the Trojan citizens "casten" to have vengeance and "seyden" that all of his family should be destroyed (1.85-91). Rumor, the first act of orality/aurality in the Troilus, comes from nowhere and is everywhere, becoming a paradigm for suspect sources througout the story--including the story itself. Rumor is a story.

The wise Calkas knows what will happen. Criseyde, however, is unaware, "unwist" (1.93) of her father's treason until the rumors reach her. Chaucer suggests the power of stories--rumors--showing how they spread and how they affect people. Criseyde "alday herd at

ere" (1.106) the story about her father. The <u>rede/ drede</u> couplet used in the description of Calkas (1.83-84) is reversed in the first description of Criseyde: "For of hire lif she was ful sore in drede,/As she that nyste what was best to rede" (1.95-96). Her going to Ector after hearing these rumors parallels Calkas's own plea to the Greek lords in Book 4, when news of the proposed truce "com to Calkas ere" (4.63). Rumor prompts daughter and father to action. (It will also be one of the reasons that Troilus and Criseyde will decide to separate temporarily rather than elope. See 4.563-65; 1569-82.)

The first words spoken by a character in the <u>Troilus</u> belong to Ector, and little does he know that his reassurance of Criseyde's right to live in Troy as long as she pleases will turn into a lie (1.117-23). He promises her that she will have all of the honor to which she is accustomed, but qualifies the promise with "As fer as I may ought enquere or here" (1.123). Again, a reference to the orality/aurality of language. Ector can protect Criseyde only through what he learns through language--possibly rumor. We know through language, and are therefore subject to its limitations.

The first section of the story proper stressed language as rumor or speech. The stanza at 1.27 gives us the narrator's first intrusion into the story proper and the first reference that he is reading this tale in

a source. He writes that he does not know whether or not Criseyde had children because he does not "rede" it (1.132-33). The word rede, which meant advise in the references to Calkas and Criseyde (1.83; 96), becomes the act of reading to the narrator. In this instance, his reading does him little good. The narrator knows the outcome of the story, yet he is not omniscient. His sources do not yield everything that he may wish to know. He knows, and he makes sure that his reader knows, that a complete history is impossible because of the selectivity of his sources.

The narrator has begun what appears to be a digression, but is really a self-conscious description of what the *Troilus* is allegedly *not* about--the Trojan War. Although he stresses that the war is not his subject, there is no way that the narrator is able to ignore it because it provides the framework for his own tale. At 1.134-47 he begins to discuss the war in very general terms, not as authorial commentary but as background to his story. In the stanza beginning at 1.141, the narrator interrupts himself. This is an extremely self-reflexive stanza, and it echoes his vocabulary from the proem, particularly words that dealt with his own storytelling, such as *purpos* (1.5; 142) and *matere* (1.53; 144). He points out that he does not wish to leave his main narrative, and yet to make this point he makes a slight digression. This first digression supposedly

forestalls a longer one:

> But how this town com to destruccion
> Ne falleth naught to purpos me to telle,
> For it were a long digression
> Fro my matere, and yow to long to dwelle.
> But the Troian gestes, as they felle,
> In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dite,
> Whoso that kan may rede hem as they write.
> (1.141-47)

The word _kan_ has a number of meanings. A form of _connen_, its meaning may vary from _to know information_ or _to understand_, to such different meanings as _to experience_ or _feel_ (_Middle English Dictionary_; cited above 9-10). When _kan_ appears in the _Troilus_, it may have only one meaning; however, the word may be used ambiguously or may carry with it the shadows of other definitions. The use of _kan_ at 1.147 is somewhat ambiguous. If we translate the expression as _whoever is able to read_, it may mean _whoever knows how to read_ (a moot expression for anyone actually reading the text); or it may mean _whoever is able to read the authorities_. This last translation could refer to the reader's ability to read the sources in their original languages or to have physical access to the sources. A reader may be kept from a source in a number of ways, a fact we must remember when we consider that the narrator is allegedly translating from a source. Moreover, we may question just how much of the narrator's reading _we_ are receiving, for by his own admission he edits the source. If something does not suit his _purpos_, he leaves it out.

(See, especially, 3.1576. Furthermore, Chaucer never tells us what the ficticious Lollius had in mind when he supposedly wrote the source. The narrator's purpos may be totally different from that of his "source." Note also that the narrator never sends his own reader to read Lollius.)

The rhyme scheme of 1.141-47 echoes the end rhyme of 1.1-7. This echo of the first stanza in which the narrator explained his purpos may be intended to emphasize the narrator's own writing. The rhymes at 1.1 and 1.3 are tellen and fellen; the rhymes at 1.142, 144, and 145 are telle, dwelle, and felle. The concluding couplet at 1.146-47 may be a complex play on the concluding couplet of the first stanza of the prologue. The rhyme of 1.146-47 is in Dite/write. The rhyme at 1.6-7 is t'endite/write. Because they form rhyme words, these verbs of telling and writing receive special emphasis in the text. When the narrator prays to Thesiphone to help him "t'endite" the story (1.6), he is asking for her help in composing. Although he insists on citing authorities, the narrator is becoming one. At 1.146, he refers to an established authority with "in Dite." He will not begin to put himself even remotely in the same category with the ancients until the Troilus is nearly complete at 5.1786-92, when he orders his "litel bok" to pay homage to the great poets.

In 1.141, the narrator may say that he will not

discuss the Trojan War; nevertheless, he keeps the theme of destruction before his reader with a word play on <u>falleth</u> and <u>felle</u> (1.142, 145), even though these words are not used to refer to the fall of Troy. This suggestion of the fall of Troy via his vocabulary is similar to the strategy he used at 1.1-7. The war will not go away because he chooses to ignore it in his tale. Moreover, to ignore it is impossible. When he denies taking the war as his subject, it suggests itself in his language. By Books 4 and 5, it will be impossible to keep the political situation out of his text. Eugene Vance comments on other ways in which the Troy story is present throughout the <u>Troilus</u> and appears to be told through the love story:

> Broadly speaking, Chaucer's <u>Troilus</u> is the story of an erotic tragedy that unfolds within the walls of Troy, a city of lovers besieged in war and a locus of love's language. The experience of Troilus ("little Troy") is therefore but a synechdoche (<u>pars pro toto</u>), a fragment, of that larger violence occurring outside the city's walls. (313)

Vance later remarks:

> If we may take for granted that Chaucer understood, whether intuitively or rationally, the ideological and metaphysical dimensions of the dramatic setting that he created, in my opinion, much of the fascination of <u>Troilus</u> lies in those numerous poetic strategies by which Chaucer manages to stage in our "dyrkyd memorie" those very historical events of Troy's fall that the narrator himself tends to repress, with the consequence that these intrude with more and more intensity upon our consciousness as the story moves toward its conclusion. In other

> words, what interests me in this poem is the manner in which Chaucer makes one story "tell" another story that is only latent or virtual, yet all-important because it is universal. (317)

Chaucer simultaneously manipulates two histories: the tale of Troilus's love and its frame, the history of Troy. When the narrator pulls back from his self-reflexive digression at 1.141-47, he returns to his tale. He situates the supposedly historical Troilus and Criseyde within a literary motif: the lover's first sight of the beloved in a church or temple. Although Chaucer follows Boccaccio (who probably follows Benoît in this instance), precedents such as Dante seeing Beatrice, Petrarch seeing Laura, Aeneas seeing Dido also exist (Barney, Explanatory Notes to Troilus in Riverside Chaucer 1026, note to lines 162-315). In any event, Chaucer creates history by triggering our literary memories. There is no guarantee that Chaucer's readers would know the earlier stories, but those who were familiar with them saw them reflected in the Troilus.

The use of such literary motifs enables Chaucer's reader to consider the Troilus in relation to other texts. His description of the spring setting is conventional, but Chaucer further emphasizes his poem as a text and related to artistic conventions by informing his audience that he presents the description as he reads it (1.159). Payne notes that the descriptio of

spring (1.155-58) is typical of the description recommended by Geoffrey de Vinsauf for beginning a courtly love poem (Key of Remembrance 193-94).

The Trojans come to worship Pallas Athena in the image of the Palladion. The only image that the narrator will concern himself with is Criseyde. Indeed, in this scene, she is an image. While most of the Trojans adore the Palladion, Troilus's attention as well as that of the narrator and reader will be fixed on Criseyde. The "relik" (1.153) called the Palladion is not even described.

Troilus will see the image of Criseyde that the narrator describes. A reader hopefully will not only perceive Criseyde's beauty but may also find the scene enriched by literary precedents (see above 37). Chaucer has placed the love in a literary context from its inception, not only as a continuation of the Troy history but in relation to other texts. Rowe sees Criseyde functioning in the poem as Troilus's Beatrice (71). There are, however, other textual echoes. Ann Astell uses the description of Criseyde in her widow's weeds to associate her with Eurydice:

> The initial description of Criseyde associates her with death, with bereavement, and with the realm of spirits. . . . In short, Criseyde resembles the beautiful, young wife Eurydice, cast down by Death among the shades. (287)

The idea of the beautiful Criseyde as a Eurydice type may not be particularly appealing, but it is

interesting when we consider the setting of the temple. If death is associated with a Eurydice figure, the setting of the temple of the Palladion may remind us of the fate of Troy. The city could not be defeated while in possession of the Palladion. Diomede's theft of the image is not mentioned in the Troilus, but readers who knew the history of Troy may have remembered this point (Baswell and Taylor 303 and 310).

The main focus in the description of Criseyde, then, is on her image, which has literary associations and supplants the image of the Palladion in this scene. Troilus will fall in love with this image. Rowe comments:

> In Book I, Troilus's love of Criseyde is in one sense a response to her beauty; most of the time, however, we watch him create an image of her in his mind. . . . In a sense, Criseyde does not even exist in Book I but is only an idea in the mind of Troilus. . . . (118)

We do not hear a word from Criseyde until she jokes with Pandarus in Book 2. In the temple scene, we see her as Troilus sees her. There is, however, an earlier description of Criseyde:

> So aungelik was hir natif beaute,
> That lik a thing inmortal semed she,
> As doth an hevenyssh perfit creature,
> That down were sent in scornynge of nature.
> (1.102-05)

Criseyde is again described for us at 1.169-82, when she is in the temple. Dressed in mourning, Criseyde should contrast with the lush spring

descriptio, the "lusty" knights and beautiful maidens assembled for the feast (1.155-68). Chaucer draws attention to her widow's weeds, using the adjective "blak" or "blake" three times within two stanzas (1.170, 175, 177). Chaucer sees the contrast between Criseyde's vitality and her mourning and makes his reader aware of it. The liveliness of her expression belongs in this festive April scene and is at odds with her widow's habit. Pandarus will call attention to this disparity between Criseyde's youthful beauty and her garb when he asks her why she wishes "to disfigure" herself in mourning (2.221-24). The word "disfigure" suggests not only that Criseyde hides her beauty (which is something she is clearly not doing in the temple) but that she dissembles, living a widow's life that scarcely suits her.

In these first descriptions of Criseyde in Book 1, she is described through metaphor and simile. The reader must picture Criseyde through the images that the narrator relates. Her natural beauty is so heavenly that it defies nature. She is like an immortal creature. There was never such a bright star beneath such a black cloud. As the letter "A" is the first in the alphabet, so is Criseyde first among beautiful women. (1.102-04; 171-75). The reference to "A" makes both a textual and a political allusion. In a poem obsessed with language, Criseyde is compared to the first letter

in that language. John Lowes saw the reference to "A" as a tribute to Queen Anne, and thus as a means of dating the poem ("The Date of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde"). None of these metaphorical descriptions of Criseyde are really concrete. We are not given a truly physical description of her until much later in the poem (3.1247-50; 4.816-17; 5.806-14). The reader must respond to these metaphors by creating his or her own image of Criseyde.

The reader's development of a glorious, impossibly beautiful image of Criseyde is necessary because Troilus will nurture his image of her in his memory. In Book 1, all Troilus has of Criseyde is an image. The reader must develope an image of her in order to empathize with Troilus. Troilus at least will see her physical beauty. The reader must grasp that loveliness through the metaphors created by the narrator and/or his source. The early descriptions of Criseyde have "hevenyssh, perfit" (1.104) comparisons because the reader must visualize her as Troilus's ideal. Charles Muscatine has commented on Criseyde's "complexity":

> In terms of the poem's pattern of meaning, she represents the many-sided complexity of the earthly fact whose mixture of qualities provides to each beholder the abstraction that he takes for the thing itself. Seen dynamically, in the alternating dominance and recession of each of her various qualities as surrounding conditions evoke them, she represents earthly stability. She is as the world is and goes as the world goes. If between Troilus and Pandarus the mixed style

> produces an irony turning on human incapacity to see, within Criseyde it produces an ambiguity turning on the human inability to be. (153-54)

Chaucer continues to direct his reader's imagination through his vocabulary. Criseyde is said to be "makeles" (1.172). The word makeles is a loaded expression that appears throughout medieval poetry. The basic meaning is peerless or matchless. The word somesometimes has other-worldly connotations, a point which can only enhance the heavenly descriptions of Criseyde. Two poems in which the expression appears are the fifteenth-century lyric which begins "I sing of a maiden/That is makeles," and the fourteenth-century Pearl.[5] In the lyric "I Sing of a Maiden," makeles refers to the Virgin Mary. Several critics have commented that the word implies mateless as well as peerless; Mary is matchless in both senses of the term.[6] In the Pearl, the poet plays a verbal game with the words maskellez (spotless) and makelez (matchless)to show the Pearl Maiden as the Bride of Christ (Pearl, 733, 745, 757, 769, 781, 784). The Pearl Maiden corrects the dreamer, saying that she is spotless (Maskelles, 781), but not spouseless (makelez, 784).

These references are not meant to imply that Chaucer knew the lyric (an impossible feat) or that he was familiar with the Pearl, but only to suggest that the multiplicity of meaning and connotation in this word was present in Middle English and available to

Chaucer. The widow Criseyde, a heavenly-looking creature, is without peer among the beautiful women of Troy. The use of makeles shows Criseyde to be not only peerless but free, possibly even worthy, to be matched by Troilus. The sense of her being mateless is reinforced by her standing "allone" (1.178) in the temple.

There is an irony implied in the description of Criseyde as "makeles"; Criseyde's matchless condition will be gently eroded throughout the rest of the poem. The word makeles has other-worldly connotations, and Criseyde is even described as being "lik a thing inmortal" (1.103). However, Criseyde's matchlessness has nothing to do with heaven; she is not a virgin bride. The reality is simple. She is spouseless because her husband died. Troilus sees only an ideal image at this point, not the reality. Her beauty seems so "out of this world" to Troilus that he thinks she is unapproachable. (Even the reader at this point knows only that Criseyde is extremely beautiful. We encounter none of the urbane charm of the woman until we see her with Pandarus in Book 2. For now, we see her as Troilus sees her, completely in the narrator's description; we do not hear her speak until Book 2.) The exasperated Pandarus will ask the prince whether or not his lady "lyveth" (1.780). When Pandarus discovers that the lady is his niece, he comments that she is not suited to "celestial" love (1.974-987). Pandarus, the realist,

knows that Criseyde is a woman, not an angel. Before she is traded to the Greeks, Pandarus will even suggest that if Criseyde must go, Troilus can always find another mistress, someone even better than Criseyde (4.401-27). So much for Criseyde's being peerless. Troilus's tragedy, however, is that for him she is matchless. This fact is also his triumph. (It is worth noting that the narrator defends Pandarus's suggestion that Troilus find a new mistress. According to the narrator, Pandarus did not know what he was saying. He spoke only to ease Troilus. See 4.428-31.)

From Criseyde's first appearance in the temple, Chaucer plays with look in its various forms as a noun and a verb. We are told that Criseyde's "goodly lokyng" (1.173) delighted the crowd. "With ful assured lokyng" (1.182) she stood in the temple. Throughout the scene, Chaucer uses Criseyde's look to refer to her appearance or her glance. Troilus's main activity is to look at the women of Troy: "Byholding ay the ladies of the town,/Now here, now there" (1.186-87). He observes any one of his knights who "lete his eighen baiten/On any womman that he koude espye" (1.192-193). Troilus smugly observes what he believes is the foolish behavior of the knights, commenting to himself about their being "blynde" and congratulating himself on speaking "wisely" (1.202-05). Troilus and his knights, however, are not the only ones who can look. Cupid, having noticed

Troilus, "gan loken rowe" (1.206), not waiting to take revenge.

This stress on _looking_ will of course lead up to the ultimate look and medieval commonplace about love. Troilus will look at Criseyde; love will enter through his eyes. Nevertheless, all of this _looking_ has an interesting implication for readers: we "see" only what the text tells us. We see Criseyde as the narrator sees her, but his vision of her is filtered through a source. Continuing his look imagery with "O blynde world, O blynde entencioun" (1.211), the narrator digresses from the scene to address the audience about the foolishness of those who believe they can isolate themselves from love. Troilus believes that he is wise because he is not a love-struck knight. Yet when he asks rhetorically whether or not he has spoken "wisely" (1.205), his smugness prompts the reader to give a negative answer where no answer was expected. Like the narrator, Troilus knows about love only through others' experiences. Unlike the narrator, the servant of love's servants (1.15), Troilus prides himself on his contempt. The narrator's digression on lovers (1.211-59) discusses knowledge and wisdom. Troilus "wende" that his passion could never be directed against his will; however, "with a look his herte wex a-fere" (2.227-29). Addressing his audience--lovers--as "wise" (2.233), the inexperi-

enced narrator falls back on his book knowledge to support his argument:

> For this trowe I ye knowen alle or some,
> Men reden nat that folk han gretter wit
> Than they that han be most with love ynome;
> (1.240-42)

The "alderwisest" (1.247) have been delighted by love. The narrator advises (rede--1.258) the audience not to distain love. He implies that Troilus is a fool, going so far as to state that what "fooles" believe is usually wrong (1.217).

The narrator has established a common ground in this digression, making sure that his audience knows the futility of resisting love's power. In a self-reflexive stanza, he announces that he will return to his main story, the love of Troilus, and intends to "leten other thing collateral" (1.260-66). The words "other thing collateral" may mean that he no longer intends to digress. However, we have already been informed that he considers the Trojan War itself to be outside of his material (1.141-147). Has the narrator edited something from his source? Although he has not named Lollius at this point in the story, he is supposedly reading a book that does not tell him everything (1.132-33). If the narrator chooses what should remain in and what should be left out of his story, he creates his own history. Alastair Minnis has studied the medieval roles of compilator and auctour, noting that Chaucer tended to

approach his writing from the stance of a *compilator* (190-210). There was a difference in the two roles:

> Whereas an *auctor* was regarded as someone whose works had considerable authority and who bore full responsibility for what he had written, the *compilator* firmly denied any personal authority and accepted responsibility only for the manner in which he had arranged the statements of other men. (192)

Nevertheless, Minnis notes that Chaucer was almost too aware of his role to be a typical *compilator*. Minnis contrasts the approaches of Gower and Chaucer. Gower was more authorial in his approach than Chaucer:

> By contrast, for the most part, Chaucer was content to assume the role of compiler and to exploit the literary form of *compilatio*. Indeed, so deliberate was he in presenting himself as a compiler that one is led to suspect the presence of a very self-conscious author who was concerned to manipulate the conventions of *compilatio* for his own literary ends. If Gower was a compiler who tried to present himself as an author, Chaucer was an author who hid behind the 'shield and defence' of the compiler. (210)

Just as the narrator will question the integrity of his sources (4.20-21), we may begin to question the narrator. The "collateral" (1.262) material he edits from his source could change our reading of the text. We already know that the source he supposedly works from is not exhaustive; it does not tell the narrator--and, consequently, us readers--whether or not Criseyde has children (1.132-33). By acknowledging that he is leaving material out of his story, the narrator is self-reflexive about his own text.

The narrator announces his return to his tale and describes Troilus's playful "lokynge" at the ladies of Troy (1.267-70). Criseyde's "lokynge" at 1.173 and 182 describes her appearance. Troilus's "lokynge," however, is active. He appraises the women. By chance he sees Criseyde, and he is unable to imagine whence she came:

> And upon cas bifel that thorugh a route
> His eye percede, and so depe it wente,
> Til on Criseyde it smot, and ther it stente.
>
> And sodeynly he wax therwith astoned,
> And gan hir bet biholde in thrifty wise.
> "O mercy, God," thoughte he, "wher hastow
> woned,
> That art so feyr and goodly to devise?"
> Therwith his herte gan to sprede and rise,
> And softe sighed, lest men myghte hym here,
> And caught ayeyn his firste pleyinge chere.
> (1.271-280)

Troilus's playful, general "lokynge" becomes a cautious, penetrating, adoring gaze. At 1.267 and 269, _pleyinge_ and _lokynge_ are end rhymes. As rhymes, the words carry a great deal of descriptive strength. Troilus is just having fun. He is not at all serious until he sees Criseyde. The language that describes his first sight of Criseyde is warlike. The word _smot_ echoes the reference to Cupid and his bow at 1.206-10 and anticipates Troilus's later concept of himself as the victim of Cupid's wars (5.582-602). He will be described as "thorugh-darted" by Criseyde's look at 1.325.

Troilus's first sight of Criseyde marks the beginning of his creation of two images: one he devises of Criseyde and one he projects to hide his feelings.

Criseyde is wonderful "to devise." The expression as it is used here means that she is lovely to look at; however, devisen may also mean "to compose" (Middle English Dictionary). In Book 3, both the narrator and Troilus devyse words. The narrator needs divine help to devise words to describe the joy of love, and Troilus devises words to offer Criseyde his love (3.41; 56). This creative aspect of devise is borne out within the next stanzas. Troilus scrutinizes Criseyde (1.281-94). Criseyde gives a condescending "look" (1.291), but then "hir lokynge" lightens (1.293):

> And of hire look in him ther gan to quÿken
> So gret desir and such affeccioun,
> That in his herte botme gan to stiken
> Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun. (1.295-98)

Troilus internalizes her image. He creates a text with no authority except his vision of Criseyde. The narrator will describe himself as writing without experience, without "sentement" (2.13). Troilus has had no experience with love until this moment when he sees Criseyde and loses himself in contemplating her.

> From the moment Criseyde's image enters his heart, he is virtually powerless to act. Like the Dante of the Vita nuova he is subjected to love largely by the power of his own imagination, suspended in contemplation of an image too pure to elict [sic] a response from his lower nature. (Wetherbee, Chaucer and the Poets 65)

Criseyde's expression (1.291-92) suggests that she condescendingly asks whether or not she is permitted to stand near the temple door, scarcely the woman who

stood there "undre shames drede" (1.180) as the narrator described her. This question, however, goes unasked, and is only the interpretation made by Troilus or the narrator of what Criseyde's glance means. They read her look.

Recent criticism has acknowledged Chaucer's tendency to depict his characters as texts. In Chaucer on Interpretation, Judith Ferster discusses several of Chaucer's characters as texts. Although Ferster does not devote a chapter to the Troilus, she makes two notable points. She notes that Criseyde reacts to Antigone's song by printing the words in her heart (2.899-900). According to Ferster, "Criseyde responds to the song by imitating it, even becoming an edition of it by printing it in her heart" (10). Ferster comments that "Troilus is a prime example of a reader who imposes his will on a text. In Book II, he reads Criseyde's letter selectively . . ." (11).

R. A. Shoaf and Carolyn Dinshaw are specific in seeing Criseyde as a text. Shoaf notes:

> Now Chaucer supplements the image of Criseyde as coin with many suggestions that she is also like a sign or text: . . . . If Criseyde is a text or a sign or even perhaps the parchment, she is already written before Pandarus, in Troylus's behalf, begins his effort to rewrite her. (Dante, Chaucer, and the Currency of the Word 108)

Carolyn Dinshaw believes "that literary activity in Chaucerian narrative is significantly represented as a gendered activity" (Sexual Poetics 15). Dinshaw notes,

"The narrator, Pandarus, and Troilus are all characterized as readers of feminine texts" (29). Troilus is a "reader of Criseyde" (50), and Criseyde "is not only a text read but is herself a reader" (52).

Troilus's gazing at Criseyde is a surface examination of a text. People may only "gesse" that Criseyde is honorable and noble (1.286-87). On the surface, Criseyde appears to be an incarnation of courtly virtues; however, texts can lie. The idea of a textual surface is present throughout this scene in the word chere. Troilus falls for Criseyde's "chere" (1.289), but he himself begins to dissemble. Chaucer juxtaposes the internal and the external: Troilus fixes his "impressioun" of Criseyde in his heart (1.297-98). However, he has difficulty keeping his own nonchalant expression: "Unnethes wiste he how to loke or wynke" (1.301). (Again, note the look reference.) That he "caught ayeyn his firste pleyinge chere" (1.280) implies that it nearly slipped away from him. Troilus does not wish anyone else at the feast to read anything into his expression. By altering his expression, he clouds the interpretation that others may make of him. Troilus attempts to make himself expressionless and thus unreadable by the others in the temple. "He neither chere made, ne word tolde" (1.312). He starts to "dissimilen and hide" his misery (1.322). He controls his "chere and speche" (1.327) in order that he may "feyneth" that

he is happy (1.326). Throughout the Troilus, the prince hides his love by pretending that he is suffering from another malady (1.484-91; 2.1513-1757; 3.204-07, 222-24; 5.1219-1232). Troilus, hoping to be misread, makes himself a deceptive text.

Love upsets Troilus's reason. He thought he was "konnynge" (1.302); now he complains that the "konnyngeste" (1.331) of lovers can be miserable. The Middle English Dictionary lists several definitions for conninge, including: "Ability or skill"; "Knowledge, understanding"; and, "Cleverness, shrewdness, cunning." The definitions "shrewdness" and "cunning" are particularly interesting in this instance, for Troilus believed himself to be too shrewd to become as love-sick as some of his knights. Even the most manipulative people, however, may have difficulty in love; this point is clearly seen in Pandarus. Troilus will have a problem. It will soon become evident that Troilus is not adept at manipulation. Troilus had been secure in his scorn of lovers. Now he almost does not function; "what to doon he nyste" (1.356).

In discussing Chaucer's treatment of love and language in the Troilus, Karla Taylor has noted that the poem's "self-conscious poetic informs and comments upon its treatment of love" ("Proverbs and Authentication of Convention" 278). Taylor's point makes a useful intro-

troduction to a discussion of Troilus's bedroom musings, in which love is subtly depicted as a creation that must be interpreted. Love, like poetry, is a craft. The great lovers of medieval romance could make love or make poetry. Both are an art. Both involve manipulation. Both are acts of knowledge, whether carnal or intellectual. Since lovers and poets are creators and their creations are subject to interpretation, they are subject to the same dilemma. How will their signs--the lover's actions or the poet's words--be interpreted? In his apostrophe to lovers, Troilus complains that a lover may do something with "good entencioun"; however, very frequently the "lady wol it mysconstruwe,/And deme it harm in hire oppynyoun" (1.345-47). Likewise, the narrator fears that his poem may be misunderstood once it leaves his control (5.1793-98). The lady misinterprets the signs and forms an erroneous opinion of her lover. The lover's intention is misconstrued, much as the poet's meaning may be misunderstood. No matter the intention of a sign (_good entencioun_), word, or action, it is subject to the understanding of the viewer--and here we are reminded of the emphasis that Chaucer places on _look_ in the temple scene. How something _looks_ is interpreted by whoever looks at it. A reader looks at a text; Troilus looks at Criseyde. The readers not only look at Criseyde, but we see her (through the narrator) through Troilus's eyes.

Troilus is still creating her image in his mind:

> his spirit mette
> That he hire saugh a-temple, and al the wise
> Right of hire look, and gan it newe avise.
>
> Thus gan he make a mirour of his mynde
> In which he saugh al holly hire figure,
> And that he wel koude in his herte fynde.
> (1.362-67)

That Troilus can find Criseyde's "figure" in his heart recalls 1.297-98, in which the "impressioun" of Criseyde is established in his heart. Though Troilus may "avise" her look, he is, nevertheless, "unavysed" of his future misery (1.378).

All three stanzas from 1.379-99 use language related to poetic composition, although only the third is literally about writing. (More specifically, the last concerns the translation of a source, and is so cunningly written that the reader may question whether the translation it discusses is indeed a translation. Love and poetry are acts of imagination and remembrance. "Imagenynge" that Criseyde would be worth any effort (1.372-74), Troilus ponders his pursuit: "Thus took he purpos loves craft to suwe,/And thoughte he wolde werken pryvely" (1.379-80).

Love and writing are crafts. Troilus considers "What for to speke, and what to holden inne;/And what to arten hire to love" (1.387-88). The words <u>craft</u> (1.379) and <u>arten</u> (1.388) connote creation and skill; in addition, they suggest deception, manipulation, strategy, and artifice. No matter how quickly Criseyde may fall

in love with Troilus, this is a love that must be plotted.

Troilus's taking "purpos" (1.379) to pursue the art of love echoes the narrator's "purpos" (1.5) to tell Troilus's double sorrow. "Remembryng hym" (1.384) literally refers to Troilus's reminding himself that a boasted love dies. Troilus's reminding himself of what was a law of courtly love, the code of silence, identifies him not only as a lover but also as a part of the courtly system which made a creation of love. Troilus becomes a poet and writes a song for Criseyde. He edits. He decides what to say and what not to say. If Troilus will try to arten her to love, we may wonder whether he will use language to deceive her as well as to woo her. Pandarus will see love and language as crafts that may be manipulated--yet there are good and bad forms of manipulation. Troilus's "craft" gives the narrator an excuse to discuss his own craft. In a self-reflexive stanza, he announces that he will translate Troilus's exact words, even though only the "sentence" (1.393-94) of Troilus's song appears in his source. As Troilus and Pandarus will try to manipulate Criseyde, the narrator will manipulate his (nonexistent) source.

> And of his song naught only the sentence,
> As writ myn auctour called Lollius,
> But pleinly, save oure tonges difference,
> I dar wel seyn, in al, that Troilus
> Seyde in his song, loo every word right thus
> As I shal seyn; and whoso list it here,
> Loo, next this vers he may it fynden here.
> (1.393-399)

The narrator plays with language. True, there is a "tonges difference," but it is between Petrarch's Italian, not the fictitious Latin, and Chaucer's English. This stanza is a confusion of languages and times. We have the ancient (Troilus), the classic (Lollius), and the contemporary (the narrator). The stanza is famous for its paradox. How can the narrator translate a song that is not even in his source?

The narrator claims to have translated words; a poet must also translate--carry over--memories. The question is not only whether the words are accurate but whether the memories are accurate to the extent that a poet can recreate them. As Payne notes, "it seems that Chaucer felt he was expected to record the 'sentence,' but that the added care of reproducing the form was a grace beyond expectation" (Key of Remembrance 73-74). Payne continues his comments on 1.393-99 and 3.491-504:

> The principle of composition . . . is clearly that the poet's greatest freedom is with the forms in which he reclothes the truths of the past. In exercising that freedom, the poet does work within limits, limits set on the one hand by the necessity to deal with the expectations and responses of his readers and on the other hand by what he wants to do with what the old books provide. (Key of Remembrance 74)

This stanza has several other explications. Ida Gordon sees it as "a joke--a mockery of the narrator's attitude to his 'auctour'" (77). In his deconstructionist reading, H. Marshall Leicester notes:

> Like the opening of Book II of Troilus and Criseyde, in which words for speaking and reading, writing and listening, are sharply juxtaposed, this passage presents us with traces of an enormously complex system of textual mediations and transpositions between us and Troilus's original performance yet appears to disregard those mediations to treat the song as a meaning whose essence can be conveyed without them. (16)

Leicester continues his discussion by noting that this "passage . . . appears to subscribe to a set of so-called logocentic illusions" including "that meaning is univocal and unchanging" and "that writing is a supplementary or secondary medium that preserves and delivers meaning transparently" (16). The stanza is very much concerned with its own storytelling. It is as though the best way to convey this story is to go beyond its source. The narrator protests throughout the poem that he is faithful to his source, but in the stanza at 1.393-399 he has gone beyond his source. By circumventing his source, the narrator is not merely reproducing Troilus for us; he is recreating him. We may use this stanza to question the narrator's integrity--he is not faithful to the source. How can he know what Troilus said? The stanza is a mass of self-reflexive contradiction. However, the narrator can know what Troilus said if Troilus is his creation. Dinshaw sees something more than a textual puzzle in the stanza. Noting the narrator's knowledge of Troilus's words without reading them in Lollius, Dinshaw comments, "The narrator's claim of historically faithful, word-for-word translation here

works as a cover for his deeper involvement, his deeper substitution: it masks his identification with the lover of the woman, Criseyde" (*Sexual Poetics* 43). The narrator clearly imposes himself on his text, self-consciously commenting on his own role. The stanza is a study in artifice. Troilus is attempting "to arten" Criseyde to love him by means of his song (1.388-89). The poet clearly attempts "to arten" the reader.

That the narrator has manipulated the source is obvious. He substitutes a translation of Petrarch's words for Troilus's song. "Joke" that this stanza may be (see above 56), the emotion the narrator brings to his narrative is not a lie. Petrarch's poem conveys Troilus's feelings, carrying the memory of the prince's emotions to present readers.

"Troilus's" song expresses confusion and paradox. He does not know why he reacts as he does. He cannot answer his own questions. At the conclusion of the song, Troilus addresses the God of Love. Totally be-fuddled, he is still unsure of how to read Criseyde. He does not know whether she is a woman or a goddess (1.425-426). The *look* references continue. The God of Love dwells in Criseyde's eyes (1.428-429). Troilus tries to see Criseyde's "goodly lok" in order to relieve his passion, but being near her only makes his love stronger (1.445-448). His heart, which holds Criseyde's image (1.297-98; 366-67), is "his brestez yë" (1.453).

Still wallowing in his image of Criseyde, Troilus seeks glory in battle, projecting the image of a great warrior, not for the sake of Troy but in order to impress his beloved with "his renoun" (1.470-483). His lack of food and sleep takes a toll on his expression; while he creates a living legend to capture Criseyde, he creates a fiction to deceive his associates:

> Therfor a title he gan him for to borwe
> Of other siknesse, lest men of hym wende
> That the hote fir of love hym brende,
>
> And seyde he hadde a fevere and ferde amys.
> But how it was, certeyn, kan I nat seye,
> If that his lady understood nat this,
> Or feynede hire she nyste, oon of the tweye;
> But wel I rede that, by no manere weye,
> Ne semed it that she of hym roughte,
> Or of his peyne, or whatsoevere he thoughte.
> (1.488-97)

This stanza and a half is loaded with references to the uncertainty of interpretation. We find Troilus's hoped-for impression, Criseyde's dubious interpretation, and the narrator's interpretation of both. Troilus sets out to impress Criseyde with his valor and his retainers with his fever. Both impressions are half truths. The prince is brave in battle, but not for the sake of Troy. He does burn, but with passion, not fever. The illness is real; the story that explains it is a fiction. Impressions, like texts, can be manipulated. The narrator does not wish to take responsibility for Criseyde's interpretation of Troilus's exploits (1.492-497). The passage recalls Troilus's reference to a lady who may

"mysconstruwe" her lover's good intentions (1.345-47). The stanza suggests that Criseyde may have correctly interpreted Troilus's actions but is creating her own impression, a countertext, that she knows nothing about the situation. The stanza makes us just a bit suspicious of Criseyde, who may indeed know nothing of Troilus's activities. He has never spoken to her of his passion. The narrator says that Troilus calls her name in complaint, but she does not hear him (1.540-44). All of the stories in the world are useless if they go unheard. Troilus has done his best to see that the right stories about him circulate. He has begun to see his love as a potential text, and is afraid that he will become even more of a joke "than that fol of whos folie men ryme" (1. 532). Later, Troilus will consider his tragic love affair to be a potential book (5.585), and Criseyde will worry about the damage that books will do to her reputation (5.1058-64). One's reputation exists in language--in stories--that will become memory.

Apparently, some of Troilus's stories have circulated, for when Pandarus attempts to tease Troilus into divulging his secret, the narrator comments that Pandarus knew "as fer as tonges spaken" that the prince was no coward (1.565-67). The scene between Troilus and Pandarus is important not only because we are introduced to Pandarus, whom Rose Zimbardo has called "the 'maker' of the love affair between Troilus and Criseyde" (286),

but because it is a study in the use of language for the purpose of manipulation--the uses of storytelling. Pandarus uses stories, proverbs, and *exempla* to prod Troilus to tell his story.

According to Payne, Chaucer uses the conversation between Pandarus and Troilus to show the differences in their characters and their ideas about love. Troilus is idealistic and speaks in the style of love poetry; Pandarus, in contrast, is pragmatic (*Geoffrey Chaucer* 90-92). Muscatine discusses the two men, noting that "Pandarus is both a devotee of courtly love and a practical realist" (138). Muscatine comments "that each sets off and questions, enhances, and detracts from, the values represented by the other" (139). The critic continues:

> Neither cancels the other out arithmetically. This is possible because both represent positive values; their relationship produces irony, not neutrality. (139)

More interesting than a comparison between Troilus and Pandarus is one between the narrator and Pandarus. Zimbardo notes, "The persona of the poet-narrator is very like Pandarus. He too claims to be unsuccessful in love and therefore external to the experience he must shape into poetic reality" (287). Pandarus will use his speech to manipulate Troilus and later Criseyde. Pandarus will be engaged in expediting a love affair; the narrator will try to communicate his story as best he can. Both creations will eventually leave the

control of their "makers."

Pandarus uses various rhetorical ploys to make Troilus speak. He refers to what the "wyse"--wise men--know (1.644, 694, 698). He uses examples from "bokes" and memory in the stories of Nyobe and Ticius (1.699; 785-88). He even tries prodding Troilus's memory, asking the prince whether he saw the letter that Oenone wrote to Paris. Since Troilus has not seen the letter, Pandarus tells its tale (1.652-665). Troilus is unmoved by Pandarus's words. Pandarus could never help himself in love (1.622-23), and Troilus is not interested in his "wordes" and "lore" (1.754) or his "proverbes" and "ensaumples" (1.756, 760). None of Pandarus's tales work on Troilus. The point that finally moves the prince is Pandarus's suggestion that a very different story may begin to circulate about Troilus. If Troilus dies in misery, Criseyde may misread the reason for his death:

> "What may she demen oother of thy deeth,
> If thow thus deye, and she not why it is,
> But that for feere is yolden up thy breth,
> For Grekes han biseged us, iwys?
> Lord, which a thonk than shaltow han of this!
> Thus wol she seyn, and al the town attones,
> 'The wrecche is ded, the devel have his bones!'
> (1.799-805)

Troilus's apparently cowardly death would create a counter rumor to the glorious stories about him.

When Troilus reveals that his beloved is Criseyde, Pandarus is delighted. He knows that he can arrange the situation. Always conscious of language, he makes

Troilus repent of his sins against the God of Love--sins that were, apparently, verbal (1.908-938). Pandarus reminds the prince of everything he said against lovers--"seyd" (1.912); "seydest" (1.916); "seydestow" (1.919, 924, 925)--and makes him repent if he "mysspak" (1.934).

Pandarus continues his verbal dexterity. He plays on the word wise. He bluntly called Troilus a fool at 1.618. He realizes that the pursuit of Criseyde will require some cunning. The Middle English wyse, as we have seen, may mean wise or manner (OED s.v. wise; see above 26). Pandarus toys with both of these uses:

> 1.956: He hasteth wel that wisely kan abyde.
> 1.959: And al is wel, if thow werke in this
> wyse.
> 1.961: Is nowher hol, as writen clerkes wyse.
> 1.964: As plaunte a tree or herbe, in sondry
> wyse
> 1.976: For this have I herd seyd of wyse
> lered,
> 1.1002: "Ensample why, se now thise wise
> clerkes,

Pandarus reaches back to the "wise clerkes"--the old books--for authorities to use in his discussion with Troilus. He is also only too aware that he needs a plan. At 1.955 and 1.959, wisely and wyse are used in a context that suggests someone's success through diligence. The very next stanza uses wyse to note that "clerkes wyse" (1.961) have written that those who plant "in sondry wyse" (1.964)--haphazardly--will never have a plant that thrives. In one stanza Pandarus

creates a rime riche of wyse, and caps it with a comparative:

> Herafterward; for ye ben bothe wyse,
> And konne it counseil kepe in swych a wyse
> That no man shal the wiser of it be; (1.991-93)

All of this word play suggests that Pandarus not only considers the discretion, the wisdom necessary to keep such an affair secret; he also realizes the logistics that it would require. He volunteers to woo Criseyde for Troilus. The prince seems a bit concerned about what his friend will say to Criseyde, for he tells him that he wants her to know that he has only good intentions (1.1030-36).

Pandarus, knowing Criseyde, replies that he would not care if she had heard what Troilus actually said (1.1039-40). This line suggests that all of the rhetorical word play between Pandarus and Criseyde in Book 2 will be a highly stylized game. Pandarus will try to find the best way to present his tale to her. Yet his reaction to Troilus's remark suggests that the men's conversation would not shock her. Pandarus will pursue Criseyde with rhetoric. He will talk around the subject at first. He will even suggest that Criseyde need only love Troilus as a friend (2.369-82). One will get the sense from their conversation, however, that although Pandarus and Criseyde talk around the subject, they both understand the subtext.

Troilus believes in Pandarus's wisdom: "Now, Pandare, I kan na more seye,/But thow wis, thow woost, thow maist, thow art al!" (1.1051-52). Troilus's rather jumbled compliment as Pandarus goes off to woo Criseyde is, ironically, the reply Pandarus will give Troilus when the love affair is definitely over: "I kan namore seye" (5.1743). When Pandarus can no longer manipulate the situation, he will be speechless.

The look imagery that began with Troilus and Criseyde in the temple continues. Troilus stops feigning illness and begins to project a different image, such "That ecch hym loved that loked on his face" (1.1078). Troilus had self-consciously projected an image of himself as ill. He has been valorous in battle in order to impress Criseyde. This new set of impressions is unfeigned and arises from his new attitude.

While Troilus presents a new image to the world, Pandarus begins to expedite the love affair. Chaucer's well-known adaptation of a passage from Geoffrey de Vinsauf's <u>Poetria Nova</u> is used to describe Pandarus's method. Adapting the passage allows Chaucer to blend the themes of love and language. Karla Taylor makes a similar point, noting the functions of both the narrator and Pandarus. She comments:

> Chaucer constructs a poem to accomplish his historical and amatory mediations in which he follows the precepts of rhetorical theory, just as Pandarus, taking his cue from the

> same text--the Poetria Nova--constructs his own poem, the love affair. ("Proverbs and the Authentication of Convention" 290)[7]

The last sight we have of Pandarus in this scene shows him planning how, when, and where to speak with Criseyde (1.1062-64). The passage adapted from the Poetria Nova stresses Pandarus's craftsmanship:

> For everi wight that hath an hous to founde
> Ne renneth naught the werk for to bygynne
> With rakel hond, but he wol bide a stounde,
> And sende his hertes line out fro withinne
> Aldirfirst his purpos for to wynne. (1.1065-1069)[8]

Chaucer's adaptation describes the advent of Pandarus's services in the develpment of the affair. Geoffrey de Vinsauf's original describes the method of beginning a literary work. Both the translation and the original emphasize craftsmanship. By echoing a rhetorical text, Chaucer is self-reflexive about his own work. By applying that text to Pandarus's activities, he blends the themes of love and language. Finally, by placing this passage just before Pandarus begins his work, Chaucer not only suggests the well-organized strategy that Pandarus will use on Criseyde but implies that it will be verbal in nature. As Pandarus leaves to create his strategy, we anticipate the manner in which he will play the game--and facilitate the developing love story--in Book 2.

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[1] Vergil, Aeneid, in Vergil's Aeneid: Books I-IV, Rev. ed., ed. by Clyde Pharr (Lexington, Mass. and

Toronto: D. C. Heath and Company, 1964) 1.8-11

> Muse, to me recount the causes, with what divinity having been offended or resenting what, the queen of the gods struck the man distinguished by goodness to undergo so many misfortunes? Are such angers possessed by heavenly spirits? (Trans. MPW)

[2] Vergil, Aeneid 4.333-336, in Pharr.

> Finally, he answers a few words. "I, Queen, will never deny you to be deserving much that you are able to enumerate by speaking, nor will it pain me to be mindful of Dido as long as I am mindful of myself, as long as life rules these limbs." (Trans. MPW)

[3] E. Talbot Donaldson notes the echo of the Aeneid when he interrupts his quotation of 5.1765-1771. After 5.1766 he inserts "But, unfortunately, arma virumque non cano" ("The Ending of Troilus," rpt. in Donaldson's Speaking of Chaucer 94). For more on the relationship between the Troilus and the Aeneid, see Winthrop Wetherbee's Chaucer and the Poets.

[4] In Chaucer and the Poets, Winthrop Wetherbee discusses 1.1-5 of Troilus (30-32). Wetherbee sees the opening of Troilus losing some of its loftiness even earlier than I do. Wetherbee notes that "a number of details conspire to offset whatever impression of epic grandeur the lines may seem to convey" (30).

[5] "I Sing of a Maiden," in Middle English Lyrics, ed. Maxwell S. Luria and Richard L. Hoffman (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974) 170; Pearl in The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript, ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron, York Medieval Texts, second series (1978; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982) 53-110.

[6] See Middle English Lyrics 170, note 1. The "matchless" pun is well-known. See especially Stephen Manning, "'I Sing of a Myden,'" and D. G. Halliburton, "The Myden Makeles." Both studies are reprinted (Manning's with some abridgment) in Middle English Lyrics 330-342.

[7] Many other critics have noted the similarities

between the narrator and Pandarus. See Dinshaw, Chaucer's Sexual Poetics; Eugene Vance, "Mervelous Signals: Poetics, Sign Theory, and Politics in Chaucer's Troilus"; Donald R. Howard, "Literature and Sexuality: Book III of Chaucer's Troilus"; Rose A. Zimbardo, "Creator and Created: The Generic Perspective of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde"; Martin Stevens, "The Winds of Fortune in the Troilus" (Stevens sees the narrator and Pandarus as contrasting figures); John M. Fyler, Chaucer and Ovid; also by Fyler, "The Fabrications of Pandarus"; E. Talbot Donaldson, "Chaucer's Three 'P's': Pandarus, Pardoner, and Poet"; Donald W. Rowe, O Love, O Charite!; Evan Carton, "Complicity and Responsibility in Pandarus' Bed and Chaucer's Art"; Gerry Brenner, "Narrative Structure in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde." This list is not exhaustive.

[8] The Latin original by Geoffrey de Vinsauf is as follows:

> Si quis habet fundare domum, non currit ad actum
> Impetuosa manus: intrinseca linea cordis
> Praemetitur opus, seriemque sub ordine certo
> Interior praescribit homo, totamque figurat
> Ante manus cordis quam corporis; et status ejus
> Est prius archetypus quam sensilis.

Ernest Gallo translates these lines as follows:

> If anyone is to lay the foundation of a house, his impetuous hand does not leap into action; the inner design of the heart measures out the work beforehand, the inner man determines the stages ahead of time in a certain order; and the hand of the heart, rather than the bodily hand, forms the whole in advance, so that the work exists first as a mental model rather than as a tangible thing.

Geoffrey de Vinsauf, Poetria Nova, in The Poetria Nova and Its Sources in Early Rhetorical Doctrine, ed. and trans. Ernest Gallo (The Hague: Mouton, 1971) 16, lines 43-48. English translation, 17.

CHAPTER TWO

The proem to Book 2 is a tangle of writing, love, and memory. "Owt," the first word of the proem, sets the tone of the entire book. Pandarus tries to find a way out of Troilus's problem, and the narrator struggles with his own difficulties. Both figures try to discover the best way to tell a story--Pandarus to Criseyde, and the narrator to us.

In Book 1, Pandarus commiserated with Troilus by comparing the prince's misery to Ticius's torments in hell (1.785-88). If Book 1 was Troilus's hell, Book 2 is his purgatory, his period of waiting before he enters the paradise of Book 3. Although Chaucer never uses the word _purgatory_ in this proem, the idea of it is kept before us through textual allusion. The narrator's opening, in which he complains that he can scarcely steer the boat of his "connyng" (2.1-4), is an imitation of the first lines of Dante's _Purgatorio_. Both Winthrop Wetherbee and Karla Taylor have discussed the impact of _Purgatorio_ on the proem.

In _Chaucer and the Poets_, Wetherbee contrasts the first lines of _Purgatorio_ with the opening lines of Chaucer's second proem. Both openings contain nautical imagery and stress a sense of freedom. In _Purgatorio_, the poet's creativity has been freed from the inferno. In Troilus, the prince is released from the hell of the first book into the possibility of a relationship with

Criseyde (147). Wetherbee notes, however, that the narrator of the _Troilus_ "is still at the mercy of something 'tempestous' in his material"; he particularly remarks on "the lack of control" shown in 2.4 (147). According to Wetherbee, this proem illustrates the narrator's "lingering anxiety as to the kind of influence being exerted on him by the story he is bound to tell" (148).

It is true that the narrator occasionally seems overwhelmed by his story; however, "unneth" implies that he can _scarcely_ steer the boat (2.4). He has not relinquished control of his narrative. A little suspense is aroused in the reader by the self-reflexivity of the stanza, in the hint of the possibility that the storyteller may lose control of the narrative.

Karla Taylor also discusses the opening lines of the second proem and makes particular mention of the syntax of 2.3-4 ("the boot hath swych travaylle,/Of my connyng"):

> By rearranging the syntax of his translation so that "of my connyng" floats unanchored by the "boot" it modifies, Chaucer makes it nearly impossible to distinguish between his difficulties in writing and Troilus's in loving. Both must navigate what appears to be the same sea. The nautical metaphors for love and poetry thus confirm the importance of the _galeotto_ roles--both as go-betweens and as steersmen--of Pandarus and poet. And by linking Troilus's love and his own poetry with the same image, Chaucer suggests the same consonance of experience that he later shares with Criseyde as well. (_Chaucer Reads the Divine Comedy_ 125).

Wetherbee also comments on what he calls "the tormented syntax" of these lines (Chaucer and the Poets 147). Tortured as the word order is, such a construction is essential to the presentation of this stanza. The narrator's frequently alleged ineptitude is not responsible for scrambling the syntax. Chaucer dominates and manipulates the language much as he inverted the syntax in the initial stanza of the proem to Book 1. In that stanza, the narrator announced that his purpos was to tellen Troilus's double sorrow. The emphasis in the opening of the second book is still on telling. Although the disorder in the syntax may suggest the narrator's difficulty in relating the story, it is an expression of Chaucer's manipulation of the language.

The narrator invokes Clio, the muse of history. By invoking her, the narrator underscores the fact that he is transmitting a past experience. In addition to the invocation of the muse of history, textual allusions in the proem tie the Troilus to a literary tradition. Wetherbee comments that this invocation echoes Statius through Dante. Clio appears in the Thebaid as a recounter of history, and in Purgatorio Dante (through Vergil) alludes to Statius's references to Clio. Chaucer's allusion to Statius both contrasts with and enhances the allusion to Dante (Chaucer and the Poets 150-151). Interestingly, Wetherbee sees the narrator's invocation of Clio as similar to Statius's invocation in

that neither storyteller wishes to take complete responsibility for his tale (Chaucer and the Poets 150).

Clio's symbols were the laurel wreath and the scroll (Zimmerman 64). The scroll symbol suggests written history, and laurel has been a symbol of poets since antiquity. We have already noted Payne's assertion that Chaucer used poetry as a means to make "the wisdom evolved in the past . . . available, applicable, and operative to the present" (Key of Remembrance 89; cited above 4). In addition to serving as a reminder of the works of Statius and Dante, and thus locating the Troilus within a literary tradition, Clio as the muse of history is an appropriate guide for a poet working with old books.

Chaucer puts history, an old story, into the form of his new poem. History transformed into a poem may be embellished--a point that may lead us to question the accuracy of history. In his edition of the Troilus, Windeatt cites old mythographies and notes that "Clio, the first Muse, was interpreted as fama or 'report' (153, note to line 8). The Latin fama could be translated as rumor. The Troilus feeds on rumors--most of which affect Criseyde (1.85-91; 106-107; 4.57-70; 659-672). Clio's association with rumor connects her even more with the story of history. Stories may not always be completely accurate. The narrator tries to disclaim responsibility for his story on two counts: he does not

write from "sentement" (2.13), and he is not an authority, but a translator:

> Wherfore I nyl have neither thank ne blame
> Of al this werk, but prey yow mekely,
> Disblameth me if any word be lame,
> For as myn auctour seyde, so sey I. (2.15-18)

The narrator claims that he does not write from any remembered emotional experience of his own; he works from his authority. Yet as a translator, he is responsible for his transmission of Troilus's experience. His carrying over of history is only as reliable as his language and his readers' ability to understand his language. By identifying himself as a translator, the narrator considers himself to be the same "instrument" we met at 1.10. As a translator of historic materials, the narrator associates himself not only with history, but with literary history; his medium for passing down the story is language. Payne has noted that "for Chaucer and his contemporaries books were very nearly the sole source of historical knowledge, so that the past is inevitably the literary past" (Key of Remembrance 64). As the narrator carries over what he claims to be an ancient story out of its original language, he takes the old material and makes it new--he recreates it. He thus places himself within a literary tradition.

There is one great problem with the tradition. If the source is inaccurate, so is the translation. Moreover, a translation may not be true to to original.

The narrator protests that he is taking his material from a Latin source (2.14); yet we know Chaucer's source was not Latin, but Italian. The narrator is a voice citing a fictive source, thus introducing an inaccuracy into history.

Through its rhyme (endite/it write), the couplet at 2.13-14 recalls the couplet in the very first stanza of the Troilus: "Thesiphone, thow help me for t'endite/ Thise woful vers, that wepen as I write" (1.6-7). The 2.13-14 couplet also recalls the rhyme of the couplet at 1.146-147, in which the narrator advises his readers to read the story of Troy in Homer, Dares, and "in Dite" to see how these authors "write" it. All three of these couplets are reflexive and concerned with textuality. They also suggest the narrator's developing consciousness of his own complicity in the transmission of the tale. At 1.1-6, the narrator has not as yet mentioned a source. By 1.146-147, we know that he is reading from an authority. By the proem to Book 2, however, he has begun to emphasize the source in order to free himself from any blame for the content of the story or for his rendition of it.

Nevertheless, a translator in the Middle Ages served as a type of authority in that he had a certain liberty in the form in which he chose to reproduce his material (see Payne, Key of Remembrance 74). No matter how much he tries to deny his responsibility, the narra-

tor is still responsible for his presentation of the story. He has already tried to throw the responsibility for his text onto his authority. Now he tries to excuse himself by pointing out the changes in language:

> Ye knowe ek that in forme of speche is chaunge
> Withinne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
> That hadden pris, now wonder nyce and straunge
> Us thinketh hem, and yet thei spake hem so,
> And spedde as wel in love as men now do;
> Ek for to wynnen love in sondry ages,
> In sondry londes, sondry ben usages. (2.22-28)

The poet is ensnared by his language, his sources, and, to a degree, his audience. His language is changeable, his sources are possibly inaccurate, and his readers are potential misreaders. The problem that the Troilus presents is that love and language may change over time. Moreover, as a story is retold or rewritten, there is always the possibility of variation. In the above stanza, Chaucer writes about language but slips into a discussion of the ways of love, summing up both in usages. The "forme of speche" was once self-contained but will be open to a reader's perception--a possibly confused perception. A narrative may have a different reception among its contemporaries than it would have a few generations later. (See Patterson, "Ambiguity and Interpretation" for an interesting fifteenth-century response to the Troilus.) A word may last forever engraved in stone, but interpretations by several readers may be very different. We must also

remember that the narrator himself is a reader, and one who may not be able to "juggen wel in hewis" (2.21), a possible reference to the rhetorical colors.[1] Although he protests that he follows his source, he must still in interpret that source.

In his discussion of "the forme of speche," Chaucer is concerned with the capacity for language to depict past experience. Troilus's story is several centuries and languages removed from Chaucer, but he depicts it as a timeless experience of love that is as relevant to his audience--both of his time and of a later generation--as it was to the characters themselves. Payne comments that Chaucer realized "an occupation for the poet was to make something timeless out of time, knowing all the while that it was an impossibility" (Key of Remembrance 86); he also notes that the only moment that time and the timeless meet is "now" (86). As Chaucer addresses his audience, he is very much concerned with the difference between Troilus's then and the audience's now. Using terms such as "now," "here," and "in this place" (2. 24, 26, 30, and 43), the past and the audience's present are compared. To Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde were historical figures who could be used in poetry in order to recreate a past experience. Chaucer is very much aware of the influence of time and language on history, and in manipulating these concepts he both discredits his source to some degree and emphasizes the

written record as the only source we have of history. Troilus's manner of courtship may seem strange to a present audience, but that was his courtship--at least, according to the authorities. The poet must use an ephemeral medium, language, to try to make permanent what is impermanent--a relationship and the memory of that relationship.

In his discussion of the differences between the past and the present, Chaucer plays on the word _wonder_. Within two stanzas, he uses three forms: _wonder_ (2.24), _wondreth_ 2.34); and _wonderynge_ (2.35). In the first use, the old words seem "wonder nyce" to us--amazingly foolish. The verb _wondreth_ and the gerund _wonderyng_ imply consideration as well as amazement. The use of _wonder_ carries with it a degree of uncertainty. Old words may seem strange to a reader and are thus open to a mistaken interpretation. The narrator claims that Troilus's words and actions are "no wonderynge" to him (2.35), yet the context in which he makes this assertion leads us to suspect that he wonders about both love and language.

Closing his address to the lovers, the narrator states that there probably are not three people in the audience who have said or done the same things in love (2.43-46). Indeed, the love story of Troilus becomes something of a touchstone for the audience's romances; the lovers in the audience listen to what "the storie

wol devise" (2.31) and compare their own activities. (Note the obsession with storytelling. The story _devises_ here, not the narrator.) There are different methods involved in any enterprise; "som men grave in tree, some in ston wal" (2.47). The comparison that the narrator uses involves engraving, which suggests writing or some other form of signification.

The narrator's reference to each lover's _purpos_ (2.45) recalls his own designated "purpos" in Book 1: to tell Troilus's double sorrow (1.1-5). The reference to someone's "purpos" seems to jog him back into his story, for he announces that he will follow his source if he "konne" (2.49). Again we have a form of _connen_, with its ambiguous suggestions concerning the narrator's knowledge and ability. The word serves as another echo of the proem to Book 1, in which the narrator claims to help lovers as he "kan" (1.11). The narrator's self-disparagement may make some readers a bit skeptical of his ability to tell the story. There is a certain irony in that the narrator, a kind of authorial stand-in, occasionally appears uncertain of his own ability. Chaucer works with a source, but he also recreates his story and orders that creation--narrator included--as he sees fit. The narrator is a means of managing his readers. We can only know what the narrator chooses to tell us. The narrator claims that he is only translating, but he places such emphasis on the changes in language

and customs and concerns himself with his audience's ability to perceive the actions described in his text that we may question his objectivity.

The first reference to language in Book 2 proper presents a contrast between verbal agility and practical experience:

> That Pandarus, for al his wise speche,
> Felt ek his part of loves shotes keene,
> That, koude he nevere so wel of lovyng preche,
> It made his hewe a-day ful ofte greene.
> (2.57-60)

Pandarus has the ability to teach the craft of love; he has no practical experience of loving. His speech is "wise," but his knowledge does little to console him. His words do not serve him; they can only serve someone else with the potential to be a lover. This passage recalls Pandarus's proverb in Book 1, in which a whetstone makes sharp instruments although it is not a blade (1.631-32). Pandarus is to the art of love what the rhetoricians were to the art of poetry. They knew the technical name for every trope imaginable. They were not necessarily able to write poetry themselves, but they enhanced the skills of those who had the gift.

There are three elements in the *Troilus* that emphasize authority, not experience. The first two are the narrator and Pandarus. The last is more subtle: the authorities themselves. Chaucer's adaptation of Geoffrey de Vinsauf's metaphor at the end of Book 1

shows us someone who knows how to create something, but who has not necessarily produced it. As we have seen, the house-building metaphor was applied to the art of creating poetry in the <u>Poetria Nova</u>; Chaucer's adaptation applies it to Pandarus as he expedites the love affair of Troilus (see above 65-66). Pandarus and the narrator cite authority, but the authorities themselves are suspect. Chaucer would make the dichotomy of experience and authority the theme of the Wife of Bath's Prologue:

> "Experience, though noon auctoritee
> Were in this world, is right ynogh for me
> To speke of wo that is in mariage; (3.1-3)

Note that the Wife relies on her experience of what she herself knows, the woe of marriage, and on that topic only. The narrator and Pandarus are experienced in frustration rather than in love.

From 2.64, old books other than the matter of Troy function as ancillary texts to the narrative. The swallow Proigne (Procne) sings a "lay" about her metamorphosis; Pandarus, "half in a slomberynge" is awakened by her song (2.64-70). Whether or not Pandarus dreamed about Proigne is debatable; the reference to her violent story of rape and familial treachery gives Chaucer the opportunity to introduce Ovidian myth--another old book. The myth may also reinforce a reader's discomfort about an uncle procuring his niece for a friend. Mudrick notes that it is not the story that disturbs Pandarus,

"but . . . the lonely recognition of his own failure and of his looming treachery to Criseyde which, in a dream, the universal poignance of the myth dims somewhat and makes more endurable" (95).

An interesting aspect of the Procne legend is that in itself it is about signs and storytelling. Tereus removes Philomela's tongue. Speechless, she manages to relate her story to Procne by weaving a cloth to illustrate the events. The cloth is an example of ekphrasis, a device Chaucer uses in _The Book of the Duchess_, _The House of Fame_, and _The Parliament of Fowls_. The Ovidian story contains hunting images, the woman as a dove or rabbit grasped in the talons of a bird of prey.[2] Compare these images to the description of Criseyde at the consummation: "What myghte or may the sely larke seye,/Whan that the sperhauk hath it in his foot?" (3.1191-92).

The Procne allusion consists of one stanza; at its conclusion, we are back in Troy. Mudrick notes that the swallow loses its epic proportions, its song breaking "the myth's grandiose pattern (and Pandarus's personal incubus) of betrayal and doom, the swallow withdraws--only a bird--into the featureless background of Pandarus's morning" (95). The violent memory of the Ovidian story disappears, and the readers turn to the tale that Pandarus is about to spin for Criseyde.

"Remembryng" that he must see Criseyde, Pandarus

prepares for his visit (2.71-75). _Remembryng_ is a significant word. The telling of an old story, of history, is an act of remembrance. We have just read a very brief reference to the Procne myth. The memory of the past exists in the written record or in an experience that is preserved in poetry. Pandarus is about to begin an undertaking that a poet will one day record. When Pandarus arrives at Criseyde's house, he will find her with a group of ladies enjoying a reading of "the geste/Of the siege of Thebes" (2.83-84), another set of textual memories. Long before Pandarus even begins the tale he has come to tell Criseyde, Book 2 will have echoed or alluded to Dante, Ovid, and Statius. It should come as no surprise that the second book is concerned with developing the best ways to tell tales.

The textual ghosts that awakened Pandarus are present in Criseyde's parlor. The ladies' reading material becomes the subject of banter. Pandarus hopes that Criseyde is reading a book of love so that she may teach him something based on the authority of the book. She throws back a joke. Pandarus's mistress is not in her house (2.92-98). Criseyde is practical, saying in effect that the knowledge would be useless without the possibility of experience. The exchange has also made us aware that Criseyde is used to her uncle speaking around a topic. These two are adept at reading each other's subtexts. The joke ends in laughter at their

repartee. Chaucer has emphasized the saying as well as what is said and has shown Criseyde to be a verbal match for Pandarus. She is urbane, witty, and humorous, not the type of woman to be shut away in mourning.

There is some question as to which book of Thebes Criseyde is reading--the medieval Roman de Thèbes or Statius's Thebaid (Barney, Explanatory Notes to Troilus in Riverside Chaucer 1031, note to lines 84, 100-08). Alain Renoir and Paul Clogan note that Criseyde is probably reading the medieval French story, whereas Pandarus refers to the 12-book, Latin Thebaid (Renoir, "Thebes, Troy, Criseyde, and Pandarus" 14-17; Clogan 24-28).

Why two texts? To Criseyde and her ladies, the book they are reading is a remembered experience that would be applicable to their situation in Troy if they recognized the similarities. Criseyde's reading a medieval manuscript (note the anachronism) reminds the reader that Chaucer creates his poem from a literary tradition. The past is alive in poetry. Using two texts allows Chaucer to subtly comment on the confusion caused by multiple sources. Pandarus describes a text that is different from Criseyde's. Two sources show different aspects of history. The two texts are separated by two languages and a thousand years. The confusion of the two texts is interesting from a reader's point of view, because it shows a type of reader-

response criticism--only the readers are responding to different versions of the same story.

The story of Thebes was significant for the Troy legend. Alain Renoir notes earlier scholarship that showed the close link between the two histories, even to the extent that the stories were often bound in the same volume ("Thebes, Troy" 15-16). Renoir comments on Criseyde's fear that her desertion of Troilus will ruin her literary reputation:

> The irony here is that the books which she fears will be written are _already_ written and that she is allowed to come unwittingly within immediate reach of one of them _before_ committing the deed for which they blame her. ("Thebes, Troy" 17)

Clogan makes a similar observation. Criseyde and her ladies stop at the rubrics when Pandarus interrupts their meeting. The women had reached the episode in which "Amphiorax" fell into hell (2.105). Clogan remarks that "the rest of the siege of Thebes, which has significant parallels for the siege and destruction of Troy, remains unread" (26). The book "kan telle" (2.104) the story. The knowledge is in the book, but Criseyde does not finish it.

When Pandarus suggests that Criseyde leave the book so that they may dance in celebration of May, her reaction is such that we realize that she is exaggerating. Remember, this is the same lady who bluntly informed her uncle that his mistress was not on the

premises:

> "I! God forbede!" quod she. "Be ye mad?
> Is that a widewes lif, so God yow save?
> By God, ye maken me ryght soore adrad!
> Ye ben so wylde, it semeth as ye rave.
> It satte me wel bet ay in a cave
> To bidde and rede on holy seyntes lyves;
> Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves."
> (2.113-19)

Despite the joke and the exaggeration, Criseyde defines what her life's experience should be by what she should be reading. Dinshaw, like Renoir and Clogan, comments on the Theban material (Sexual Poetics 52-53). Noting Criseyde's reaction, Dinshaw remarks, "Criseyde's tone suggests here that everyone knows the reading appropriate to a woman without a man is the reading of perfectly closed narratives whose letter is itself worthy of imitation" (53). The reference to saints' lives provides another literary anachronism. The image of Criseyde as an anchorite reading about saints is totally at odds wth the sophisticated woman listening to someone reading a romance in a comfortable parlor. Dancing in praise of May is, perhaps, not the most socially acceptable behavior for a widow in Troy, and Criseyde does have a point. Nevertheless, we have the sense that although she is a widow, she very much enjoys her state in life. This intuition is confirmed in her internal debate about whether or not to love Troilus: no husband dominates her (2.750-56). Moreover, saints' lives are not the most enjoyable reading material for one who, as Pandarus once said, is scarcely

suited to celestial love (1.983). The allusion to saints' lives enables Chaucer not only to put medieval books into the hands of his pre-Christian characters in a reversal of his art of "remembraunce," but he has again shown us Criseyde's sense of humor. Her make-believe shock at Pandarus's suggestion that they dance may lead us to suspect that her later shock when Pandarus discusses Troilus's love is also exaggerated.

As Linda Tarte Holley notes in her dissertation, Criseyde has an imagination that yields to stories, and Pandarus tells a story to make her more susceptible to his intentions (116-138). Pandarus uses all the subtlety of language to make Criseyde do as he wishes. He whets her curiosity by saying that he "koude" tell her something to make her "pleye" (2.121)--but she will not hear it from him because there is no prouder woman in Troy (2.134-140). Pandarus tries to manipulate her by <u>not</u> telling this story. She is apparently familiar with this stratagem, for she calls his bluff. Her "reader response" to this non-story is to wait, knowing that the teller will eventually reveal his plot.

Throughout the <u>Troilus</u>, there are references to one character's trying to interpret another's opinion or thoughts. Troilus tries to decipher Criseyde's expression when he first sees her in Book 1, during the consummation, he calls her face a "text" (3.1357). In this scene between Pandarus and Criseyde, she tries to

untangle his meaning; but he has chosen to hide his meaning, becoming a riddle, a text that she must decode. She tells her uncle that she cannot "reden" his meaning; her "wit is for t'arede it al to leene" (2.129, 132). When Criseyde tells Pandarus that she cannot construe his meaning because of her limited "wit," we feel that she is once again exaggerating. We have already seen Criseyde "read" him very nicely when she parries his initial inquiries about her book: his mistress is not present, and he can stop his banter about love.

Since Pandarus will not tell his story and Criseyde will not make him uncomfortable by persisting in asking him (2.146-47), they pass the time discussing other "frendly tales" (2.149). The language in the conversation between Criseyde and Pandarus becomes almost stylized, as though it were a tennis match, their carefully chosen words functioning as the ball that bounces between them. Their alternating comments are marked by the word quod. Granted, quod means said, but in this conversation it comes with a certain force, as each character is about to serve another comment. In the stanzas that begin at 2.162 and 169, Criseyde and Pandarus use a conversational formula that hints at the regulation of their chat. Criseyde answers Pandarus with "In good feith, em" at 2.162; at 2.169, Pandarus responds, "In good faith, that is soth"; both answers

are followed by a <u>quod</u>.

They talk about various topics until Criseyde asks Pandarus about Ector (2.153). This gives Pandarus the perfect opportunity to bring up the subject of Troilus. Although they discuss the two princes, the conversation is riddled with references to itself as a discussion. It contains references to knowing--both what is known about Troilus and Ector and what they themselves know. The following references to saying and knowing occur within two stanzas. Note especially the uses of three different forms of <u>know</u> at 2.175 (<u>known</u> or <u>famed</u>), 2.180 (as in <u>to know a fact</u>), and 2.182 (<u>to know a person</u>):

That is to mene	2.171
dar I seye	2.173
Hire myght is wyde yknowe, and what they konne	2.175
namore for to telle	2.176
I seye	2.181
I knowe nat swiche tweye	2.182

These references to Troilus's reputation continue into Criseyde's reply at 2.183-89. Criseyde, apparently, has already heard stories about Troilus's military prowess and courtly conduct. It seems that the stories he hoped would circulate about him have begun to be told. Criseyde's description of Troilus's friendliness and bravery echoes the narrator's description of the prince at the conclusion of Book 1, when he became a better person as a result of his love. Criseyde, however, seems oblivious to being responsible for the change.

The conversation between Criseyde and Pandarus is self-reflexive and refers to what is known through what is said. Their talk is made of references to what other people say about Troilus because they themselves have not yet discussed the real reason for Pandarus's visit. Pandarus praises Troilus's prowess as though he were the only Trojan in battle and adds that Troilus "best felawshipe kan/To swich as hym thynketh able for to thryve" (2.206-07). Pandarus pretends that this is the end of the conversation and that he is leaving. His supposedly final words are quite pointed: Troilus can be very friendly to those people he considers worthwhile. Pandarus's words are true from what we have been told of the prince at the end of Book 1. Nevertheless, they are meant to appear to be his parting remark to Criseyde, who realizes that Pandarus's visit has been too brief. He is never so eager to leave the company of women (2.211-12). Her ladies withdraw, and she discusses her private affairs with her uncle. When "hire tale al brought was to an ende" (2.218), Pandarus again announces that he is leaving; however, he still wants to dance.

Criseyde may have finished her "tale," but she wants to hear Pandarus's. He has just asked Criseyde why she wishes "to disfigure" herself in widow's weeds when such a wonderful "aventure" awaits her (2.222-224). The word <u>disfigure</u> suggests that she not only hides her-

self in mourning but that she also projects a false image of herself. In the Middle English Dictionary, the first entry for aventure begins "Fate, fortune, chance." By bringing up fate, Pandarus has allowed the conversation to revert to his cryptic comments. Criseyde wonders why Pandarus hints at destiny and asks, "Shal I nat witen what ye meene of this?" (2.226). The question is the beginning of the verbal dance between Pandarus and Criseyde. The stanza at 2.225-31 addresses material that is not relative to itself alone, but to language in general. It brings out three questions about the art of language: What is the meaning of what is said? Will the listener interpret the message as the speaker or writer wishes? What is the best manner in which to present the material--does the speaker need a certain amount of time to give a message, or does the listener need certain conditions to fully comprehend it? Criseyde does not understand the meaning of his mysterious hints.

The reasons that Pandarus gives Criseyde for not telling her his story sound very considerate but are really quite manipulative. The story takes time to tell and may offend her (2.227-29). The topic requires "leyser" (2.227). Criseyde certainly seems to be at leisure, and Pandarus has not mentioned having any pressing engagement. This is simply a delaying tactic. While Pandarus delays Criseyde's hearing the story and

increases her curiosity, Chaucer keeps the audience in suspense about Criseyde's reaction. Pandarus pretends that he will not tell her, saying that it is better for him to keep his "tonge" quiet than to "seye a soth" against Criseyde's will (2.230-31). Pandarus goes right for the physical maker of language, the tongue, whose name may be used for the bodily organ or as another word for language. Chaucer has already used it for English at 2.14. The use of soth is suggestive, for a soth is a truth. The truth should be more important than Criseyde's will. Pandarus is admitting to being capable of manipulating the truth, not by what he says but by what he chooses not to disclose.

Their conversation continues to refer to knowing and understanding. To Pandarus's "wyttynge," Criseyde is the woman he loves best, except for his would-be mistress (2.235-37). He swears his love for Criseyde by "Mynerve" (2.232). True, Mynerve rhymes with serve at 2.234, but its position as an end rhyme only makes the invocation stronger. ("Mynerve," goddess of wisdom, is Pallas, the deity honored in Book 1.) Pandarus tells Criseyde that he believes she knows his feelings (2.238). She declares that "emforth" her "wit," she would never offend Pandarus (2.243).

With all of these references to knowing and understanding, Criseyde still does not know what Pandarus is talking about and asks him to stop his "fremde manere

speche" (2.248). Pandarus does not go straight to his material, but tells Criseyde "Tak it for good" (2.252), essentially telling her how to interpret his story. Criseyde becomes Pandarus's audience, not the other person in a dialogue. She casts down her eyes; Pandarus coughs as though he is about to make a speech, and gives his tale a preamble:

> "Nece, alwey--lo!--to the laste,
> How so it be that som men hem delite
> With subtyl art hire tales for to endite,
> Yet for al that, in hire entencioun
> Hire tale is al for som conclusioun.
>
> "And sithe th'ende is every tales strengthe,
> And this matere is so bihovely,
> What sholde I peynte or drawen it on lengthe
> To yow, that ben my frend so feythfully?"
> (2.255-263)

The question is rhetorical. Pandarus _is_ drawing out his tale, but attempting to sound as though he is without guile. He is about to tell a story, so at this point he is an authority, a source. These lines also contain a couplet with the significant rhyme _entencioun/conclusioun_ (2.258-59). The concepts of intention and conclusion are close to the hearts of both Pandarus and the narrator. An intention may not yield the conclusion one would like. Pandarus may have his "entente" at 3.1582 (an "entente" that the narrator does not wish to discuss), and his intention to arrange a love affair between Troilus and Criseyde is fulfilled, but he never expected the affair to end quite as it does, with Troilus seeking his death in war. The narrator also

must face an unsettling conclusion. Bloomfield remarks "that one of the main sources of the inner tensions of _Troilus_ is this sense of necessity of an historian who knows the outcome in conflict with his sympathies as an artist and a man" (84). However, Bloomfield concludes his remark by noting that the "conflict" eventually reaches "the final leap which elevates the issue into a new and satisfactory context" (84). Just at the moment, Pandarus does not have a particularly lofty intention. He is looking for the best way to tell his story in order to make Criseyde agree to his conclusion. He wishes to forestall her distrust. He assumes that his audience is inclined to be suspicious and not quite as intelligent as he is:

> Than thought he thus: "If I may tale endite
> Aught harde, or make a proces any whyle,
> She shal no savour have therin but lite,
> And trowe I wolde hire in my wil bigyle;
> For tendre wittes wenen al be wyle
> Theras thei kan nought pleynly understonde;
> Forthi hire wit to serven wol I fonde"--
> (2.267-273)

Although Pandarus focuses on Criseyde, his comment has some meaning for the larger scheme of knowledge and language that the poem explores. Pandarus will adjust his argument to Criseyde's comprehension. However, he does not want to give her all of his information. He wants her to understand only certain aspects of it. He hopes to manipulate her understanding through what he tells her. Pandarus is Criseyde's only source of

information about Troilus's love for her. If she feels manipulated or believes the story to be embellished, she will not believe Pandarus. The narrator stands in the same relation to his source as Criseyde stands to her uncle. The narrator may at times be skeptical about his source, but it is all that he has to follow.

As Pandarus wonders how to serve Criseyde's wit, he watches her face so intently that she remarks upon it. The verb she uses to describe his action is avise (2.276). Although Criseyde uses the word to describe the way Pandarus looks at her, in other contexts the word may mean advise--and Pandarus is certainly about to advise Criseyde.

Pandarus continues to enlarge upon his argument, still without having gotten to his main point. He talks about an "aventure" that "is shape[d]" for each person "if he it kan receyven" (2.281-82)--if he is able to grasp it or has enough sense to grasp it. Pandarus informs Criseyde that a bit of her beauty fades each day (2.393-406). Pandarus's argument is devised to be a warning to Criseyde not to be stupid. His general remarks about the good fortune that comes to "every wight" (2.281) become specific at 2.288, when he tells her that she has the opportunity to seize an "aventure." Ironically, he asks her why he should make any more of a "proces" (2.292), yet he continues to create a "proces" to build up his attack. He speaks only in

"good entencioun"; he cherishes her "honour and renoun"; and if she thinks that he is lying, he will never see her again (2.295-301).

When Pandarus speaks of Criseyde's "honour and renoun" (2.297), he is actually speaking about fame. When the audience first met Criseyde, she was concerned because of the rumors about her father and the effect that those rumors would have upon her life. Pandarus, with slight innuendo, has injected the idea of rumor into his argument to build up its effect on Criseyde.

Pandarus continues, still not telling her the main point, but stressing instead the truth of what he says. Even though she has never heard this "tale" before, she should trust him (2.305-06). If it were unsuitable, he would "no swiche tales brynge" (2.307-08). A tale, it seems, is a thing to be carried, from one contemporary to another or down through the generations. Pandarus's statement exasperates Criseyde. He protests about his concern and the marvelous news he has brought--but he has not yet delivered it.

Criseyde does not ask Pandarus what he means; she asks him to tell her. She places as much emphasis on telling as she does on the information she is about to hear:

> "Now, good em, for Goddes love, I preye,"
> Quod she, "come of, and telle me what it is!
> For both I am agast what ye wol seye,
> And ek me longeth it to wite, ywis;
> For whethir it be wel or be amys,

> Say on, lat me nat in this feere dwelle."
> "So wol I doon; now herkeneth! I shall telle:
> (2.309-15)

Notice all of the references to telling or saying. Criseyde is afraid of what she does not know. The stanza is more self-conscious of the fact that a tale is not being told than about the tale itself. There are three commands in the stanza. The first two are Criseyde's requests, begging Pandarus to tell his tale (2.310, 314). The second command is Pandarus's order that she listen (2.315). The speech act, not Pandarus's information, is paramount in this stanza.

Pandarus very briefly states that the prince is in love with her. He makes his message as simple and succinct as possible, adding "What sholde I moore seye?" (2.321). The last line in this stanza throws the whole problem to Criseyde: she may do as she pleases to make Troilus live or die (2.322).

By asking what more he should say, Pandarus implies that he should say nothing. Nevertheless, he does find something that he must say. If Criseyde allows Troilus to die, Pandarus will not live. Even as he threatens to commit suicide, Pandarus refers to language. He gives Criseyde his "trouthe" and tells her that he is not lying (2.325). Although he has wondered what more he need say, from 2.323 there are nine more stanzas of Pandarus's harangue before we hear a word from Criseyde.

Pandarus makes a rhetorically effective argument based upon the premise that Criseyde will allow Troilus to die. He uses the technique of repetition in his "Wo worth" series (2.344-47) to emphasize to Criseyde her potential for being a wretch. He anticipates any argument that Criseyde may have, warning her not to think that this is a charade. He touches on reputation, one of Criseyde's main considerations. If she were to lose her honor through her uncle's connivance, he would be a disgrace (2.351-57).

Pandarus begins to tone down his argument in the stanza at 2.358-64. He stops his threats, and wants Criseyde to understand that he expects her only to pay enough attention to Troilus so that he does not die. He wants her to give him "bettre chiere" and "moore feste" (2.360-61). He is not asking her to make any vow to Troilus. He only wishes her to do these small things in order to save the prince's life. He ends the stanza by swearing that he never meant anything else.

He goes on to argue the reasonable nature of the "requeste" (2.365). Having clarified his own intentions to Criseyde, he goes on to show her how easy it is. He anticipates that she will be concerned about her reputation if people see Troilus leaving her house. He suggests that people will interpret the relationship as nothing more than "love of frendshipe" (2.371). Troilus conducts himself in such a fashion that she may never

fear the image he would project. Yet we get the impression that although Pandarus protests that the relationship would be a friendship, he has something more in mind. He warns Criseyde to "wre" herself "in that mantel" of friendship (2.379-82), almost as though she would be presenting a proper image, one that would be socially acceptable if not exactly true. He had wondered why she would "disfigure" herself in mourning (2.223). His suggestion recalls this earlier reference to Criseyde's projecting an image.

Criseyde has "herde" her uncle (2.386) but does not fully understand his intentions. Much of what Pandarus has said indicates that one may create an image in order to hide meaning. It is possible to see an image, but sometimes one must search out a meaning. Criseyde is suspicious and thinks that she will "felen what he meneth" (2.387). It is as though Pandarus's carefully woven speech had texture and she must feel for the subtext. She asks her uncle what he would "devise" (2.388). True, she is asking for Pandarus's advice; nevertheless, the word can mean "compose" (<u>Middle English Dictionary</u>; cited above 49). We have already noted several comparisons of Pandarus and the narrator (see above 61, 65-66, 67-68, note 7). Rose Zimbardo has commented, "Like the narrator and his mysterious 'auctor,' Pandarus is a poet. Words are the devices by which he creates

the love affair" (292). Martin Stevens also compares Pandarus and the narrator. "Where Pandarus constantly creates plots and gives free rein to his imagination, the narrator deliberately recreates the stories of his sources and refrains entirely from exercising his power of invention" ("Winds of Fortune" 297). Stevens continues his comparison in a note that points out the use of "devyse" by both the narrator and Pandarus:

> The parallel roles of the two "story-makers" is nowhere emphasized more brilliantly than at the beginning of Book III, where the narrator uses one of his favorite tag lines to bring his story forward, "as I shal yow devyse" (III, 238), just after Pandarus used the same line with reference to his plot building (compare III, 203). ("Winds of Fortune" 306 note 17)

Pandarus's initial response to Criseyde's question as to what he would "devise" (2.388) is not an answer but a comment on her appropriate reaction; she has spoken well (2.390). When he answers her, he advises her to love Troilus because love in return for love is "skilful guerdonynge" (3.392). The use of _skilful_ associates Pandarus's advice about love with his previous use of _skylle_ at 2.365, which described his request as reasonable. Pandarus has thus used a word previously associated with discourse in a context about love. He has also made a possibly distasteful proposition sound like a sensible, delightful civic duty.

Pandarus continues to emphasize reason in his argument. He reminds Criseyde that "every houre" time will

"devoure" her beauty (2.393-395). The rhyme of _houre_ and _devoure_ is forceful; little by little time will eat away her loveliness. Criseyde should be afraid of time, not love. Pandarus brings his argument full circle. He began his speech by wishing "grace" upon the "mirour" that is Criseyde's face (2.266). He concludes with the jester's joke about a time-ravaged beauty looking at her face in a mirror. The verb Pandarus uses for _look_ is _prye_. Granted, _prye_ is a rhyme word, but it suggests a covert, hesitant action, almost as though the woman is afraid to look.

It is now Pandarus's turn to bow his head and listen to Criseyde, who starts to cry on cue (2.407-08). Her reply picks up on some of Pandarus's artifice. She says that she believed Pandarus would have berated her if she had taken a lover through her own "dysaventure" (2.414-419); her expression contrasts with the "aventure" Pandarus has been urging upon her (2.224, 288). With a series of rhetorical questions, Criseyde attacks Pandarus's speech; she calls it a "paynted proces" and asks whether the entire presentation pointed to the one "fyn" (2.424-425). She mocks his speech-making. Pandarus had said that he would not make a "proces" of his story (2.292; see also 2.268). She is saying that he not only made a "proces," but it was liberally splashed with the colors of rhetoric. Ironically, Pandarus had asked rhetorically, why he should "peynte"

his story (2.262). The "fyn" Criseyde mentions echoes Pandarus's opening remark that every tale is made for a conclusion and that the end of a story is its "strengthe" (2.259-60).

The narrator said that Criseyde "herde . . . with hire ere" (2.451) Pandarus's words. Throughout the poem, Criseyde listens to rumors and stories that concern her but that she has not created. In Book 1, she hears the rumors about her father (1.106-07). In Book 2 she has listened to the proxy protests of Troilus's love. In Book 3, she listens to Pandarus repeat a ficticious rumor that Troilus heard about her relationship with Horaste (3.796-98). In the fourth book, she hears about her impending trade through rumor (4.659-72). She will seem to hear only a few words of Diomede's initial offers of service (5.176-79). Criseyde has listened to Pandarus's story; the narrator would have us believe it has upset her. He claims that Criseyde is "the ferfulleste wight" (2.450) who "wel neigh starf for feere" (2.449-450) at Pandarus's threat. Many critics have believed that Criseyde is genuinely frightened. Kirby remarks "that Pandarus has been entirely successful in frightening Criseyde into pity for Troilus and himself" (195). Yet how seriously are we to take this exchange about suicide? Pandarus and Criseyde are discussing a conventional, courtly love situation. People who die

in sympathy for their dear friends who do not get the girls of their dreams may exist in stories, but Pandarus and Criseyde are supposedly living in historical Troy. They have been speaking around a topic, and Criseyde is quite aware of this point. We have already seen an exaggerated reaction from Criseyde when Pandarus asked her to dance in praise of May (2.113-19). Pandarus did not seem terribly concerned about presenting this story to Criseyde; indeed, he told Troilus that he himself would not have cared if Criseyde had overheard what Troilus had said (1.1039-40). If Criseyde is upset, her reasoning of the situation is cool:

> And if this man sle here hymself--allas!--
> In my presence, it wol be no solas.
> What men wolde of hit deme I kan nat seye;
> It nedeth me ful sleighly for to pleie."
> (2.459-62)

Someone who is truly scared does not think about how to shrewdly play a game. She knows that Pandarus is very concerned about the situation. However, her laconic comment that she would have little comfort in his killing himself in front of her is not the remark of someone who believes that a family member is in danger of imminent death. To the extent that she thinks about the possibility of Pandarus's suicide, she thinks of it as a potential rumor.

Saying that she chooses the lesser of two evils, Criseyde agrees to grant Troilus her friendship, but

adds that she will never grant Troilus any further grace (2.464-489). This is the first promise made by Criseyde that will eventually prove false.

Pandarus questions Criseyde about whether she will keep her promise. They bounce the repartee back and forth (2.491-97). This perfect, conversational alternation carries through to the next stanza (2.498-504). Both stanzas are as concerned with language as they are with love. Note hight, pleyne, preche, speche, tales, quod (several times), Tel me (twice, at the beginnings of 2.501 and 2.504), and speke. Pandarus asks her whether he must "pleyne" or "preche" after her (2.496); of course, he has just done both. When Criseyde tells Pandarus that he will not have to keep pestering her, she adds another rhetorical question: what need is there for any further speech on the subject (2.497).

The matter seems settled, until Criseyde can no longer contain her curiosity. "Tyl at the laste, 'O good em,'" (2.499) sounds as though Criseyde blurts out her request; there is nothing between "laste" and her words. She wants to know how Pandarus first learned of Troilus's love for her. As soon as she discovers that no one else knows of his feelings (2.502), she bluntly asks Pandarus, "Kan he wel speke of love?" (2.503). Again kan has the force of its several shades of meaning. Criseyde makes the question sound academic. She wants to be prepared to speak with him. She bases the

quality of the relationship on Troilus's ability to speak love's language.

We are told that Pandarus smiled a little at her question (2.505). When Pandarus believed that Troilus was about to divulge his secret in Book 1, he noted the beginning of a "game" (1.868). He seems to have the same reaction to Criseyde's question. He knows that his game has worked. He tells Criseyde that he first learned of Troilus's love when the prince, asleep in his garden, made a "confessioun" (2.528) to the god of love. (Pandarus uses confessional language at 2.440 and 2.579.) The trouble with this garden scene (2.507-53) is that a reader cannot be sure whether Pandarus is lying. It is certainly possible that the events Pandarus describes took place; however, if they did occur, they occurred outside the frame of the story. The reader must rely on Pandarus's veracity. As readers, we have nothing to indicate as yet that Pandarus may be a liar. We know that he is manipulative and that he exaggerates for effect. However, we cannot say that he lies.

Pandarus continues his narration with an account of what seems to be the scene we witnessed between the two men in Book 1, when Pandarus confronts the prince in his chamber (2.554-574). He gives Criseyde the gist of the conversation, describing the "engyn" and the "loore" he used to no avail on the prince (2.565). Nevertheless, he tells Criseyde that he cannot bear to

"rehercen" (2.572) Troilus's words. Oddly enough, he seems to have rehearsed Troilus's alleged garden speech relatively faithfully. One of the reasons he may not wish to repeat the words discussed in Troilus's chamber is that they would reveal his own complicity.

In the stanza beginning at 2.575, Pandarus returns to protesting that he means no evil. He has concluded his version of the discovery of Troilus's love, and pleads with Criseyde by the God who made them both to have mercy on Troilus (2.577-78). (This plea before the Creator echoes Criseyde's oath at 2.500, at the beginning of this section of Pandarus's narrative. The oaths to God, thus, frame this section.) Pandarus's intentions are not evil; it is just that he may not mean what he literally says. When he rhapsodizes on the time when Troilus and Criseyde will belong to each other "al hool" (2.587), he certainly implies more than their friendship. Criseyde, who seems to have understood the subtext in the conversation, is not at all insulted by the remark and treats it as a joke (2.589-90). Yet the lines about Criseyde's belonging totally to Troilus accurately tell what Pandarus wants. When Pandarus remarks, "What so I spak, I mente naught but wel" (2.592), he is telling the truth. He means well. He may not always mean what he actually says, and the situation he creates may grow into something he cannot

manage. His intention, however, is good.

When Pandarus leaves, Criseyde goes to her closet, "And every word gan up and down to wynde" (2.601). We have already noticed the emphasis placed on what Criseyde _hears_ (above 101). As she muses over the situation, she hears the crowd shout that Troilus is returning from battle. Two stanzas (2.610-23) form a prelude to Troilus's appearance. Troilus is described at 2.624-48. The vocabulary in these stanzas draws attention to what Criseyde hears: _ascry_ (2.611); _criden_ (2.612); _shoute_ (2.614); _cryde_ (2.643); _herde cryen_ (2.646). The references to what Criseyde hears anticipate what she sees. Without mentioning any movement on Criseyde's part, the narrator has manipulated the context so that we as readers imagine that she has looked outside because of the shouting. For several lines we are not told explicitly that Criseyde has gone to her window; yet the description suggests that she is watching the whole parade and that we are viewing Troilus from her perspective. We are not told that Criseyde has watched until 2.657, when she pulls her head inside.

Criseyde had been reading about the siege of Thebes when Pandarus walked into her parlor. She asked Pandarus about Ector, and commented that she thought it was wonderful for a prince to do well in battle (2.164-165). Criseyde already has visions of knights in her head. Troilus presents an image that Criseyde responds

to as though she thought him up. Troilus is "So lik a man of armes and a knyght" (2.631). Troilus is the archetypal warrior in this scene, with a touch of bashfulness to make him more appealing. The stanza beginning at 2.631 emphasizes Criseyde's drinking in the sight of Troilus. (Indeed, she will ask that famous rhetorical question, "Who yaf me drynke?" at 2.651.) Within one stanza, there are four references to seeing: to seen (2.632, 635); semed (2.636); and the final line, "It was an heven upon hym for to see" (2.637).

This stress on sight is important because Criseyde mentally catalogues Troilus's attributes. Troilus looked as though he possessed "a myght/To don that thing" (2.633-34) and he appeared "weldy" (2.636). The vocabulary suggests that Criseyde not only admires his beauty but assesses his potential as a lover. As Donaldson has noted about this passage: "The verb weelden has, inevitably, a common sexual sense in Middle English, and 'that thing' seems a probable euphemism" ("Criseide and Her Narrator" 66, note 1; see also Donaldson's "Briseis, Briseida, Criseyde, Cresseid, Cressid" 8-9).

(Ironically, with all of the classical resonance in the poem, this warrior description of Troilus is the opposite of the description of the wretched boy Troilus in the Aeneid 1.474-78; Wetherbee cites the passage from the Aeneid, and questions its relevance for the Troilus.

However, Wetherbee also notes that there is "no essential inconsistency" in Chaucer's "treatment" of Troilus with Vergil's, and he claims that the _Troilus_ tells a story that the _Aeneid_ does not. See _Chaucer and the Poets_ 90-92.)

The people's judgment only makes Troilus more interesting to Criseyde. She hears Troilus compared with Ector. She heard Pandarus make a similar observation in which he referred to Troilus as a second Ector (2.158). To look at Troilus is a "noble game" to Criseyde (2.647). At this point, the relationship is indeed a "noble game"--the game of courtly love. Criseyde not only looks at Troilus; we are told that she began to "aspien" him (2.649). The same verb will be used at 3.85, as Criseyde watches the tongue-tied Troilus and loves him.

"Remembryng hire" (2.653) that this is the knight who will die if she does not befriend him, Criseyde pulls her head inside. Criseyde's memory, filled with the words of Pandarus, is also filled with the sight of Troilus. She "gan to caste and rollen up and down" (2.659) all of his attractive attributes. The word _caste_ implies deliberation; the verb is used again with Criseyde at 2.690. Both Calkas and Pandarus _caste_ in the poem (1.75; 2.74), and some readers may associate Criseyde's consideration of the situation with the scheming of her father and her uncle. Both Calkas and

Pandarus are great planners, and Criseyde is attempting to reach a decision. Her inventory of Troilus's considerable charms suggests a woman who is contmplating more than friendship. What appeals most to Criseyde is that Troilus seems to be suffering <u>for her</u>. She thinks that it would be terrible to let him die "if . . . he mente trouthe" (2.665). She is attracted to him but is concerned about his intentions--what he means. (She will actually ask Troilus what he means at 3.125-26.) If we carefully read the couplet at 2.664-65, the shame of allowing Troilus to pine away would exist only if he intends to pledge his fidelity. If he has no such intention, all of his protests would be a lie, and he would be in no danger of dying of unrequited love.

Criseyde's concern about Troilus's meaning prompts the narrator to clarify his meaning. He is afraid that his readers will believe that Criseyde fell in love too quickly. The narrator makes himself clear, stating that Criseyde did not fall in love with Troilus immediately, but that she began to like him (2.666-79). According to Donaldson, the narrator succeeds only in confusing the reader, who may have had no thought that Criseyde may be too quick to fall in love ("Criseide and Her Narrator" 65-67): "For all the narrator's efforts to suggest the contrary--indeed, because of them--it may well seem to hitherto unsuspicious readers that Criseide liked Troilus on May fourth and loved him on May fifth" (67).

If a reader has made no response to Criseyde's reaction thus far, he or she must form an opinion now--if only on the narrator's awkward handling of a situation that a reader could judge for himself. This stanza is one of the striking instances in which the narrator affirms something (albeit negatively--he says <u>nought</u>) instead of blaming his <u>auctour</u>.

While the narrator bumbles through a self-conscious, unnecessary explanation, Chaucer manipulates the scene. The sentence that begins at 2.656 has two predicates, both of which consist of <u>gan</u> plus an infinitive and its objects. The first predicate consists of Criseyde's pulling her head inside her palace and Troilus's passing by. The stanza breaks at the conclusion of the first predicate. The following stanza, beginning at 2.659, begins with the conjunction that joins the two predicates. The stanza break emphasizes the exterior world--Troilus's riding by with the throng of cheering Trojans--with the interior world of Criseyde hiding in her palace with her inner turmoil. From 2.659 to 2.679, the narrator tells us what Criseyde is thinking and makes his superfluous excuse about the timing of her love. He spends these three stanzas not in describing Troilus's immediate activities, but on what Criseyde is pondering and how we should perceive her. From 2.680 to 2.685, Troilus is mentioned twice, but only in his relation to Venus. The narrator pulls himself back into

his story at 2.687-88 with "Now lat us stynte of Troilus a throwe/That rideth forth"--almost as though the four stanzas between these lines and our last sight of him on horseback at 2.658 did not really interrupt his narrative. That we should stop discussing Troilus is a wonderful reminder of the actions that have moved like a motion picture, a background to the narrator's commentary. As Criseyde considered the situation and the narrator made exucuses for her, Troilus "paste" (2.658) and rode away (2.688), presumably out of view. The narrator returns the reader to the action, but saying that he intends to stop discussing Troilus suggests that he considers his opinionated digression too brief to be a real interruption.

When the narrator begins to explore Criseyde's thoughts, he falls back on his sources. He declares that he will write "somewhat" of her thoughts, according to what his "auctour listeth for t'endite" (2.699-700). Again we have a <u>write/endite</u> couplet, so preoccupied with the act of writing. The narrator, for the moment, ceases to be opinionated and will only write what his author has written. He is faithful to his source. Yet we must question whether the narrator has edited his account and whether the narrator's source is entirely accurate. The narrator himself questions whether his source is accurate or complete. (See, for example, 1.132-133; 4.19-21). The narrator has said

that he would record "somewhat" of the material that his source was pleased to write down. How much is "somewhat?" The word indicates that the narrator has edited the source. If it is indeed edited, what has he left out? Was there anything that the source disapproved of and left unrecorded? Moreover, how did the source know what Criseyde was thinking?

Criseyde's thought process is cool and subtle, considering all of the pros and cons of Troilus's friendship. The vocabulary of Criseyde's monologue suggests that she brings her reason to the situation before her emotions: woot (2.708, 715, 719, 744; knowe, (2.722, 733); thenk (2.736); "were . . . wis"(2.713). I is the subject of these verbs. This is not the fearful Criseyde drawn by the narrator. She is concerned about rumor. Men may suspect that Troilus loves her, but she decides that such conjecture should not bother her. She should not be suspected of having an affair just because a man loves her (2.729-735). The audience knows of one such situation already. Pandarus has made no secret of his amatory stalemate. Criseyde appears to be inclined to trust Troilus: "Sith it is so he meneth in good wyse" at 2.721 appears more confident than "if that he mente trouthe" at 2.665.

Although she is self-assured, Criseyde is wary of words. One good point about Troilus is that he is not a braggart, and she never intends to give him enough

material to boast about should he be so inclined (2.724-28). According to Criseyde, _men say_ that Troilus does not boast (2.724). Perhaps Criseyde has listened to some rumors. She declares that he will never be able to "bynde" her in the "clause" of a boast (2.728). No husband will ever say "'Chek mat'" to her (2.754). Criseyde thinks of what Troilus could say about her, what the Trojans may say about her, and what she will not allow a husband to say to her. Both general rumor from the Trojan people and personal demands from a lover would diminish Criseyde's freedom.

From 2.701 to 2.763, Criseyde's thought are fairly positive and are concerned with Troilus's loving _her_. At 2.764, one stanza bridges her positive thoughts to her negative thoughts; it is as though a cloud hides the sunshine. At 2.771, she becomes afraid of what will happen if _she loves_. This negative section extends to 2.805. She does not use a single _I knowe_ in this section, in contrast to her earlier, more confident thoughts (see above 112). Her strongest affirmation is "I trowe" at 2.795, in a stanza about the frequent "tresoun" committed against women--a betrayal which Criseyde suggests is well known (2.792-93). The _Troilus_ begins and ends in treachery, against the state and the individual. The love story cannot be separated from the historic events. Both end up as the substance of

poetry. Criseyde wonders about the "fyn" of love (2.794). The "fyn" of a story is its "conclusioun," which Pandarus claims "is every tales strengthe" (2.259-260). A tale directed by a storyteller moves to a conclusion, but lovers who live a love story do not know what their "fyn" will be. The narrator knows the end of the story, and so do we. Bloomfield remarks, "Troilus and Criseyde is a medieval tragedy of predestination because the reader is continually forced by the commentator to look upon the story from the point of view of its end and from a distance" (82). (Yet the narrator will question the ultimate fate of his creation, hoping that it will be understood. See 5.1793-99. Bloomfield refers to these lines, commenting, "Chaucer has even consigned his very poem to time and put it in its place along with all terrestrial things . . . in the kingdom of mutability and change" [86].) Though Criseyde will change her allegiance and Troilus's love will presumably die with his own death, their love story lives on as a memory in an old book.

Criseyde is afraid of "wikked tonges" and those who "jangle" about other people's love affairs (2.785; 2.800). Criseyde is right to fear rumor, but it will not be until 5.1058-68 that she sees her rumor grow into history. If rumor is taken into memory as fact, it becomes history. At this point in the story, however, Criseyde does not see beyond the moment. Her

thoughts finally begin to "clere" (2.806)--an emphatic end to a section that began with her "cloudy thought" (2.768)--she descends to her garden in which she hears a song made not by a "wikked tonge," but by "the goodlieste mayde/Of gret estat in . . . Troye" (2.880-81).

Criseyde has considered only the salacious rumors spread by "wikked tonges." Antigone's song, a hymn to love, shows only love's goodness, a complete antithesis of the stories told by malicious rumor. The lyric itself is a small paradigm of an idealized love; it has style. The lovers are noble. They are further ennobled by their love, avoiding anything that is evil. A listener's conclusions about the love exemplified in Antigone's song would be very different from the conclusions drawn by someone listening to a rumor. This point is important for the Troilus. History is an interpretation of events and sources from the past. The narrator himself will question whether the old books lie (4.20-21). A historian should be bound to the truth, but he may not be able to establish what truth is. When we interpret the Troilus, we must weigh the rumors that the narrator hates to relate and the courtly love story in an attempt to discover what truth is.

Antigone cites her source as Troy's "goodlieste" maiden (2.880). Criseyde's niece is a narrator; her text contains an opinion on those who "Defamen love"

(2.860). Criseyde, who had been so concerned that a lover would destroy her independence, listens to a song that seems to address her fears (2.827-875). In the song, the lover swears that she will be steadfast in her "entente" as well as she "kan" (2.828-29). That the lover will stick to her intent as far as she knows how to or is able to makes the lover similar to a story-teller. Human ability and human knowledge are imperfect, hence the difficulty in knowing/loving a person or writing a tale. The last stanza of Antigone's song is important because of the effect the imagery will have on Criseyde. There is nothing to fear in love; indeed, the absorption of the other is so total that the lovers seem to have exchanged hearts (2.869-70). John Leyerle has commented that "the suggestion of exchange of hearts is probably what prompts Criseyde's subsequent dream" (192).

When Antigone is done singing, Criseyde asks her who wrote the song "with so good entente" (2.878). The word "entente" appears frequently in the Troilus and points out one very poignant fact. Most of the characters have good intentions, but the situation goes beyond their own ability to control it. Criseyde is concerned with meaning. She thought it would be wrong to let Troilus die "if that he mente trouthe" (2.665). Criseyde is caught in the language of the song that reveals the happiness of lovers and asks Antigone if

there is such joy among them "as they konne" "endite" (2.885-86). Antigone replies that not everyone is an authority on love; some may believe they are authorities because they feel lust (2.887-93). Saints "kan telle" the beauty of heaven (2.895); they have experienced it. The lustful, however, have not experienced real love. According to Antigone no one "konne wel" describe love's joy (2.888-89); It is true that lovers "endite" well, but the language itself falls short of truly presenting the joy of love.

Observing that it will soon be night, Criseyde cuts the discussion short. While she has avoided any more conversation, "every word" she has heard she has begun "to prènten" in her heart (2.899-900). The use of to prenten is significant in that an expression associated with writing is used in connection with Criseyde's attempt to memorize Antigone's love song.

For several lines (2.904-17), the narrator again becomes very self-conscious of his narrating and his audience. He refers to the sun in three metaphors, and informs his audience, "al this clepe I the sonne" (2.904-05). Chaucer makes his narrator look like an inept poet while he makes fun of grandiose language. Payne notes these two stanzas, commenting on Chaucer's immediate restoration of "a serious, almost sentimental mood" (Geoffrey Chaucer 84-85). The couplet at 2.916-17, employing a rime riche, is a form of abbreviatio

used to gloss over Criseyde's thoughts in order to continue immediately with the narrative. Going over Criseyde's thoughts in detail is unnecessary, according to the narrator, because we supposedly know what they are. Payne sees the couplet as a part of the "alternation in tone" that these two stanzas display (Geoffrey Chaucer 84). According to Payne, "we are jerked out of the scene and made to view it, with some amusement, from a greater distance" (85).

The stanzas at 2.918 and 2.925 are remarkable for several reasons. The first of these stanzas describes a nightingale singing "in his briddes wise a lay/Of love" (2.921-922) in the moonlight. The second describes Criseyde's rather violent dream about an eagle that excanges her heart for his own. These two stanzas recall Ovid; they bring the day full circle as they recall the swallow that awakened Pandarus; they reflect Antigone's song; and they bring a rush of romantic tradition.

Nightingales are stock figures in romantic love poetry. Both the swallow that awakens Pandarus and the nightingale that sings Criseyde to sleep are literal figures, but they carry with them the literary associations of the past, particularly of Ovid. The swallow Procne that awakens Pandarus at the beginning of Book 2 is only a part of the Ovidian story. Both Criseyde's nightingale and Pandarus's swallow sing lays, but the

swallow Procne sings about her sister--and the text at 2.64-70 does not mention that the sister was changed into a nightingale.[3] Criseyde's nightingale, however, is male, and prefigures the male eagle that she will dream tears out her heart. The earlier reference to Procne helps associate Criseyde's nightingale with the classic _Metamorphoses_. Criseyde's bird, however, is gentle, and has more in common with the typical _aube_ figure than it does with violent myth. The nightingale carries with him all of the force of Ovidian myth and the courtliness of love poetry. The day that began with Pandarus and a swallow ends with Criseyde and a nightingale. The associations with the myth have brought the day full circle.

Criseyde's dreams in anticipation of love are quite different from those of Pandarus. The nightingale sings from a green cedar. The only thing green at Pandarus's house is his own "hewe" (2.60). Although the nightingale sings sweetly, there is a suggestion of the violence of the dream to come. We are told that "the dede slep hire hente" (2.924). The word _hente_ implies forcefulness and power. It is not used as an action of the eagle, yet it anticipates his actions: "Under hire brest his longe clawes sette,/And out hire herte he rente" (2.927-28). Granted, _rente_ is not a rhyme word in this stanza--but it rhymes with _hente_ at 2.924. The

violence of rente echoes the forcefulness of hente--and the exchange of Criseyde's heart with the eagle's recalls 2.872-73 in Antigone's song. (See Leyerle's comment on the exchange of hearts in the song as the possible inspiration of the dream, cited above 116).

The scene shifts in time and location from the sleeping Criseyde (undisturbed by her dreams) to Troilus, who is riding home in the afternoon, just as we left him at 2.687. He sends for Pandarus, who, like a teasing storyteller, tries to keep his listener in suspense about the outcome of his tale. Pandarus says he wants to sleep--but adds that he has taken care of Troilus's problem (2.953-964). The narrator sums up any embellishment Pandarus may have made by explaining that he will not make a "sermoun" of the material; we have already heard it (2.965-66).

Pandarus's next advice to Troilus is filled with references to language, knowledge, and image. He prefaces his advice diplomatically, saying that although he is aware that Troilus is far "wiser" than he is, he would write Criseyde a letter and pour out all of his misery (2.1002-08). Both Pandarus and Troilus are perfectly aware that the prince does not know how to woo Criseyde. Pandarus offers to deliver the letter to her. Troilus will thus have pursued Criseyde through two verbal media: through Pandarus's speech on May 4 and his own letter (with Pandarus providing additional

commentary) on May 5. The words of this letter will be accompanied by an image: Troilus is to ride by Criseyde's palace when Pandarus and she are "lokynge" into the street (2.1009-15). The "lokynge" of Troilus and Criseyde is crucial to Book 1. The action is still at work here. As far as Pandarus knows, Criseyde has no fixed image of Troilus to moon over such as the prince has of her. Pandarus does not know that Troilus need not project an image for Criseyde. She has just seen him riding home from battle and found him very attractive.

Pandarus knows the type of letter that will or will not move Criseyde, who is verbally conscious enough to inquire how well Troilus can speak about love (2.503). He is aware that Criseyde will be critical of the letter. It should be an image of the lover, both in its words and its appearance. It should even be tear stained:

> "Towchyng thi lettre, thou art wys ynough.
> I woot thow nylt it dygneliche endite,
> As make it with thise argumentes tough;
> Ne scryvenyssh or craftyly thow it write;
> Biblotte it with thi teris ek a lite;
> And if thow write a goodly word al softe,
> Though it be good, reherce it nought to ofte.
> (2.1023-29)

When Pandarus says that he knows Troilus will not make these mistakes, he is fully aware that these are the very mistakes Troilus may make. He advises Troilus not to keep repeating the same word, and continues his

illustration with the example of a harper who plucks one string (2.1030-36). In the following stanza, Pandarus continues to show disharmony with discordant, not in relation to harp strings, but to vocabulary:

> "Ne jompre ek no discordant thyng yfeere,
> As thus, to usen termes of phisik
> In loves termes; hold of thi matere
> The forme alwey, and do that it be lik;
> For if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk
> With asses feet, and hedde it as an ape,
> It cordeth naught, so were it but a jape."
> (2.1037-43)

Pandarus has brought an old book to his aid. Lines 2.1041-43 are based on Horace's Ars poetica (Barney, Explanatory Notes to Troilus in Riverside Chaucer 1035, note to lines 1041-43). Troilus's love letter will benefit from classic poetics. The letter must be well-written if it is to sway Criseyde. The making of this love affair relies on language, and that language is highly structured discourse. Moreover, by relying on the advice of an old book (even though he does not admit to it) Pandarus has made his advice intertextual. As the vocabulary of the letter will be manipulated, so too hopefully Criseyde's feelings will be moved. This is only a little love letter, but Pandarus wants it to have epic proportions.

Troilus confesses to Pandarus that he is "ashamed" to compose the letter because his "innocence" may cause him to say the wrong thing (2.1047-48). Troilus's remark about his innocence enables the reader

to see that Troilus is not as culpable as Pandarus in the machinations to seduce Criseyde. Pandarus suggests something that has not occurred to Troilus: Criseyde may answer the letter.

Swearing "Depardieux" (2.1058), Troilus agrees to write. In this stanza (2.1058-64), the noun lettre appears twice, along with several verbs that emphasize the action of writing: write, endite, devyse, and wrot. The narrator does not give us Troilus's exact words, but he summarizes them in such a way that we have a fairly good idea of what is in the letter. Troilus calls Criseyde various endearments, so many that the narrator ceases to list them and refers to "ek thise other termes alle/That in swich cas thise loveres alle seche" (2.1067-68). Troilus must seek the right words. Notice that he uses the termes that all lovers use; at least he has taken Pandarus's earlier advice not to use "termes of phisik" (2.1038) in a love letter. This is a stock billet-doux. Throughout the three stanzas that detail the construction of the letter, the word and is frequently repeated, possibly a self-conscious emphasis on the gushing, emotional cramming of Troilus's feelings. In the stanza beginning at 2.1079, five of the seven lines begin with and. By using the rhetorical device of repetition, the poet mimics the overload of affectionate expressions that seem to be the content

of the letter. The narrator says quite frankly that it would take too much space to include everything Troilus wrote. He notes that the prince lies in the letter by claiming that he is of little worth (2.1077-78). It is unclear whether Troilus believes that he is lying.

Troilus reads his letter, kisses it a thousand times (he will kiss Criseyde a thousand times in the consummation at 3.1252), and seals it. There is no indication that Pandarus reads the letter. Pandarus's earlier entreaties at Troilus's behest were all in his own words. For all of the furtive looking that Troilus and Criseyde have done so far, the letter is, in a sense, their first direct communication. The letter forces the relationship into reciprocity. According to Dinshaw, "the exchange of letters constitutes the lovers' intercourse at the point in the affair" (<u>Sexual Poetics</u> 50).

There is no transition between Troilus's sealing the letter and Pandarus's taking it the next morning. Chaucer plays with his narrator, having him announce that Criseyde receives Pandarus "With dredful herte" (2.1101); yet the Criseyde we hear teasing her uncle about his dubious skill in "loves daunce" (2.1106) is not fearful. Her language echoes her tone of early Book 2, when she joked that his wished-for mistress was not among her company of ladies (2.98). When Pandarus

has a come-back line to her question, she begins to laugh "it thoughte hire herte brest" (2.1108). It is as though the narrator wishes to present us with a staid, timid Criseyde, but her own words give us a very different picture. As Criseyde laughs, Pandarus tells her, "Loke alwey that ye fynde/Game in myn hood" (2.1109-10). Perhaps Pandarus is giving her a hint that the new story he is about to tell her about a Greek spy is, after all, a game. Criseyde may realize that it is a ruse. Why should her uncle announce that he has news about a Greek spy, and then take her into the garden to hear "a long sermoun" of it in private? (2.1111-15).

The game continues, played through speech. The words of Pandarus's speech and her response to it seem stylized, dictated by a convention. When Pandarus breaks a rule of the formal convention, we see the talk dissolve into the game that the two characters realize it is. We may be taken in at first by their courtly speech. Pandarus takes an entire stanza to introduce Troilus's letter in the most genteel of terms (2.1121-27). In two stanzas, Criseyde, suddenly the great, daunger-filled lady, refuses the letter and acts as though she has been terribly insulted. Her reaction seems to be an expected part of the game. When Pandarus thrusts the letter into her bodice and taunts her to take it out and be stared at, she teases him

right back. She can wait; Pandarus can send any message to Troilus that he wishes. Pandarus says that he would be happy to deliver a message--as long as she composes it. If Criseyde were truly timid, she would be stymied at this point. All she does is laugh and suggest that they eat dinner (2.1155-63). The exchange is humorous; Criseyde's anger is only part of the game. Pandarus tells so many jokes that she thinks she will die from laughter (2.1167-69).

Before dinner, Criseyde privately makes a very close reading of Troilus's letter: "Avysed word by word in every lyne,/And fond no lak, she thoughte he koude good" (2.1177-78). Criseyde responds not only to what Troilus writes but how well he writes it. After dinner, when Pandarus has maneuvered himself into a window seat, he asks Criseyde's opinion of the letter: "Kan he theron? For, by my trouthe, I noot" (2.1197). Pandarus is probably telling the truth; we never saw him read the letter. For all of its banter, there is a seriousness to their discussion. Criseyde has received her answer to the question she asked back at 2.503: Troilus can speak the language of love. In the narrator's summary of Troilus's letter (2.1065-85), the continual repetition of _and_ and the standard phrases hinted at a typical courtly love letter. Nevertheless, the contents seem to move criseyde, who at least declares that she _believes_ Troilus writes well ("trowe," 2.1199). Perhaps

the original letter, which we do not see, was better than the narrator implied.

Criseyde agrees to write a response. Declaring that she "kan so writen" (2.1205) but does not quite know what to say to Troilus, she swears "Depardieux" and announces that she never wrote a letter before (2.1212-14). The "Depardieux" oath is identical to the oath sworn by Troilus when he began his letter to her (2.1058). Her claim that she never wrote a letter before seems to contradict that she "kan so writen." We may suspect from her stress on Troilus's skill with language that this is not her first letter. However, kan may imply only that she is able to write the letter or knows how to write it; kan does not necessarily imply experience.

If we are puzzled by this exchange between Criseyde and Pandarus, both the narrator and Troilus have trouble interpreting her letter. The narrator says that he intends "to telle in short . . ./Th'effect, as fer as I kan understonde" (2.1219-20). In the remaining five lines of the stanza, he summarizes Criseyde's response. In contrast, he needed three stanzas to summarize Troilus's letter. Troilus will also have difficulty understanding it. The prince's reaction to her letter seems to vacillate between hope and despair (2.1324-27). The prince finally decides that there is some hope for

him although she "covered . . . tho wordes under sheld" (2.1324-27). Criseyde tells Pandarus that she took pains writing the letter (2.1231). If the narrator's summary is accurate, the letter is artfully done. So artful, that it perplexes the recipient.

Pandarus sat in the window, asking Criseyde about Troilus's letter because he "saugh tyme unto his tale" (2.1193). He is waiting for his next artifice to be enacted. He uses an image of writing when he informs Criseyde that her heart has been difficult to "grave"; seeming to ignore the fact that he brought the situation to her attention only yesterday, he complains over the length of time that she has been a "tirant" (2.1240-41). While "they declamed this matere" (2.1247), the prince and his cohort ride up the street as planned.

In discussing this contrived scene, John Fyler notes, "Its artificiality is heightened because . . . the scene has in fact occurred once before, though only Criseyde and the audience know that it has" ("The Fabrications of Pandarus" 126). The scene that Fyler refers to is the earlier scene in which Troilus rode by her house and she watched him (2.610-658). The narrator is also aware that the scene has occurred before, which may be one of the reasons he rhetorically asks why he should describe Troilus's "aray" (2.1264). Although the narrator lists some of Troilus's many assets at 2.1267-68 and Criseyde seems to be completely enchanted, he does

not go into all of the details of the earlier scene. Fyler notes that "these two episodes contribute to a growing sense of lost moorings as the poem increasingly dislodges us from an assured perception of sequential reality" ("Fabrications" 127). Fyler sees this scene as a case "in which . . . dramatic irony works in reverse" ("Fabrications" 126); he comments that the fabrication does serve a purpose in that Criseyde must acknowledge her interest in Troilus ("Fabrications" 127-28). The scene, however, tells us something more: Criseyde can be persuaded by a good show. She does not realize that she is watching a contrived plot, and she responds to the performance.

It is in this carefully planned scene that Pandarus brings up the point that appearances lead to interpretation. If Criseyde runs from the window, Troilus will believe that she is avoiding him. Just as both Troilus and Criseyde gave Pandarus the same "Depardieux" remark when he had them write letters (2.1059 and 2.1212), they have the same reaction here: both their faces turn color. This same change in expression happened the first time that Criseyde saw Troilus in Book 2, though not for the same reason. Troilus blushed because the crowd cheered him (2.645); she blushed because of what she was thinking (2.652). Now their color changes because they are looking at each other. Pandarus had told Troilus that he and Criseyde would be "lokynge" (2.1015)

into the street and that he should fix his "countenaunce" on him (2.1017). Pandarus had stressed the image that Troilus should present (2.1011-12). The words that are crucial to Troilus's <u>coup-de-foudre</u> in Book 1 are <u>chere</u> and <u>look</u>. The same idea governs this scene. Even the vocabulary emphasizes sight: <u>aspide</u> (2.1252), <u>ysee</u> (2.1253), <u>seeth</u> (2.1254), <u>look</u> (2.1259), <u>biseyn</u> (2.1262), <u>look</u> (2.1267).

The narrator comments that Criseyde never had such pity on Troilus since the day that she was born (2.1269-71). Criseyde learned about Troilus's love only the previous day. The narrator may be trying to show her good quality--her pity, which is praised again at 5.824. The narrator does not seem to realize that by comparing this one-day interval to her entire life span, he is not only exaggerating the situation but is suggesting that this is indeed the sudden love he denied (2.666-679).

The <u>Troilus</u> is so obsessed with language that speech refers to itself as speech, not just information. When Criseyde agrees with Pandarus that it would be terrible to allow Troilus to die, he tells her that she has said the truth and adds that she can "felen" herself that he has not lied to her (2.1277-83). The line is an echo of Criseyde's feeling for Pandarus's meaning at 2.387. The rhetoric of Pandarus's argument is very subtly structured. Note the balance between "ye sey me soth" (2.1282) and "I nought lye" (2.1283), with <u>soth</u>

and lye used as end rhymes in that stanza.

The narrator claims that Criseyde hesitates to speak with Troilus because of "speche" (2.1291). The difficulty with speche is that it alternates with shame in several manuscripts (Barney, Textual Notes to Troilus in Riverside Chaucer 1167, note to line 1291). Given that 2..291 is surrounded by references to speech and that the boon Pandarus begs of Criseyde is that she speak with Troilus, speche is an interesting reading. The Riverside Chaucer glosses it as "malicious gossip" (507, note to line 1291). This is a reasonable reading especially because Criseyde is afraid of rumor. Speech is the problem of the romance; Troilus does not know what to say to Criseyde until he has Pandarus say it for him. Criseyde hesitates to say anything to Troilus. Criseyde and Pandarus are concerned about what will be said of her. There is a dualism between speech and sight. She prefers to remain an icon, and reward Troilus "with nothing but with sighte" (2.1295). Her "entente" is "to love hym unwist"--at least, that is what Criseyde said (2.1293-94).

The placement of unwist is deceptive, for it may mean that Criseyde does not want Troilus to know that she loves him, or that she wants no one else to know of their love. Apparently, Criseyde must have mentioned something about her idea to Pandarus, for he decides that her "opynyoun" will not last two years--if he can

help it (2.1297-98). The narrator borrows one of Pandarus's phrases, asking why he should make "a long sermoun" about Pandarus's reaction (2.1299; see 2.1115). For the present, Pandarus must consent to Criseyde's "conclusioun" (2.1300), but he has another one in mind. According to Pandarus, a story exists for its conclusion (2.259). Criseyde's conclusion does not fit in Pandarus's plot. He has his own goal for the romance, and he will manipulate Criseyde. A character in a story may express intent, but it is the author who controls the outcome to some degree. (This is one reason that the narrator speaks of his source: he does not wish to be blamed for the outcome of the story.) Pandarus's realization that he cannot control the entire situation does not surface until Book 4. For now, he can orchestrate the love affair.

Pandarus brings Criseyde's letter to Troilus, saying that it is the "charme" that will cure him (2.1314). Showing the letter to the prince, Pandarus orders him to look "on al this blake" (2.1320). He draws Troilus's attention not to what Criseyde writes, but to the physical embodiment of her text in the ink. Troilus interprets the letter, discounting what he does not wish to read.

The main effect of the letter is that it increases Troilus's passion. He sends a message to her every day through Pandarus. His pursuit of Criseyde is verbal,

but it is verbal by proxy. Pandarus is the center of the major conversations of Books 1 and 2. The only other character Troilus speaks with in Book 1 is Pandarus. With the exception of the few words she says to Antigone, Criseyde speaks only with Pandarus in Book 2. Even at Deiphebus's dinner, the only line Criseyde speaks is 2.1724, and it is addressed to her uncle.

The exchange of letters continues, and Troilus is affected by the answers he receives (2.1350-51). He complains to Pandarus, who "al his herte caste" (2.1357) to ease Troilus. The words are an echo of the architectural metaphor from Geoffrey de Vinsauf, in which the architect casts out his "hertes line" (1.1068) to create what he wishes.

This metaphor will be picked up in a later stanza, in a word that links both architecture and literature. Pandarus says that he will "shape" a way for Troilus to speak with Criseyde (2.1363-65). Pandarus believes that Troilus's misery "mot som routhe impresse" on a "good herte" (2.1371). Criseyde's heart is apparently impressionable. Pandarus had complained that it was difficult "to grave" her heart (2.1241). Criseyde printed the words of Antigone's song on her heart (2.899-900). The manipulation of Criseyde will be much more effective if Troilus pleads for himself. What Pandarus does not

realize is that manipulation has its limits. According to R. A. Shoaf:

> If Criseyde is a text or a sign or even perhaps the parchment, she is already written before Pandarus, in Troylus's behalf, begins his effort to rewrite her. In the language of medieval grammar, she has already been "imposed" to signify a meaning. . . . If Pandarus attempts Criseyde's "herte for to grave" (2.1241; 3.1499), he not only wounds flesh with his stylus or chisel but also violently effaces an original character imprinted by that greater Authority . . . and substitutes for it a character of his own making (_poesis_) which, to Troylus's sorrow, must necessarily prove false. (_Dante, Chaucer, and the Currency of the Word_ 108)

As a creator, Pandarus likes to work alone. As he goes off to tell Deiphebus a story, he repeats the same words he said to Troilus before he carried his tale to Criseyde: "lat m'alone" (2.1401; see also 1.1028; similarly, "lat me thanne allone at 3.413). The narrator, Pandarus, and even Deiphebus seem to be as conscious of making speech as they are of the subject of the conversation. The narrator and Pandarus know that Pandarus is creating a fiction for Deiphebus; the audience assumes that Pandarus is lying, but this fact is not clarified until 2.1496.

The narrator announces that he will "telle in short, withouten wordes mo" Pandarus's story (2.1405; note the redundancy). The conversation between Deiphebus and Pandarus is conscious of itself as speech. It emphasizes not only what is said but the very action of saying it. Pandarus tells Deiphebus of Criseyde's

supposed enemies "withouten more speche" (2.1421). Deiphebus is surprised that Pandarus speaks so "straungely" of Criseyde (2.1423-24). As far as Deiphebus is concerned, Pandarus's request needs nothing more "to speke" (2.1426), but asks Pandarus about the best way to handle the situation since he knows "of this matere" (2.1429). Pandarus suggests that Deiphebus invite Criseyde to dinner in order that she may come "hire pleyntes to devise" (2.1434). Deiphebus asks, "What wiltow seyn if I for Eleyne sente/To speke of this?" (2.1447-48). He adds that he has heard Ector "Speke of Cryseyde swich honour that he/May seyn no bet" (2.1453-54). Ector need not even be asked for his support. Deiphebus's final request is that Pandarus speak with Troilus (2.1457).

The conversation has consisted of storytelling. Pandarus's fiction will breed other fictions, for Deiphebus intends to tell Eleyne. Criseyde herself is supposed to tell her story the next day--and she has not even heard the story yet. Pandarus, of course, will do all of her talking. The irony of this set up is that Pandarus will bring Criseyde to be the storyteller, but he will do the talking and Troilus will plead to her.

Pandarus goes to Criseyde's palace "as streyght as lyne" (2.1461), a semi-architectural simile that recalls "hertes line" from 1.1068 and "herte caste" from 2.1357. Both of the earlier examples refer to Pandarus as shaper

of events. He tells Criseyde a more elaborate version of the story he told Deiphebus. There is a history behind Pandarus's story that may make it seem plausible to Criseyde and everyone else. Apparently, Criseyde had once been sued by Poliphete. This point is illustrated by Pandarus's comment that Poliphete is "aboute eftsones" to sue her with "advocacies newe" (2.1468-69). There must have been an <u>old</u> lawsuit. Pandarus tells Criseyde a truth, a lie, and a truth that is based on a lie:

> For I have ben right now at Deiphebus,
> At Ector, and myn oother lordes moo,
> And shortly maked ech of hem his foo,
> That, by my thrift, he shal it nevere wynne,
> For aught he kan, whan that so he bygynne."
> (2.1480-84)

Pandarus tells the truth about Deiphebus, but he lies about Ector and the others. (Fyler notes that Pandarus could not have spoken to Ector since he went immediately to Criseyde's house. Moreover, since Ector will not be at the dinner, Pandarus will not be caught in a lie. See "The Fabrications of Pandarus" 125.) It is true that Pandarus's friends will be Poliphete's enemies if he should begin a lawsuit--but is such a lawsuit likely? It will be made clear at 2.1496 that the whole story is a ruse by Pandarus. In effect, he is quashing a lawsuit before it can begin--but the whole lawsuit is a fiction. Since Pandarus has made it clear that Poliphete has not begun legal proceedings

and will drop them in fear if he knows of the royal family's concern for Criseyde, Pandarus's lie is likely to be undetected until it has served its purpose.

The narrator says that Pandarus and Criseyde "casten" what to do (2.1485). The verb has been used before in contexts of manipulation, deviousness, and planning. Calkas "caste" to leave Troy (1.75); Pandarus "caste" when to visit Criseyde; and Criseyde bagan "to caste" when she was entranced at the sight of Troilus (2.659). The use of the verb at at 2.1485 is ironic; Pandarus already has his entire scenario planned.

Later, Pandarus relates the entire story to the prince. The narrator has glossed over Pandarus's departure, declaring that he will "telle" it "in short" (2.1493). He describes Pandarus's narration. He told Troilus "al this thyng . . . word and ende" (2.1495). After he tells Troilus his story, he advises him on how to present the story of his love to Criseyde:

> "Now spek, now prey, now pitously compleyne;
> Lat nought for nyce shame, or drede, or
> slouthe!
> Somtyme a man mot telle his owen peyne.
> Bileve it, and she shal han on the routhe:
> Thow shalt be saved by thi feyth, in trouthe.
> (2.1499-1503)

If Troilus believes his story, she will be moved to pity for him. Barney's Explanatory Notes to his edition of the poem in The Riverside Chaucer gloss 2.1503 as a use of theological vocabulary applied to love, and cite Luke 8.48 and 18.42 (Riverside Chaucer

1036). The pagan Pandarus would not have known the New Testament. The line is an anachronism, but it signifies a reading of a text that is totally at odds with its spirit--Pandarus has appropriated a spiritual text for physical purposes. He twists an authority to support his own dogma, yet he is oblivious of even using an authority. This misappropriation of scripture is used to illustrate the point that if Troilus is to be convincing, he must believe the story himself. Note that while Troilus's love is true, the story in which his protests will be encased, his fever at Deiphebus's house, will be a fiction. Pandarus devises a "sleyghte" in order to hide Troilus's "cheere" (2.1512). While Troilus's faith will save his love, deception will save face for him. Troilus's expression is a text, and he does not want anyone else to read him correctly. Pandarus echoes his earlier line at 2.1503: Troilus should be convincing because he is indeed love sick--"lat se now how wel thow kanst it make,/For, parde, sik is he that is in sorwe" (2.1522-23). The word make stresses the artifice of the situation, but it is fiction with great verisimilitude. Troilus is, indeed, not himself. He even tells Pandarus that he need not be exhorted to "feyne" illness (2.1528). Pandarus's comment is that the prince will not have too much "to countrefete" (2.1532). We may even wonder whether what is

truth for Troilus is fiction for Pandarus, who tells the prince to hold to his "purpos" (2.1525). The same word that the narrator applied to his literary effort at 1.5 is applied by Pandarus to his plot.

Deiphebus's dinner party is crucial not only because it serves as an excuse for bringing Criseyde to Troilus; it associates Criseyde with Helen of Troy, and the scene is loaded with memory.[4]

Speaking of Criseyde, Talbot Donaldson has suggested "that from the time of Benoît, and perhaps much earlier, she may have been a kind of surrogate for Helen" ("Briseis, Briseida" 4). We have already noted Basworth and Taylor's comment (above 22). The description of Eleyne at the party seems innocuous, but its vocabulary is suggestive. Eleyne "Shoop" herself to visit Deiphebus, to whom she would "feyne" nothing. She came to the dinner "in hire pleyne entente" (2.1556-60). <u>Shoop</u> suggests <u>shape</u> and its artifice, and seems a bit at odds with her <u>pleyne</u> intention. After this description of Eleyne, we are told that "God and Pandare wist al what this mente" (2.1561). God only knows--and Pandarus--what is going on. The next stanza describes the arrival of Criseyde, "al innocent of this" (2.1562). Eleyne comes in her sisterly concern, Criseyde is supposedly oblivious of Pandarus's machinations, and the truth is known only to God and Pandarus--and <u>maybe</u> the narrator, his readers, and Troilus.

Eleyne may feign nothing _now_ to Deiphebus, but according to the _Aeneid_, she betrays him, by then her new husband, at the fall of Troy. In the _Aeneid_, Deiphebus becomes the storyteller, relating the story of his death to Aeneas:

> Namque ut supremam falsa inter gaudia noctem
> egerimus, nosti: et nimium meminisse necesse
> est. (_Aeneid_ 6.513-14)[5]

According to the shade of Deiphebus, it is necessary to remember too much. Deiphebus complains of the infamous memorials Helen gave him--"_illa haec monimenta reliquit_" (_Aeneid_ 6.512). Helen's memorials were not words, but were actions that became stories.[6] When there is a surfeit of information, something will be edited. Chaucer's Eleyne and Deiphebus do not know what the shade of Deiphebus complains of in the _Aeneid_. The dinner party with Eleyne and Deiphebus is in some respects similar to Criseyde's reading the _Siege of Thebes_, which may have been bound with the Troy story (see Renoir, "Thebes, Troy" 15-16; cited above 84). The characters are ignorant of what will become of them, but their future is our literary memory.

The narrator, like Pandarus, believes that the strength of a story is its conclusion, and skipping the preliminaries, he goes "Right to th'effect, withouten tales mo" (2.1566). Even before Pandarus begins his storytelling, there are tales told about Troilus. Eleyne complains so much of his illness that it was a

"pite . . . to here" (2.1577). Criseyde, listening to their comments but saying nothing, thinks that she could be Troilus's best physician (2.1582)--scarcely a completely innocent remark and reminiscent of Pandarus's comment at 2.571. Criseyde listens to everything, noting what is said (2.1590-91). One of the comments is that Troilus "kan, that fewe lordes konne" (2.1587). The reference for _that_ is vague, and is similar to Criseyde's initial assessment of Troilus: he seemed to have the ability "To don that thing" (2.634; see Donaldson, "Criseide and Her Narrator" 66, note 1; and Donaldson's "Briseis, Briseida" 8-9; see above 107).

The narrator realizes that he digresses, and calls attention to his return to the story with "o fyn is al that evere I telle" (2.1596). Pandarus comes to the same conclusion about _his_ story. During the dinner, the guests "of this and that devise" (2.1599) until Pandarus gets to his _fyn_. He "brak al that speche anon" (2.1600) and asks Deiphebus's permission "To speke" of Criseyde's "nedes" (2.1603). He is, of course, not concerned with Criseyde's needs, but with Troilus's. Eleyne is the first who picks up "the tale" (2.1605). The story reverts to Pandarus when Deiphebus orders him to tell it, because Pandarus can tell it best (2.1612). The presentation of Criseyde's problems becomes an exposé of storytelling. Pandarus, like the narrator, mentions that he will get right to the point;

why should anyone wait (2.1614)? Sounding as though he is about to abbreviate the story, he instead "rong hem out a proces lik a belle" about Poliphete that was so hateful the listeners might spit upon it (2.1615-17). The story, fabricated as it is, gives the illusion of substance for people to react to it physically. The audience becomes a group of storytellers, for "Answerde of this ech werse of hem than other" (2.1618). The narrator breaks in again, echoing Pandarus by asking why he should spend any more time on the "tale" (2.1622). The word <u>tale</u> may refer to the discussion at the table, or it may ironically refer to the story of Poliphete, the creation of Pandarus's imagination that he based on the memory of a previous lawsuit.

Eleyne questions Pandarus as to whether Ector or Troilus knows this story. Pandarus calls attention to his own words and the emphasis placed on speech in the scene. He asks the guests to "here" him (2.1628), suggesting that Criseyde tell her story personally to Troilus. Because she is a lady, Troilus will be willing to hear her story (2.1633). Pandarus's reasoning is true, but it is not the whole truth. Troilus has taken Criseyde, not her alleged problems, to heart. Pandarus has given the correct answer, but the wrong reason.

Pandarus's speech is a study of who is telling what to whom. He tells the dinner guests that he will let

them know whether Troilus will "here" about Criseyde's problem (2.1636). Pandarus, of course, does not ask Troilus's permission; he jokingly tells the sick prince that he has brought his "beere" (2.1638). He returns to Eleyne and Deiphebus to tell them what Troilus has supposedly said. Pandarus thinks that perhaps he should relate Criseyde's story, since he can "Reherce hire cas unlik that she kan seye" (2.1656). Pandarus has a point; Criseyde heard the story only the previous day. (Fyler makes a similar observation in "Fabrications" 119). Pandarus makes one comment that is, ironically, the truth. Troilus will listen to Criseyde because she is a stranger to him (2.1660). It is true that although they have communicated, they have never met.

The text stresses tale telling. Eleyne and Deiphebus are told that Troilus has some secret matter to discuss with them. (If it is secret, why does Pandarus know about it?) Eleyne defers to Pandarus to tell Criseyde's story, explaining to Troilus that he can tell it better than she (2.1679-80). "Pandarus gan newe his tong affile,/And al hire cas reherce" (2.1681-82). Troilus agrees to meet with Criseyde, and sidetracks Eleyne and Deiphebus by handing them something to read. He asks them for their advice on a matter Ector presented to him concerning whether a certain man deserved the death penalty (2.1693-1708). He gives them the letter and document only to be rid of them;

when they return from the garden with the documents, he will treat the situation "ful lightly" (3.220)--a contrast to the "grisly wise" (2.1700) with which he hands them the materials. The narrator does not know who the condemned man was. His name, apparently, is not in his source and is lost to memory. Perhaps the letter itself is fabricated. The emphasis placed on the letter being there "as hap was" (2.1696) indicates that this is more than a casual occurrence. When did Ector send the letter? He was not invited to the dinner; he may not even know that Troilus is at Deiphebus's house. In any event, if Ector did ask Troilus's advice, Troilus has delegated the task. He manipulates the letter by using it in a way that is different from its original purpose--assuming, of course, that the letter is genuine. Fyler comments on the "contrast . . . between the real, imminent execution of a nameless wretch, and the mere illusion of a threat to Criseyde's well-being" ("Fabrications" 124). Fyler also notes:

> Fact and fiction, the real and the illusory, become interchangeable. For if the effect of the scene at Deiphebus's house is to give reality to the illusory, its concluding lines make the all too real seem an illusion. ("Fabrications" 124)

After Eleyne and Deiphebus leave, Pandarus returns for Criseyde, announcing to everyone that Troilus, Deiphebus, and Eleyne await her. Criseyde supposedly knows nothing of the scheme. She "Avysed wel hire wordes and hire cheere" (2.1726). She puts on a suitable

expression. This line is particularly interesting in that it may anticipate a stanza that appears only in the Rawlinson manuscript after 2.1750 and a repetition of 2.1576-77 (Barney, Textual Notes to _Troilus_ in _Riverside Chaucer_ 1168, note to line 1750). In this stanza, Pandarus orders Criseyde to change her expression, her "face," or show Troilus some mercy. He tells her that her expression is completely at odds with her treatment of Troilus, "That crueltee with so benigne a chier/Ne may not last in o persone yfere" She is dissembling, just as her uncle suggested she dissembled in widow's weeds (2.222-23). Barney comments that this stanza is likely to be Chaucer's work (Textual Notes, _Riverside Chaucer_ 1168, note to line 1750). Given the preoccupation with expression and with the face as text (see especially 3.1357), the stanza is suited to its environment. If Criseyde projects beauty instead of _daunger_, Troilus will misread her.

If Criseyde has not yet guessed at her uncle's intentions, she must surely do so as she is led to speak with Troilus. Pandarus says nothing about a law-suit to her, but exhorts her not to allow Troilus to die. Pandarus plays with the idea of time--delayed (2.1739), won (2.1743), and lost (2.1749). The references to time point to the narrator's comment that this is "the firste tyme" that Troilus will plead to his lady

in person (2.1756). Pandarus reminds Criseyde that no one "devyneth" that there is anything between them; all are blinded (2.1741-43). Pandarus discusses the interpretations that people make of lovers' actions: "In titeryng, and pursuyte, and delayes,/The folk devyne at waggyng of a stree" (2.1744-45). One becomes afraid of happiness because of what other people may say--because of the stories they will create (2.1746-48). Pandarus seems to suggest that delay itself fuels rumor, and seeks to manipulate Criseyde through her own fear of gossip.

The last stanza of Book 2 is concerned with listening and speaking. The narrator addresses the lovers that are present "here" and mentions that Troilus can "here" the whispered conversation of Pandarus and Criseyde (2.1751-53). The here/here rhyme associates the listening audience with the listening Troilus. Both the prince and the audience eavesdrop on Pandarus's words.

The last word of Book 2 is seye--What will Troilus say to Criseyde? By making seye the final word (2.1757), Chaucer anticipates the substance of the opening of Book 3. The word reminds us that Troilus has never before said anything to Criseyde in person, but has always used Pandarus as a messenger. The suspense that ends Book 2 and begins Book 3 partly consists of the audience's awareness that Troilus may bungle the meeting

because this initial seduction is verbal.

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[1] Karla Taylor comments on the similarity between this comment and Pandarus's remark at 1.628-29. She notes that Chaucer "modifies" Pandarus's earlier reference to a blind man "to include a pun on the colors of rhetoric, and so reinforces the analogies between Pandarus and poet, love affair and poem." See "Proverbs and the Authentication of Convention" 290.

[2] Ovid, Ovid's Metamorphoses: Books 6-10 ed. William S. Anderson, The American Philological Association Series of Classical Texts (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press in co-operation with the American Philological Association, 1972) 6.516-17, 529-30.

[3] Ovid, ed. Anderson, 6.667-70.

[4] The critics are at odds as to whether the scene between Deiphebus and Eleyne suggests a tryst or their later marriage. McKay Sundwall proposes that the two of them are having a rendezvous ("Deiphebus and Helen: A Tantalizing Hint," Modern Philology 73 [1976]: 151-156). Mark Lambert believes that Helen's eventual marriage with Deiphebus "is irrelevant here" ("Troilus, Books I-III: A Criseydan Reading," in Essays on Troilus and Criseyde, ed Mary Salu, Chaucer Studies III [Cambridge: D. S. Brewer; and Totawa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979] 140, note 10). Winthrop Wetherbee mentions the section in Chaucer and the Poets 90. For an in-depth discussion of Eleyne, see Baswell and Taylor's "The Faire Queene Eleyne in Chaucer's Troilus."

[5] Vergil, Aeneid 6.513-14, in Pharr.

> For surely you knew how we spent that last night among vain joys: and it is necessary to remember too much. (Trans. MPW)

[6] John V. Fleming discusses the Eleyne scene in "Deiphoebus Betrayed: Virgilian Decorum, Chaucerian Feminism," The Chaucer Review 21 (1986): 182-199. He also examines the episode related by Deiphebus's shade in Aeneid 6, and makes particular note of the shade's use of the word monimenta--the battered Deiphebus is the "signifier" of Helen's treachery (198).

CHAPTER THREE

Although it acts as a bridge between Books 2 and 3, the Book 3 proem splits the flow of the narrative. The action of the poem is continuous, interrupted only by this intertextual proem. It is generally recognized that it was adapted from a song sung by Triolo in the *Filostrato* and shifted from its place in that work. Boccaccio's song was influeced by Boethius and possibly by Dante's *Paradiso* (Barney, Explanatory Notes to *Troilus* in *Riverside Chaucer* 1037, note to lines 1-49, and 1044, note to lines 1744-71; Gordon, 30-33; Wood, 103).

Which Venus does the narrator address? The goddess of cupidity, or her parallel who resembles Natura? Many scholars have examined the several faces of Venus.[1] Ida L. Gordon and Chauncey Wood, for example, give very different interpretations of the Venus presented in Chaucer's proem. Wood believes that "the multiplicity of Venuses in the Prohemium is probably intended to invite us to contrast them with the Venus of sexuality who is the sole subject of the poem" (104). According to Gordon, "It is possible in fact to read the whole invocation either as an address to the pagan goddess or as an address to Divine Love" (32). Davis Taylor notes:

> Because Chaucer adds to Boccaccio the explicitly sexual reference to Jove, his intention is clear: he wants to include the sacred and physical under the influence of

> Venus. He thus sets up a pattern continued throughout Book III. (240)

Different as these opinions are, they point out that Chaucer invokes more than one aspect of Venus. He manipulates several concepts of the goddess, and thus reminds the reader of the different concepts of love--and of the different concepts of Venus that may be presented in texts.

By shifting Boccaccio's song from its place in the _Filostrato_, Chaucer has not only manipulated a source but has allowed his narrator to carry out a medieval concept of translation--to carry over the original thought and idea, not the words alone, into a new form. (See Payne, _Key of Remembrance_ 73-74 for a discussion on the poet and form.) Not only is this proem different from the other proems, the tone of it is unlike that of the rest of the _Troilus_--with the exception of the consummation. This proem is a prayer to Venus, sandwiched between Criseyde's walking into Troilus's room to "preye" (2.1657) for his support and Troilus's praying to Criseyde for mercy. This proem has a lyrical quality absent from the other proems, which are self-absorbed and preoccupied with the narrator's commentary on his text. The proem to Book 1 told what the poem would be about. The Book 2 proem discussed the problems with language and custom--our ideas of love are different from those of the Trojans. The proem to Book 4 tells

the reader that Criseyde's desertion of Troilus will be the subject of the final books. The proem to Book 3, in contrast, does not focus on the text until 3.39-49, in which the narrator begs Venus for the ability to devise some of the happiness of lovers.

The proem, then, concentrates on Venus and the power of love, and on the changes that love creates. Venus changed Jove into many forms (3.20). She seems to have temporarily changed the narrator. The praise of love has elevated his pedantry. However, he is still the "clerc" (2.41), the servant of love's servants (1.15). The narrator is not asking to be taught about love as much as he is asking to be taught how to re-create the experience in his poem. At this point, his request is a bit academic. However, we will later see him wondering why he never sold his soul for an experience such as Troilus's (3.1317-20).

The narrator comments that if he discerns correctly, all living creatures are filled with Venus's eternal vapor "in tymes" (3.8-11). The word <u>descerne</u> (3.9) involves recognition. The narrator sees the signs of love's presence and understands them for what they are. Notice the reference to "in tymes" (3.11). Love, like language, is related to time. <u>Troilus</u> is the memory of a love affair; the language in which it is written may change over time. The Troilus tries to capture

the experience of Troilus's love, but the language in which it is cast is itself changeable. As Karla Taylor has noted, "The mutual mutability of love and language conditions Troilus and Criseyde's relationship to literary tradition" ("Proverbs and the Authentication of Convention" 291).

The theme of discernment is carried into relationships. Love may be discerned, but not necessarily understood. A text may be read, but not comprehended. These points are exemplified by the contrast between Venus and human beings in 3.31-35. Venus knows things that are hidden or "covered"; she is, in a sense, an authority. People, on the other hand, "kan nought construe" why one person loves another. They are not the authority. They must decipher the text. This reference to the inability to explain mutual attraction is an elaboration of the discussion in the Book 2 proem, in which the narrator points out that different words and customs belong to different times and places.

The Book 3 proem picks up some of the final references in Book 2. The last word Pandarus says to Criseyde in Book 2 is <u>hele</u>--he orders Criseyde to restore Troilus's health (2.1750). In the proem to Book 3, Venus is praised as the "veray cause of heele" (3.6). The final stanza of Book 2 focuses on Troilus, who listens to the muffled conversation of Criseyde and

Pandarus. The last words of Book 2 are made of the narrator's question "what shal he seye?" (2.1757). The last words create an illusion that the narrator himself does not know what Troilus will say. The prince will be tongue-tied at the beginning of Book 3. This eloquent proem is conspicuously placed before a section in which the main character is at a loss for words.

The narrator invokes both Venus and Caliope. Venus is to teach the narrator enough that he may "devyse" or recreate the happiness of lovers (3.41-42). Caliope, on the other hand, is to help him "telle" the story (3.45-48). The prayer to Venus is to help the narrator create; the prayer to Caliope seeks help in order to express that creation. The first is a prayer for understanding, for revelation. The second is a prayer for the right word. The difference between the two prayers is exemplified in the narrator's requests. He asks Venus for her "sentement" (3.43); he asks Caliope for her voice (3.45).

Book 3 proper opens on Troilus, who, like the narrator, wants to devise the right words:

> Lay al this mene while Troilus,
> Recordyng his lesson in this manere:
> "Mafay," thoughte he, "thus wol I sey, and
> thus;
> Thus wol I pleyne unto my lady dere;
> That word is good, and this shal be my cheere;
> This nyl I nought foryeten in no wise."
> God leve hym werken as he kan devyse!
> (3.50-56)

In the proem, the narrator asks Venus to teach him

something so that he may write. Now Troilus tries to commit "his lesson" to memory. Troilus says that he will forget nothing. He will, nevertheless, become tongue-tied. He may record his speech, but his inability to express himself makes all of his "Recordyng" useless. Troilus's attempt to recall his speech is somewhat similar to the problem of history. When a source fails in recording an event, when the memory or the expression of an auctour fails, something of history is lost. Criseyde will have to construe Troilus's meaning until he finds his voice, yet we are told that she does not love him any less for his loss of speech (3.85-88). Troilus says that one of the words he will use will be his cheere; a verbal expression becomes his text, his countenance. He wants Criseyde to understand him in a particular way. However, she will not be able to read him in the manner he wishes to project. He will bungle it. Yet Criseyde will like what she sees.

In this most glorious of love poems, the lover is at a complete loss for words. When Criseyde asks for his support, he cannot say a single word. He cannot produce his carefully rehearsed speech (3.78-84). This same stanza makes contrasts. Troilus "herde his lady preye/Of lordshipe hym" (3.77-78). He adores her, but she seems to put the relationship back into a subject-prince relationship. He sees it turned around with

Criseyde as the adored one and himself as worshipper. She may "preye" for his lordship, but he had hoped "To preyen hire" (3.84) with the speech that he cannot produce. (There is, however, an interesting ambiguity in these lines, which could also be interpreted quite differently: she may have been praying for lordship over him.)

Before Troilus lost his ability to speak, he managed to greet Criseyde, telling her that he regretted his inability to rise and pay homage to her (3.69-70). In one sense, the statement is a lie. Troilus is quite capable of getting out of bed. On the other hand, his words are literally true. He cannot get out of bed. To do so would be to give away the entire plot. Essentially Troilus states a truth to cover a lie.

The "wis" Criseyde does not reject Troilus because he does not speak well of love at this point. She appreciates, rather, his shyness. Troilus recovers enough to say something, and the narrator self-reflexively calls attention to his presentation of Troilus's words: "His resons, as I may my rymes holde,/ I yow wol telle, as techen bokes olde" (3.90-91). He still touches on the theme of teaching and knowing that he used in the proem to Book 3. The narrator asked Venus to teach him because he is inexperienced. Troilus, also inexperienced, has been coached by Pandarus. Learning does not give the narrator

experience, nor does it unlock Troilus's tongue. We may question what the old books teach. The narrator says that he will give Troilus's words as he found them in his source; however, he adds the small _caveat_ of holding to his rhyme. Does he imply that he has rephrased Troilus's words to suit his rhyme scheme? Has he omitted material that does not fit into his rhyme? We do not even know whether the alleged source (a fiction itself) is accurate. The old books are responsible for the material; the narrator is responsible only for his rhymes. Do the rhymes accurately present the substance of the speeches? Payne noted the poet's freedom in presenting the form of his material (_Key of Remembrance_ 73-74; quoted above 56). By referring to his rhymes, the narrator suggests that he is taking advantage of this liberty.

The narrator is extremely conscious of Troilus's difficulty in speaking; he must suggest it in his own lines. The word _vois_ appears twice within two lines (3.92-93). Troilus first opens his mouth "With look down cast and humble iyolden chere" (3.96). We have already examined some of the many references to _look_ and _chere_ in the poem. His looking at Criseyde's look was the beginning of his sorrow. Now Troilus looks down, not at Criseyde. Before she walked into his chamber, Troilus believed that a verbal expression would be his "cheere" (3.54). Troilus has lost his

expression, both verbal and facial. He has difficulty talking. His look is both cast down and down cast. The narrator suggests Troilus's hesitancy to speak (3.97-105). The narrator explains that "the alderfirste word that hym asterte" was to beg Criseyde for "Mercy" (3.97-98). The emphasis on the very first word and the strained action in asterte imply that this speech was a labor for Troilus.

After his initial plea for mercy, Troilus "stynte a while, and whan he myghte out brynge,/The nexte word was" a very convoluted speech (3.99-112). Troilus is grasping for words. He is greatly distressed. Vergil used complicated syntax in the same way in order to portray Aeneas's emotional distress (Aeneid 4.333-36; quoted above 21). Troilus himself uses the words "may out brynge" to refer to his speech (3.107), very similar to the narrator's expression "myghte out brynge" (3.99). One of them is imitating the other's speech pattern. He points out to Criseyde that inarticulate as he is, he still suffers; he does not care how soon he dies since she has heard him speak (3.104-05; 3.111-12).

Pandarus picks up on this last line as though it is a cue, and he begs Criseyde to end the difficult situation. She feigns ignorance. With "I, what" (3.120), she pretends that she has no idea of what Pandarus wants her to say. He may not have given her a prepared speech, but he certainly suggested the response

he wanted her to make at 2.1732-50. He actually coached Troilus at 2.1499-1502. Pandarus mimics her "I, what" (3.122) either exasperated at Criseyde's failure to grasp his earlier advice or, more likely, playing out a game. When Criseyde says that she wishes Troilus to tell her "the fyn" of his intentions (3.125), she is saying that she wants him to get to the point. She is also imitating her uncle, who had claimed when he first spoke to her about Troilus that the conclusion is the strength of every story (2.259-60). Criseyde is asking for the conclusion of the tale that Pandarus and Troilus have been creating. The love affair is built upon discourse, much of it dictated by Pandarus. Criseyde claims that she never knew Troilus's meaning very well (3.126). She may be playing out a game, or she may be honest. She knows only what Pandarus has told her and what Troilus has written.

Troilus gives a fairly good speech, disconcerted as he is. He turns Criseyde's reference to his meaning into a question: "What that I mene . . . ?" (3.127). He responds to his own rhetorical question. He offers her his fealty. His speech is brought to a well-rounded conclusion, "Lo, this mene I" (3.147). His *mene I* is the inversion of *I mene* at 3.127, the beginning of his speech. The two *mene* expressions serve as a frame for the speech. Moreoever, the *mene* phrases appear in the first and last lines of stanzas.

When Pandarus points out that Troilus wants only Criseyde's honor (3.152-53), she must realize that something more than her friendship is sought. Ector had promised to preserve her honor in Troy (1.120-23). The context was completely different. Here, there may be a hint of preserving Criseyde's honor because she may be in danger of losing it. Pandarus is asking Criseyde to interpret Troilus's suit in a particular way. He refers to two actions that are important to interpretation, heren and sen (3.152, 153). Criseyde has heard what Troilus hasto say and can look on him and determine whether what he said is the truth.

Criseyde's answer is a very quiet, direct look at Troilus, who has been sitting with bowed head and averted glance. She says that he may serve her "in swich forme as he gan now devyse"--provided that her honor is safe (3.159-61). The verb devyse appears as an end rhyme in Book 3 eight times through line 476 alone, and it is reminiscent of shape. Both terms have literary and nonliterary associations. The narrator asked Venus to help him "devyse" some of the happiness of love in his poem (3.41-42). Troilus does as well as he "kan devyse" to create a speech for Criseyde (3.56). Criseyde now asks him to "devyse" the "forme" of the relationship. Note that forme appeared in forme of speche at 2.22. Martin Stevens has noted the parallels between the narrator and Pandarus, citing their uses

of devyse at 3.238 and 3.203 ("Winds of Fortune" 306, note 17; quoted above 99). Clearly, there is a relationship between the devysing of a love poem and the devysing of a love affair. The development of both is based on language.

Criseyde does not let go of her emphasis on meaning. She stresses "As I wel mene, ek menen wel to me" (3.164). She seems to be addressing Pandarus, for she refers to Troilus in the third person (3.159-67). She does not directly address the prince until 3.168, when she tells him that he need no longer complain. As though picking up on Criseyde's speech, Pandarus rejoices and clarifies the god to whom he prays: "Cupide I mene" (3.186).

Pandarus breaks his own speech with "namore . . . of this matere" (3.190). He has something better to plan. Pandarus sounds like the narrator when he abbreviates material. He orders both of them to be at his house when he may "shape" their "comynge" (3.196). Pandarus, conscious of love as a verbal art, talks of what will happen when the two meet at his house. They will see who can better "speke of love aright" because they will have "leiser for to telle" (3.199-200). They shall meet as Pandarus may "devyse" the situation. Pandarus's vocabulary is suited to the creation of literary works. He blends making love with making conversation. The passage becomes even more suggestive when

Troilus asks when the meeting will take place. Pandarus answers that it will be done when Troilus rises (3.202).

When Eleyne and Deiphebus return from the garden, Troilus groans again and Criseyde leaves with her uncle, supposedly to allow the royals to speak in private (3.204-10). The narrator gives the impression of eavesdropping on the conversation of the two princes and Eleyne, commenting on how wonderful it was to hear their praise of Criseyde (3.214-217). The narrator is essentially listening to a small story set within his larger story. The three characters stop talking about Criseyde when the subject of the letter is reintroduced. As far as Troilus is concerned, the letter was valuable as a ploy to remove Eleyne and Deiphebus from his chamber so that he could talk with Criseyde. The important material that he asked his brother and sister-in-law to read is treated as if it were of small consequence. Fyler has remarked on the way that all references to Poliphete and to Ector's letter disappear once Troilus has met with Criseyde: "After Troilus has seen Criseyde, the letter from Hector has served its purpose, as Pandarus implies (3.191-92); and, like the request for assistance against Polyphete, the matter it concerns is quickly dropped" ("Fabrications" 124). Troilus keeps up the pretense with Eleyne and his brother, telling them he wishes to relax "after tales"--but he makes this

excuse only to be rid of them (3.222-24). The narrator's use of the plural tales is suggestive. It may refer only to conversations that Troilus has had in the afternoon; however, the conversations, for the most part, were the result of artifice. The dinner guests heard a story about Criseyde, Troilus told Criseyde his meaning (3.126, 127, 147), and Deiphebus and Eleyne were given something to read in the garden. Troilus's speech--though we have no example of it, only the narrator's summary of the royal family's conversation (3.212-224)--no longer seems to be the jumbled words of the impassioned, sincere young man; we are back with the practicalities of creation, not with the enactment.

Chaucer lets the readers know that Criseyde has gone home (3.218) in language that matches his description of Troilus riding to his palace at 2.687-88. The narrator is in the habit of clarifying the comings and goings of his major characters. This device is useful because it allows his readers to know who is or is not present in certain scenes. At this point, the main characters operate in a verbal vacuum. What Pandarus says to Criseyde in private is different from what he says to Troilus. (This tendency to note who is or is not present becomes remarkable in the consummation, for we are never told that Pandarus actually leaves the room.) When the narrator has made it clear that

everyone has left except Troilus, Pandarus returns to give the prince an unusual medieval pillow lecture. In his introduction to Pandarus's speech, the narrator is self-conscious. His description of Pandarus's movement onto Troilus's bed is sandwiched between two self-reflexive narratorial statements (3.234-38). His brief description of Pandarus's narration is framed with his own self-conscious commentary, and the two styles of narrating are contrasted:

> To telle in short, withouten wordes mo,
> This Pandarus, withouten any lette,
> Up roos, and on his beddes syde hym sette,
> And gan to speken in a sobre wyse
> To Troilus, as I shal yow devyse: (3.234-38)

Line 234 above is redundant and possibly ambiguous. If the narrator tells this part of the story "in short," it should be obvious that he will use no more words than are necessary. Chaucer gave to this most gloriously structured of poems a storyteller whose preoccupation with narrating is humorous. The narrator relishes this story, much as he regrets Criseyde's ultimate desertion. If one takes the line seriously, it may mean that the narrator is not embellishing the story with anything extra; it could imply that he has edited material that he felt unnecessary. He may mean that he is going straight to his material without further digression. In contrast to this wordy introduction, Pandarus's movements are quick, and he speaks soberly.

The narrator refers to himself again, telling us that he will "devyse" Pandarus's words.

Although Pandarus facilitates the love affair, he wants to make sure that no stories circulate. His theme is boasting and the damage that it does to women's reputations. Oddly enough, he begins with himself; he makes "no bost" that he has become a means of making women come to men. It is a shame to even say what he has done.(3.248-55). He adds, "Al sey I nought, thow wost wel what I meene" (3.256). Troilus should be able to interpret what he means.[2] The audience should certainly be able to understand Pandarus's implication. No matter what Troilus may think of Pandarus's less-than-avuncular activities, the audience may be uneasy about them. Pandarus realizes that he has "bigonne a gamen pleye" (3.250), but he takes it very seriously. Note the <u>rime riche</u> of 3.254 and 256, the two different meanings of <u>meene</u>. The meaning or definition of the type of mean Pandarus has become is nothing to brag about.

Pandarus is concerned not only about the rumors spread through boasting but also with the stories that are perpetuated through rumors. He develops his argument through several points.

First, Troilus must protect Criseyde's name, which "as yet" is "halwed" among the Trojans (3.266-68). That man is unborn who ever knew her to do wrong (3.269-70).

At the time Pandarus makes this statement, it is true. It is not until Criseyde deserts Troilus and becomes a memory that she is "rolled . . . on many a tonge" (5.1061). Her name is not lost until she becomes history, which is fed by rumors and shattered fame. The as yet suggests what we and the narrator already know. Criseyde will eventually be considered a disgrace to courtly lovers. The sneaky little yet will appear in Criseyde's protests about her alleged dalliance with Horaste (3. 1053-54), and although Criseyde has been true, the adverb will very subtly suggest that her actions may change.

Second, the fact that Pandarus has procured his own niece for his friend would create a scandal if it were known. Pandarus fears the spread of this story not only for Criseyde's sake, but for his own (3.274-80). When he first suggested that Criseyde be friends with Troilus, he emphasized the "skylle," the reasonable nature of his request (2.365-66; see also 2.392). Now he points out to Troilus the "skilfull" nature of his present request (3.285-87). The word has none of the cajolery used in conversation with Criseyde; Pandarus speaks in earnest.

Third, Pandarus works up to a topic dear to the narrator: old stories. He tells Troilus that a bit of wisdom has been preserved from "wise clerkes," all long dead: the "firste vertu is to kepe tonge" (3.292-94),

a bit of advice that is exemplified in The Manciple's Tale. Pandarus launches into a lecture about the effects that boasting has on women. Their reputations are destroyed, and the stories are widely circulated. Pandarus, if he so wished, could recite many. Pandarus may expedite an affair, create scenarios and speeches; but he does not wish this story to become common knowledge:

> "And nere it that I wilne as now t'abregge
> Diffusioun of speche, I koude almoost
> A thousand olde stories the allegge
> Of wommen lost through fals and foles bost.
> Proverbes kanst thiself ynowe and woost
> Ayeins that vice, for to ben a labbe,
> Al seyde men soth as often as thei gabbe.
> (3.295-301)

These warnings will come true for Criseyde, though not through any boast made by Troilus. The situation will come true to the narrator's detriment, for he perpetuates the history of Criseyde, a history that will be numbered among the "thousand olde stories" mentioned by Pandarus. Pandarus notes that many rumors are false (3.306). According to Pandarus, "Avauntour and a lyere, al is on" (3.309). A boaster and a liar are similar in that they destroy reputations. However, a boaster is not necessarily a liar. Pandarus's statement presents some of the problems involved with being a source. Pandarus may say that the clerks warned about telling tales; but the clerks must have written an example to which Pandarus refers. The irony is that if

there were no sources, there would be no history, no Troilus. Pandarus does not actually distinguish between sources that tell lies and sources that reveal true but damaging information. The story of Troilus, though the narrator traces it to the ultimately nonexistent source of Lollius, is a revelation of human experience. It may be wise to remain silent, but silence kills literature. The narrator will suggest that lies may have been told about Criseyde (4.19-21). Although the narrator stresses that he is merely passing his story down from Lollius, he himself is an accomplice in destroying Criseyde's reputation.

The stanza at 3.330-336 echoes literary expressions found elsewhere in the text. When he concludes his lecture on boasting, Pandarus returns to his "purpos," different in nature from the narrator's "purpos" at 1.5, which was to tell Troilus's double sorrow. Pandarus intends to proceed with Troilus's "proces"; this was the same word he used when he decided not to "make a proces" when he first told Criseyde that Troilus loved her (2.268; also 2.292). Pandarus uses vocabulary that is appropriate for making a speech or creating a poem to describe arranging a rendezvous. He tells Troilus that he will handle the situation just as the prince would "devyse" it.

The expressions of language and intentions continues. Pandarus will make all of the arrangements because

he knows that the prince means well (3.337-38). Pandarus has picked up on Criseyde's earlier question about the meaning of Troilus's suit and the prince's response to her, a response so self-conscious of his meaning that <u>mene</u> appears at the beginning and end of his answer (3. 127, 147). As though to underscore his approbation, Pandarus announces that the time is at hand to make the "chartres," a legal term that seems to imply that, at least as far as Pandarus is concerned, the relationship is completely legitimate (3.340).

Pandarus speaks for fifteen stanzas without interruption from either Troilus or the narrator. This harangue about the creation of rumor tells the type of love that Pandarus wants the lovers to create. Although the affair has been expedited through the tales carried by Pandarus, it is not to become a commonly known story.

Troilus swears never to betray the secret. If he is lying, Achilles can kill him (3.374-78). The irony is that even though Troilus never betrays the affair, Achilles will kill him. History will make those words, which should never come to pass because the condition of secrecy is fulfilled, turn out to be Troilus's fate.

The prince's speech begins to take on some of Pandarus's expression. His "I kan namore" (3.390) resembles Pandarus's final words in the poem (5.1743). He directly answers one of Pandarus's concerns: what to call certain activities. At 3.317 to 318, Pandarus

wonders what he should call men who boast of women. He does not wish to label the activity he has performed for Troilus. He has become a mediator through whom women come to men. He does not wish to define it any more (3.253-56). Troilus's response answers Pandarus's reticence about his service on three points. First, Troilus claims to know the difference between "bauderye" and the service rendered by Pandarus (3.395-99). Second, Troilus names what Pandarus hesitated to identify. Pandarus's activity should be called "gentilesse,/Compassioun, and felawship, and trist" (3.402-03). Third, to show that Pandarus should not be ashamed of what he has done (and possibly to answer his bedtime prayer at 3.343), Troilus offers to procure his sisters, Eleyne, or any other female in "the frape" (3.407-10). He even echoes Pandarus's preference to work alone (3.413; see also 1.1028 and 2.1401). The names that Troilus gives to the activity that Pandarus will not label still do not change those services. He does not make the distinction between Pandarus's cajolery of a hesitant but ultimately willing Criseyde and his volunteering of the pick of his sisters. He tells Pandarus that someone who performs such a service for compensation may be called whatever one wishes (3.401). Pandarus's activity, done for the sake of friendship, is entirely different. Troilus does not see that although

the intentions are different, the results are the same.

Troilus manages to keep the relationship a secret by making his expression unreadable. No one "wist, by word or by manere,/What that he mente, as touchyng this matere" (3.431-32). Again we have a reference to meaning. Troilus's meaning is clear to Pandarus and Criseyde; however, since the relationship is secret and Troilus takes care to hide any sign of it, no one else even knows that Troilus has a meaning in reference to Criseyde.

We hear only the narrator's voice at 3.421-551. These stanzas contain not only summaries of the activities of the characters; the narrator in these lines refers to his own act of recreation. He reminds us that he is telling the story ("devyse," 3.435). He clarifies Troilus's activities ("This is to seyn," 3.438). He lets us know what he is unsure of; he will not swear as to whether or not Troilus was a bit disturbed during this waiting period (3.442-45). He qualifies one statement, saying that as far as he knows, Troilus felt the way other men did in similar circumstanxes (3.446-47). The qualification is important because the narrator is not a lover. His knowledge of a lover's displeasure is intellectual and based on others' experiences. He leaves conjecture for what is "certeyn" for his "purpos" (3.449). He refers to what "writen is in geeste" (3.450). At this point, he feels secure in the

information recorded in his old books. He does not give a verbatim reproduction of the lovers' conversation, but he tells us their topic, how they should progress in the affair (3.453-55). Their clandestine talks are quick; they do not want anyone to "devynen or devyse" anything about their relationship (3.458-59). (However, someone was able to devise their story into a source; the narrator is still devising.

The lovers and the narrator realize the limits of language. Troilus and Criseyde wish that Cupid would give them the "grace" "To maken of hire speche aright an ende" (3.461-62). They are tired of their furtive, snatched whispers. Although 3.462 refers to their wish to end their too quick meetings, the line also suggests 3.458, in which other people may "devyse" their affair. The word speche in 3.462 is a slight echo of this potential for rumor. Even the narrator comments on the limitations imposed by his medium. Some people will believe that he "rehercen sholde" "every word, or soonde, or look, or cheere/Of Troilus" (3.491-93). He cannot give an exact accounting. It would be too long to listen to; he has never heard of such a thing being done in a story. In addition, his source only summarizes their messages, so it is impossible for him to give the text of their correspondence (3.495-504). (Oddly enough, he boasted of giving Troilus's words to a song that was only summarized in his ficticious Lollius. See 1.393-

99.) His audience must be content with "the grete effect" (3.505).

The narrator must, however, use language. The relationship of Troilus and Criseyde, nevertheless, has reached a point where language is sometimes unnecessary.

> But thilke litel that they spake or wroughte,
> His wise goost took ay of al swych heede,
> It semed hire he wiste what she thoughte
> Withouten word, so that it was no nede
> To bidde hym ought to doon, or ought forbeede;
> (3.463-67)

They talk little, but Troilus understands her so well that talk is not essential. When Criseyde asked Pandarus whether Troilus could speak well about love (2.503), she is considering the verbal game of courtly love. The relationship has gone beyond a game. Troilus handles himself so well in the situation "That al the world ne myght it bet devyse" (3.476). She is no longer fearful. (The narrator hastens to add that he _means_ that she is no more fearful than is necessary. See 3.482-83.)

The lovers' complaint is that they have no "leiser . . . hire speches to fulfelle" (3.510). The fulfillment of their speeches is not more talk. The narrator announces that he will "telle" what happened next (3.511; see also 3.505 and 508: he is extremely conscious of _telling_ the story). His reference to their lack of "leiser" echoes Pandarus's expression with none of his humor. Pandarus said that he would arrange for

the lovers to meet at his house so that they would have "leiser" to discuss love (3.193-200). Pandarus has no intention to bring them together for conversation. The narrator uses Pandarus's vocabulary, placing what could be interpreted as a bawdy remark in a prolix expression: "Wheras at leiser al this heighe matere,/Touchyng here love, were at the fulle upbounde" (3.516-17). While the narrator waxes eloquent on what he considers a classic story, Pandarus attends to practical details.

Pandarus uses all of his ability to manipulate the situation. He "Forncast" the circumstances of the meeting (3.521). He has made predictions before; he "caste" before he first went to Criseyde on Troilus's behalf (2.74). When Pandarus, like Calkas, predicts something, the prediction becomes an opportunity for a betrayal of some type, or an activity not completely on the level. He approaches his "travaille" (3.522) with great determination. (The word echoes the narrator's reference to his own work in creating the poem at 1.21.) He keeps any inkling of the affair away from any "pie" (3.527). The "pie," of course, is a human being whose song is rumor. The reference to the pie is totally different from the description of the literal birds, the swallow and the nightingale, each of whom sings a figurative "lay" that tells a story that trails with it the weight of Ovidian myth and poetic tradition (2.64-70; 2.918-24).

The narrator extends the house-building metaphor he borrowed from Geoffrey de Vinsauf at 1.1065-69, in which the architect measures with his heart's line to determine what he will build. The form has been determined, and now the "tymbur is al redy up to frame" (3.530). (This architectural metaphor will culminate in Troilus's "O paleys desolat" speech at 5.540-53, in which he addresses Criseyde's empty palace.) The metaphor applies to Pandarus's activities, not the narrator's. At this point the narrator seems to be caught up in the story as a story, not as a translation he labors over. He writes that "we witen wolde" (3.531) the time when the lovers will meet. By using "we," the narrator suggests that he is as ignorant as the audience is about when the meeting will occur. Are we to believe that the narrator has never read his source before, and is translating as he reads? This situation is unlikely, given that the narrator presents the basic outline of the plot in his first stanza. By using "we," the narrator has distanced himself from the narrative; moreover, he involves his audience in the process. The narrator pretends to be ignorant in order to experience the story along with the audience.

Troilus creates his own story in case anyone wonders where he is on the night he will spend with Criseyde. His tale is that he intends to hold vigil at Apollo's temple, waiting to hear the god's voice as

he speaks from the laurel (3.533-46). This mention of the oracle accomplishes two things. It brings us back to the beginning of the story, where Calkas interprets the signs of Apollo; it also throws us back into Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Neither Calkas nor Troilus is particularly pious. Both Apollo episodes are founded on personal gain. Calkas, at least, questions Apollo and makes an accurate interpretation of the god's answer. Troilus, in contrast, is lying. He has no intention of listening. He claims that he is going to the temple to discover when the Greeks will flee. Had he gone, he would have learned that they were staying.

The reference to Apollo's oracle and his laurel reminds us that we are in the classical world. The reference recalls the Metamorphoses, specifically the story of Apollo and Daphne, who turned into a laurel tree rather than be possessed by a god. Troilus will pray to Apollo in earnest right before the consummation, asking for the god's help because of his love for Daphne (3.726-28).

Pandarus goes to Criseyde with an invitation and a threat. If she does not come to dinner, he will never again visit her. The threat is similar to the ones he made when he first presented her with Troilus's suit. Criseyde realizes that she is being manipulated, and asks Pandarus whether Troilus will be there. He tells

her that the prince will be "out of towne" (3.570; apparently, Troilus and Pandarus did not check with each other about Troilus's alleged whereabouts). The expression should make Criseyde suspicious. In a city that is under siege, how can anyone be "out of town"? The nature of Troy as a town as opposed to a country is evident from the beginning of the poem (for example, 1.59, 64, 75, 85, 100, 129, and 149). Pandarus throws in a supposition, and its careful wording implies that Troilus may indeed be at his house:

> "Nece, I pose that he were;
> Yow thurste nevere han the more fere;
> For rather than men myghte hym ther aspie,
> Me were levere a thousand fold to dye."
> (3.571-574)

If Troilus were to be present, Pandarus would make sure that no one sees him. The narrator hedges, not wishing to implicate Criseyde in anything he feels would be unseemly. He has evidently found the "out of towne" remark to be suspicious, for he repeats the phrase, noting that his source does not "fully" say what Criseyde thought about it (3.575-78). One has the impression that in spite of the manipulation, Criseyde is eager to go and knows that something is happening. She is, however, concerned about potential stories. She advises her uncle "to ben war of goosissh poeples speche,/That dremen thynges whiche as nevere were" (3.584-85). She orders her uncle, "Loke al be wel, and do now as yow liste" (3.588). The lines are cryptic.

Criseyde could be telling him to keep Troilus away or to keep him out of sight. As words alone, they could suggest that she merely expects a good meal. However, the context in which the words appear suggests that Criseyde is telling her uncle to be very sure that the coast is clear.[3] She tells Pandarus to do as he pleases, but she has known Pandarus's pleasure now for a long time. She knows that he intends to bring her and Troilus to his house in order to discuss love (3.193-200). Her final request that he make sure everything is well mimics the way Troilus has put everything in his hands. When Pandarus swears "yis" to her request and invokes an assortment of potential punishments upon himself, he is not swearing to Troilus's absence, but to his own ability to make everything well (3.589-93).

We have seen nothing of Troilus for seven full stanzas. His dropping from sight is appropriate, for he has been hidden since midnight, "in mewe" in Pandarus's "stewe" (3.601-02). The _stewe/mewe_ rhyme is suggestive. V. A. Kolve has noted that _stewe_ could mean _brothel_ as well as _bath_, and that this multiple meaning has implications for the love of Troilus and Criseyde ("Chaucer's _Second Nun's Tale_ and the Iconography of Saint Cecilia" 146-148). Kolve notes that "Chaucer allows other associations of the word 'stuwe' to complicate, ever so slightly, our larger identification with the lovers and

the declared idealism of their love" (147). That Troilus is "in mewe" suggests that he is shut up like a molting falcon--quite a different image from the eagle of Criseyde's dream.

When Criseyde wishes to leave Pandarus's house but finds herself detained, the narrator makes an excuse for her. It is the will of the gods that she remain (3.622-23). It is certainly the will of Pandarus, who makes it clear that she cannot leave in the storm. Whether she is manipulated by the gods or by Pandarus, it would seem that Criseyde has little choice in the matter. The image of the helpless Criseyde will be belied when she later informs Troilus that she would not be in his arms if she had not already consented (3.1210-11).

Pandarus has read the signs of the weather so well that he has managed to stage the consummation during a storm. Criseyde's reaction is common sense. Her reasoning is similar to her thinking in 2.456-62, in which she glibly thought that it would do her little good if Pandarus were to commit suicide in front of her. She graciously consents to stay overnight. The after-supper diversions at Pandarus's house have been verbal. There are stories and songs. The repartee between Pandarus and Criseyde concerning her staying contains a word play on "a-game" or "game" (3. 636, 648, 650). Their usage of it suggests that they may be hinting

at their own devious skill with language; it also reminds us of the other game that is happening--the hiding of Troilus.

Pandarus describes the sleeping arrangements for the benefit of Criseyde, her ladies, and the audience (3.656-72). This speech is important because it enables us to visualize the strategy and skill with which Pandarus puts Troilus in Criseyde's room. Pandarus's comment about the good sleeping weather sounds completely innocent; however, if it is wonderful weather to sleep in, it is also good enough to drown out any of the noise of Pandarus, Criseyde, and Troilus.

Criseyde had ordered Pandarus rather cryptically to see that all would be well (3.588). As soon as everyone was asleep and "he sey that alle thyng was wel" (3.696), Pandarus opened the stewe door and told Troilus "word and ende" about their project (3.702). Pandarus is still telling stories. Troilus prays to Venus for her help, but Pandarus informs the prince that he will "make it weel" (3.710). Notice that Pandarus is still *making*. He has manipulated a situation for a particular outcome. He has pre-empted Fortune: he intends to make the situation "weel."[4] Troilus seems to ignore Pandarus's practical reassurance, and continues to invoke Venus. For twenty-four lines (3.712-35), Troilus calls on a pantheon of gods, and includes references to

four stories about gods who loved human beings. The four Metamorphoses tales that he recalls are Venus and Adonis, Jupiter and Europa, Apollo and Daphne, and Mercury and Herse. This is an intertextual invocation. All of these tales are about the gods' manipulation to attain their beloved, or their frustration. The reference to Adonis is particularly interesting because, as Rose Zimbardo has noted, Troilus will be "very obviously associated with Adonis" in Book 5 (297). The references to Ovid locate the Troilus with classical legend and provide an opportunity for textual self-reflexivity. The stories of the Metamorphoses are about endurance through change--much as the "forme" of a language will change within a thousand years' time (2.22).

Pandarus's reaction to this litany of gods is to call Troilus a "wrecched mouses herte," throw him a fur cloak, and lead him out of the stewe (3.736-42). The scene calls attention to the difference in their characters. Troilus, the idealist, prays; Pandarus, the realist, is pragmatic. Praying will not put Troilus in Criseyde's bed.

Much of the initial part of the consummation concerns hearing and speaking, telling lies and stories with a few truths. Pandarus, wearing a serious expression, closes the door on Criseyde's ladies (3.745-49). One wonders whether he put on this expression as he

would later make "his contenaunce" appear as though he were looking at an old love story (3.979-80). Pandarus must suit his facial expression to his verbal expression. He is about to present Criseyde with a story that is not only false in content, but pure invention even in its existence.

The scene in Criseyde's chamber is greatly concerned with language. When Criseyde awakens, Pandarus warns her to say "No word"; no one must awake and hear their "speche" (3.755-56). It is not a good idea to give anyone a reason "to devyne" (3.765), to come to a conclusion or make an interpretation. He tells her that he will leave as soon as his "tale" comes to its "ende" (3.769-70). Remember, the conclusion, as far as Pandarus is concerned, is the main point of any story (2.258-60). In three lines he summarizes what, if it had ever existed, would be a longer tale: a friend of Troilus's told the prince that Criseyde is in love with Horaste, and as a result Troilus is suicidal (3.796-98). His short summary is answered by Criseyde's six-stanza discourse on "fals felicitee" in which she cites "clerkes" and what one does or does not know about the transitory nature of earthy joy (3.802-840). The several references in this scene to what one may _woot_ provide a very subtle contrast to _unwist_, the key word for the lovers' relationship in that it must remain a secret. _Unwist_ appears several times in Book 3 before

Troilus is in bed with Criseyde; for example, at 3.603, 758, 770, 789, and 912. Criseyde is shocked, not by the allegation but by the idea that Troilus has so little faith in her that he believes such "tales" (3.802-04).

As far as Pandarus is concerned, Criseyde's speech is a waste of time not unlike Troilus's earlier invocation of the gods. Pandarus, however, cannot accuse Criseyde of being a mouse's heart. The most he can do is interrupt her and attempt to steer the conversation towards what he wants to discuss. He starts to interrupt her at 3.841, but she stops him, demanding to know who told the story to Troilus. Who is the culpable narrator? Pandarus is evasive. He cannot name anyone for fear that Criseyde may follow up on the lead. He instead picks up on her use of _clerkes_ (3.814), and reminds her that "clerkes wise" have written that there is danger in delay (3.852-54). She has given an academic discourse, so he answers her in kind by referring to the "clerkes." If she allows Troilus to suffer, she never held him dear; she is too wise to put the prince's life in danger (3.863-868). Her response recalls a remark made by Troilus in Book 1. The prince did not believe that Pandarus could be of any assistance in a love affair because Pandarus could not even help himself (1.621-23). Criseyde's retort is similar. He never held anything as dear as she holds Troilus (3.869-70). In other words, Pandarus does not know

what he is talking about.

Pandarus, however, knows more about this scenario than either of the lovers. He is also more skilled in arguing than is Criseyde. Since she has chosen to make an "ensaumple" of him, he will continue in that role. He would never let Troilus spend the night in misery (3.871-75).

Criseyde, playing the courtly lady, offers Pandarus a ring to take to Troilus as a sign of her fidelity. This form of communication is not what Pandarus had in mind (3.883-893). Even language is inadequate to help Troilus now. If he were a "fool" Criseyde would be able to "feffe hym with a fewe wordes white" (3.899-901); however, "this thyng stant al in another kynde" (3.903). With "wordes white" Pandarus has suggested the direction in which he is steering the conversation. Troilus will say "no jalous wordes " to her, but only one word from her will cure him (3.907-10). (Criseyde must understand that Pandarus means more than conversation. In 3.944, "plesaunce"--her word--can scarcely refer to a polite chat.)

Pandarus reassures Criseyde that he will be with her all that night (3.914). The words are probably true in the letter; we are never told that Pandarus actually leaves. However, if they are meant to imply that Pandarus will act as chaperon, they are false in spirit. He says he will bring Troilus as soon as she

she wishes; the words suggest that Criseyde is in control, but coming from Pandarus in this scene they underscore the point that she is expected to receive Troilus. Pandarus's reasoning sounds honest, "so like a sooth at prime face" (3.919), but they imply that Troilus is not in the room with them. Parts of Pandarus's story are true, but the foundation is false because there is no Horaste rumor. When Criseyde informs him that she is in "dulcarnoun," at the end of her wits (3.931), Pandarus latches onto the word. "Dulcarnoun" is a place for "wrecches" who "wol nought lere" (3.933-34). Criseyde is not one of these creatures. Pandarus reminds her that it would not be "skilful" to resist what they "han on honde" (3.937-38). Pandarus used _skylle_ and _skilful_ when he first went to Criseyde to ask her to love Troilus as a friend (2.365, 392). Criseyde should be wary of this word, because when Pandarus talks about the reasonable nature of a request, he usually wants more than he asks for.

Both Pandarus and Criseyde realize that they are not talking about friendship. She declares that she trusts Pandarus and Troilus, and since they are "wise" they will conduct themselves in such "a wise" that all will be well (3.942-43). The _rime riche_ pairing of _wise/wise_ indicates the ability of Criseyde and Pandarus to play with words. Even in this serious discussion,

they seem to be playing a game. The passion is controlled or camouflaged by the rhetoric of Pandarus and Criseyde. The conversation is so formulaic that it enables them to understand each other's meaning without exact words. When Criseyde asks that the two men be discreet, Pandarus gives his standard reply, "That is wel seyd" (3.946; he said the same words at 2.390. One wonders whether the expression implies more than Pandarus's pleasure in Criseyde's acquiescence. It may be his comment on her deft handling of a situation in which clear expression would be *gauche*.)

As Pandarus continues to bluster, Troilus is suddenly in Criseyde's room. There is no reference to his walking in. Criseyde had said that she wished to rise before she received him (3.940), but Pandarus quickly suggests that she lie "stille" and receive "hym right here" (3.948). His timing has been perfect. His praise to Venus, "I the herye" (3.951) echoes the narrator's prayer in the Book 3 proem that he may tell the story "to Venus heryinge" (3.48).

Martin Stevens has noted the remarkable parallelisms among the three scenes in which Troilus and Criseyde are together: at the end of Book 2 and the beginning of Book 3, when Criseyde is led to Troilus; the consummation in Book 3; and their final night together in Book 4 ("Double Structure" 162-64). The

second scene is a "mirror" of the first; the third is a "mirror" of the second. Stevens remarks, "No one can read the second scene without recalling the first." In the first scene, Criseyde is led to Troilus; in the second, Troilus is led to Criseyde. In the first scene, Troilus blushes; in the second, Criseyde ("Double Structure" 163).

What is particularly striking in the similarity of the first two scenes is that Troilus in the first scene and Criseyde in the second become tongue-tied. Criseyde, seeing Troilus appear at her bedside, "kouthe nought a word aright out brynge" (3.958). (Troilus cannot "out brynge" very many words at 3.99.) The narrator is unable to say (3.967) whether she neglects to ask Troilus to rise because "sorwe it putte out of hire remembraunce" (3.968) or she felt it was necessary for Troilus to pay homage to her (3.970). Criseyde may not be completely silent; her words, moreover, may be as garbled as Troilus's were at 3.98-112. (The text has a tendency to summarize Criseyde's words.) The narrator may wonder whether Criseyde's manners had fled from her "remembraunce"; he had no doubt of Troilus's sudden stage fright at 3.84, when the whole speech he intended to make for Criseyde was "thorugh his wit ironne."

This theme of remembrance is crucial to the discussion of language in _Troilus_ because it is not strictly

related to the characters' speech but to written language and to history. Part of the fascination of the *Troilus* is what is said or not said or what the narrator took from his source or added to it. The source is built of words. Language may be flawed, but it is the only system we have of passing down our memory. (One of the great ironies of the *Troilus* is the narrator's insistence on his fidelity to a source that is itself a fiction--a jab at authorial integrity.) Without language, there would be no sources, no history. Without speech, lovers are stymied. As Karla Taylor has noted, Chaucer addresses the mutability of both love and language in the Troilus:

> The instability which troubles him most deeply is not simply that of a mortal love affair, but that of his poetic language, his medium for drawing together the past tradition of "olde bokes," the present, and, he hopes, the future of that tradition. His solution is to go between the horns of the dilemma--dependence on his poetic language and simultaneous recognition of its mutability--by incorporating into the text a metalanguage in which the image of Troilus's and Criseyde's love refers to *Troilus and Criseyde* itself. ("Proverbs and the Authentication of Convention" 291)

The consummation uses a vocabulary that focuses on language, tale telling, and reading as well as sex. Pandarus advises Criseyde to invite Troilus to sit upon the bed so that they may hear each other, goes to the fireplace, "and fond his contenaunce,/As for to looke upon an old romaunce" (3.974-980; especially 3.979-80).

The language is almost innocent; Pandarus seems to suggest that they talk. Moreover, the description of Pandarus is a little vague. He arranges his expression as if he is looking at an old romance. In this scene, Pandarus is like a reader. Dinshaw notes that he "reads the lovers' persons as characters in a script he has himself written--reads them as if *they* constituted 'an old romaunce'" (*Sexual Poetics* 49). Evan Carton makes a somewhat different analysis: "It cannot and need not be determined whether he looks upon a literary romance or regards the one being enacted before him as if it were a book; in either event, he models our activity" (56). This scene is suggestive of Pandarus's role as creator. In his edition of *Troilus*, R. A. Shoaf includes an enlightening note to the use of *fond* in 3.979:

> A fuller expansion would be: "invented as a pretence (*fond*) the appearance of" where *fond* suggests the notion of *inventio* ("invention"), in classical and medieval rhetoric the first step in the composition of a discourse (i.e., the "finding" of the topic of the discourse). (Shoaf's edition of *Troilus and Criseyde* 148, note to line 979)

Pandarus did not create the love of Troilus and Criseyde; however, he has expedited it. Pandarus is watching what he has brought to pass. We assume that the "romaunce" is a story in an old book, something summoned from the *memoria* of Pandarus as he prepares to watch the project that he has initiated come to fruition.

Criseyde speaks without interruption for nine stanzas (3.988-1050). She lectures Troilus about his jealousy, and her discourse is reasonable, not passionate. Words such as <u>wit</u>, <u>kan</u>, and <u>connyng</u> appear in her defense of her fidelity (3.997-99). Criseyde's argument is based on what she knows, but she does not know why Troilus is jealous (3. 1009-11). She invokes Jove as "auctour of nature" (3.1016); her words are a prayer, but they suggest an appeal to authority. A portion of her speech recalls the earlier conversation between Pandarus and Troilus, in which Pandarus did not name his service "for shame," but Troilus called it "gentilesse,/Compassioun, and felawship, and trist" (3.248-56; 3.402-03). Unable to cite an authority, Criseyde cites the way "folk" define jealousy: "jalousie is love" (3.1023-24). Criseyde does not agree with this opinion, and says that God knows "If it be likkere love, or hate, or grame;/And after that, it oughte bere his name" (3.1028-29). Note that Troilus precisely names the activity of Pandarus, but Criseyde gives jealousy a number of labels and says that it should be named for what it most resembles. Declaring that some forms of jealousy are more acceptable than others, she forgives Troilus "for the gentilesse" (3.1030-36). Her remark not only echoes Troilus's name for Pandarus's service, but it recalls his comment about the difference between similar things (3.404-06).

Criseyde offers to prove her innocence through "ordal," "oth," or "sort," or in any other way Troilus wishes (3.1046-47). Ordeals, oaths, and "sort" are subject to interpretation. There is no solid evidence in them, only whatever evidence an observer manages to read in (or into) them. Criseyde must have realized the ordeal, a public spectacle, was impractical for the clandestine relationship. An oath is only as good as the person who swears it, and divination requires a skilled reader. None of these proofs are what Pandarus wants.

The uninterrupted portion of Criseyde's speech ends with her asking Troilus what more she could do or say (3.1050), an expression somewhat similar to Pandarus's remark that he "kan namore seye," his final line in the poem (5.1743). Nevertheless, she does find something to add. "Now God," she declares, she has "nevere yet" been unfaithful to Troilus (3.1053-54). The important words are two nearly insignificant modifiers, <u>now</u> and <u>yet</u>. Ironically, the remark is true <u>now</u>.

After her last protest, she lies down in her bed and covers her head with her sheet; "nought o word spak she more" (3.1057). She cannot remove herself from the room, so she removes her countenance. We saw Troilus catching his "chere" at 1.280, as though he were about to lose his expression. Pandarus has just "fond his contenaunce" (3.979). Criseyde has a tendency to hide

her expression or make herself unreadable. By hiding her face, she makes herself unreadable to Troilus and the reader. Although the narrator claims that Troilus heard Criseyde's words and it upset him to hear and see her cry (3.1065, 1068), we must wonder whether the prince has actually listened to what she has said or if her expression, before she hid her face, contradicted her words. Criseyde had told Troilus that although she was sorry for the way he felt, she was not "wroth" (3.1044). Troilus, however, truly believes that she is "wroth" (1082). He uses the same word she used to deny her anger. There is a hint at 3.1082-85 that Troilus's reaction is partially frustration. He is upset not only because Criseyde is sad, but because she was supposed to make him happy. He comments that when everything is known about the "game," he will not be held "to blame" (3.1084-85). Troilus has not considered his love to be a game. That expression is more suited to Pandarus. This situation with all of its contrivance is, however, a game, and people can be hurt. What Troilus cannot know is that when the game is finally played out, he will be hurt, and Criseyde will be blamed.

In the middle of all of this confusion, between Criseyde's hiding her head in her sheet and Troilus's wishing he were dead, the narrator intervenes in a single stanza (3.1058-64) to remind us that no matter

how awful a situation is, it may soon be better. He declares that one may "reden . . . in stories" that victories come after an onslaught (3.1063-64). We may be a bit unsure about exactly who is being attacked in this scene. Criseyde should appear to be the victim, but Troilus will faint. The military image is an oblique reminder of the siege of Troy. The narrator may very happily apply his image of victory after battle to the consummation of Troilus's love. However, the relationship between Greece and Troy is a real war, not a metaphor. It is Troy that is attacked with Greece as the victor. Given that the audience is expected to know the outcome of the war, the narrator's gleeful comparison is ironic.

Pandarus's earlier promise to Criseyde that Troilus would not be at his supper because he was not in town comes true in a sense. Troilus has a fainting spell, and as he loses consciousness, his "felyng" of the situation "fled was out of towne" (3.1091; see also 3.1351). Troilus's loss of consciousness gives Pandarus the opportunity to throw him into Criseyde's bed. He had called the prince a mouse's heart before leading him into Criseyde's chamber (3.736). He cannot call him the same thing without the prince's losing more face in front of Criseyde. He contents himself with the rhetorical question "O thef, is this a mannes herte?" (3.1098). He enlists Criseyde's help; she becomes the

physician she had considered being back at 2.1581-82. When the befuddled Troilus awakens, she echoes her uncle's question and asks Troilus whether such a reaction is "a mannes game" (3.1126). The question is not exactly what one would expect an allegedly timid woman to ask.

The more intimate Troilus and Criseyde become, the more intense the narrator's preoccupation with language. Criseyde swears many oaths to Troilus as she attempts to revive him. Significantly, she does not ask him to awake, but to speak to her (3.1111-12). When Troilus finally revives, he "to hire spak, and seyde/As fil to purpos for his herte reste" (3.1130-31). Criseyde "with hire goodly wordes hym disporte" (3.1133). She "did al hire peyne" (3.1118) in her attempt to revive him. The remark recalls the comment she made to Pandarus when she wrote her first letter to Troilus: she "nevere dide thing with more peyne" (2.1231). Not that either of these activities has given Criseyde any grief; both were painstaking in that they required her care. Criseyde has begun to appear much less aloof. Interestingly, she lays her arm over Troilus in a manner similar to Eleyne's gesture in Troilus's "sickroom" (3.1128; 2.1671; see also Baswell and Taylor's similar observation, 308).

Although she seems to have softened, Criseyde still maintains a certain independence. She answers Troilus

as she "leste" (3.1132). She took oaths from Troilus "as hire leste devyse" (3.1143-44). Her attitude appears to have changed from 3.1046-47, in which she offered to take an oath or undergo an ordeal as Troilus "list" in order to prove her innocence of the Horaste accusation. After Troilus has taken the oaths, Criseyde sees no reason to ask him to rise from her bed (3.1146). Earlier, she did not ask him to rise from his knees (3.967-970). The omission of the identical command to rise signifies two different things. When Criseyde kept Troilus on his knees, she kept her _daunger_; when she keeps him in bed, she consents to his love.

The narrator breaks into his narrative with a comment. An oath is not always essential: "for every wyght, I gesse,/That loveth wel, meneth but gentilesse" (3.1146-48). This emphasis on meaning, particularly meaning "gentilesse," will be toyed with throughout the scene. Troilus had called the service performed by Pandarus "gentilesse" (3.402). The narrator is sure that the lovers mean "gentilesse"; Troilus and Criseyde themselves seem to incarnate it. Yet when Criseyde asks Troilus the reason for his jealousy "And ek the sygne that he took it by" (3.1149-55), he will lie to her. He will lie, of course, for what he considers the best of reasons. He decides that "for the lasse harm, he moste feyne": he tells her a story "al deere ynough a rysshe" that she could at least have looked at him when she was

at a feast (3.1156-62). Troilus's feeble excuse may cause the reader to wonder why Troilus says nothing about the Horaste story, since he seems to have been inside Criseyde's chamber as Pandarus related the rumor (see 3.742). Criseyde defends herself, even though she seems to realize that Troilus is making the story up. Even if the story were so, she says, she cannot see any harm in her alleged actions since she "non yvel mene"; she declares that her "entente" is "cleene" (3.1163-66). One of the tragedies of the Troilus is that the characters do seem to mean well, but their good intentions eventually lead to pain. Criseyde has used her uncle's phrases. He said that he "non yvel meene" at 2.581; in the previous line, he announced that his "entent is cleene" (2.580). Neither Pandarus nor Criseyde is lying, but there is a subtext to the conversation. Criseyde seems to know that Troilus is lying to her with the best of intentions. She asks him why he would "the childissh jalous contrefete" (3.1168). The concern with intention is reflected not only by the lovers but by the narrator in his intent to tell the story.

Troilus made up a story, a simple lie "for the lasse harm" (3.1158). During the consummation, the narrator will tell us to do as we please with "any word" if he "in eched" it "for the beste" (3.1328-30). Unlike Criseyde in her knowledge of the worthlessness of Troilus's story, we cannot know where the narrator "in

eched." Even though he may have added something "for the beste" (much as Troilus lied "for the lasse harm" at 3.1158), the narrator has tampered with the story. The truth is compromised when a source adds something to his tale, even if he adds the spurious material with the best of intentions. It is true that a poet could take liberties with the form of his story in order to make the past meaningful for the present; such embellishment could even have been considered desireable in order to intensify its "emotional effect" (Payne, Key of Remembrance 73-90). Both Troilus and the narrator mean well. Troilus is deliberately deceptive; the narrator takes advantage of artistic license to add material. Both their actions, however, are fabrications. The additions to a source may be a lie, as the narrator suggests about his own source at 4.20-21. Troilus apologizes to Criseyde: "And if that in tho wordes that I seyde/Be any wrong, I wol no more trespace" (3.1174-75). Note that he does not actually confess to error; the "if" undercuts any acknowledgment of guilt. It is unclear whether Troilus asks her pardon for what he thought of her ignoring him at the feast or for telling her a lie. Although he has not exactly made a confession, he places himself in Criseyde's "grace" (3.1175). She absolves him (3.1177-78), much as she absolved Pandarus (2.595; see also 3.1577-78).

Moreover, Criseyde's absolution is given without a penance.

Criseyde sees this night becoming a memory, a story to recall in the future. She tells Troilus to "recorde" this night (3.1179). As Book 3 opened on Troilus, he was "Recordyng" what he would say to Criseyde, memorizing the words in order to be able to recreate them in speech (3.51). Their memory of the night becomes our memory recorded in an old book.

Troilus puts everything in God's hand "as he that mente/Nothing but wel" (3.1185-86) and embraces Criseyde. Pandarus "with a ful good entente" advises Troilus not to faint again (3.1188-90). Within 41 lines there are five references to good intentions, those of lovers in general and of Criseyde, Troilus, and Pandarus (3.1148, 1164, 1166, 1185-86, 1188). This emphasis on intentions is all the more poignant because the intentions, wonderful as they may be, will be spoiled by circumstances. When Troilus finds his erstwhile brooch on Diomede's coat, he will rail at the absent Criseyde, "ye mente/Al outrely to shewen youre entente" (5.1693-94). For the time being, however, nothing mars the good intentions of the main characters.

As the narrator begins to describe the consummation, he falls back upon his proverbs, his old books, and his <u>auctour</u>: he also explains his own method of

narration:

> What myghte or may the sely larke seye,
> Whan that the sperhauk hath it in his foot?
> I kan namore; but of thise ilke tweye--
> To whom this tale sucre be or soot--
> Though that I tarie a yer, somtyme I moot,
> After myn auctour, tellen hire gldnesse,
> As wel as I have told hire hevynesse.
> (3.1191-97)

The narrator begins his explanation of his narration with a proverb that presumably refers to Criseyde, who trembles in Troilus's arms (3.1200). Both the proverb and the description of the shaking Criseyde will be belied by her own words. Troilus will ask Criseyde to yield; if she had not already yielded, she claims, she would not be with him (3.1208-11). The narrator's "I kan namore" may be meant as an apology for his skill, but it oddly enough anticipates Pandarus's last line in the poem, "I kan namore seye" (5.1743). The narrator insists that he is following his authority. He intends to take as much time as is necessary to tell their joys, just as he told of their sorrows. Ironically, he used abbreviatio in telling their sadness. He has no intention of using it here. As he describes the love scene, he is ever mindful of his text, to the extent that he places his old books in the middle of an embrace:

> Criseyde, which that felte hire thus itake,
> As writen clerkes in hire bokes olde,
> Right as an aspes leef she gan to quake,
> Whan she hym felte hire in his armes folde.
> (3.1198-1201)

The narrator is concerned with intention and meaning. When he discusses the pain of Troilus as an illness that is finally cured (3.1212-18), he uses language that calls attention to itself--"sooth is seyd" (3.1212) and "I mene it here" (3.1217). Such expressions are not essential to the assertions that the narrator makes, but by using them he calls attention to the truth of what he says and the very fact that he has said it. When Criseyde realizes Troilus's "clene entente" (3.1229), she "Opned hire herte and tolde hym hire entente" (3.1239). When Troilus starts to recite another litany, he invokes Venus under the title Citheria, and quickly clarifies to whom he is praying: "Venus mene I" (3.1255-57). As he praises Love to the best of his ability, he declares, "I kan namore" (3.1273), echoing the narrator's reflexivity on his own text (3.1193). He will again clarify his meaning with "As thus I mene" (3.1291). What Troilus means in this instance is that God has ordained that Criseyde will be his "steere" (3.1289-91). Martin Stevens has commented on this image of Criseyde as steerswoman: "In the larger setting of the poem, she is now, for Troilus, the earthly agent of the Goddess of Love, for it is Venus who governs and 'binds' together all of God's creation" ("Winds of Fortune" 288-89). In light of this comparison of Venus and Criseyde, it is interesting to note that the narrator and Troilus make the same request of the adored

one: Troilus asks Criseyde to teach him so that he will not displease her through his "ignoraunce" (3.1293-95). The narrator begs Venus to teach him how to depict the joys of love (3.39-42), which he claims never to have experienced.

Criseyde responds in kind to this verbal preoccupation:

> But lat us falle awey fro this matere,
> For it suffiseth, this that seyd is heere,
> And at o word, withouten repentaunce,
> Welcome, my knyght, my pees, my suffisaunce!"
> (3.1306-09)

With Criseyde's welcome, the lovers go silent, and the narrator must rely on his descriptive powers. The four stanzas from 3.1310 to 3.1337 are remarkable in that the narrator is not only caught in the problem of describing what he sees through the medium of his source, but he faces the realization that he has never known what he is describing. He claims that he does not know how to tell their bliss--yet tell it he does:

> Of hire delit or joies oon the leeste
> Were impossible to my wit to seye;
> But juggeth ye that han ben at the feste
> Of swich gladnesse, if that hem liste pleye!
> (3.1310-13)

The narrator announces, "I kan namore" (3.1314), a phrase we have already heard bandied by Troilus and the narrator (3.1273, 1193) and that will become Pandarus's exit line (5.1743). The narrator cannot even say the least of their joys, but he appreciates them. Instead of judging himself, he invites the audience to be

judges.

Martin Stevens has noted that "the consummation scene in general is the numerical and narrative center of the poem" ("Double Structure" 158). In his study of the center of the poem, Thomas Hanson has suggested that the center occurs between stanzas 187 and 188 in Root's beta text--that is 3.1303-16. Hanson, however, does not count the proems, noting that Root believed that they were not part of the original poem (298-300). Hanson also refers to the gradus amoris topos that has been studied by Lionel J. Friedman; the highest step on this staircase of love was consummation.[5] Hanson states, "The coincidence of the center of the Troilus with the sexual embrace must have occurred by design; the completion of the gradus amoris means only that there are no more upward steps to be taken" (300).

Hanson comments on the use of heigh in 3.1323 (300). More interesting, however, is the line count in Barney's edition in Riverside Chaucer, which is based on a gamma manuscript (Barney, Textual Notes to Troilus in Riverside Chaucer 1161-62). The Hanson argument calls for the removal of the proems from the line count. However, if the proems remain, the exact center of this gamma text occurs at 3.1271, in Troilus's line "And me bistowed in so heigh a place." It is remarkable, if not engineered, that the center of the poem has the main character commenting upon being in a "heigh place"; the

<u>heigh</u> of 3.1323 refers to the height of the lovers' joy, not to location.

No matter where the central line is fixed, the consummation scene is central to the poem. As he reads his text and comments, the narrator brings his own life to the text: "Why nad I swich oon with my soule ybought,/Ye, or the leeste joie that was theere?" (3.1319-20). The narrator has just finished saying that he could not describe the least of their joys (3.1310-11). He wishes that he knew exactly what he is writing about. He remarks that the joy of the lovers "is so heigh that al ne kan I telle!" (3.1323).

The word <u>telle</u> (3.1323), the last word in the stanza in which the narrator considers selling his soul, jolts the narrator away from his reading and into his writing:

> But sooth is, though I kan nat tellen al,
> As kan myn auctour, of his excellence,
> Yet have I seyd, and God toforn, and shal
> In every thyng, al holly his sentence;
> And if that ich, at Loves reverence,
> Have any word in eched for the beste,
> Doth therwithal right as youreselven leste.
>
> For myne wordes, heere and every part,
> I speke hem alle under correccioun
> Of yow that felyng han in loves art,
> And putte it al in youre discrecioun
> To encresse or maken dymynucioun
> Of my langage, and that I yow biseche.
> But now to purpos of my rather speche.
> (3.1324-37)

"I kan nat tellen al" in 3.1324 is a near reversal of the words in the previous line--"al ne kan I telle"

(3.1323). The narrator attempts to qualify his previous statement. He cannot tell everything that his source tells, but he can give the "sentence." Yet neither the narrator nor the readers can know whether the source told everything. There are places in the text in which the narrator comments that the material is missing from the source (1.133; 3.501-04; 5.826). We have already seen him add to the authority's "sentence" at 1.393-399; indeed, he seemed to be privy to more information than Lollius.

The narrator does not necessarily have to experience love in order to describe it. The narrator has given the "sentence" of his source; however, he is not merely translating words. He is carrying the "sentence" of the original into a new format. He claims that he may have "in eched" some material "for the beste" (3.1329). Dinshaw notes that the narrator's <u>in eching</u> occurs at the most joyous time for the lovers (<u>Sexual Poetics</u> 43-44). According to Dinshaw, "The narrator's <u>translatio</u> is not merely flat fidelity to the sentence; it combines the textual eroticism of intermittence with vicarious pleasure in the love affair" (<u>Sexual Poetics</u> 44). (Although he is referring to the narrator's greater interest in the love story than in the war, Eugene Vance makes an observation not unlike Dinshaw's: "Like Pandarus, the narrator substitutes vicarious, literary love, the love of letters, for the real thing,

though in doing so he denatures the very heroic tradition which he names and in which his poem is situated." See "Mervilous Signals" 315.)

The narrator, however, not only comments about his own interpretation of his sources; he demands that the readers create the scene from his text and embellish it or diminish it in their own minds. The narrator gives his own reader response criticism of his source and expects that of his readers. He can write only as an intellectual; lovers may do with the words as they wish. They know from experience what the narrator knows only from old books that may be inaccurate. The reader cannot help being pulled into the text. Charles Owen, Jr. notes in "Mimetic Form in the Central Love Scene of Troilus and Criseyde":

> What happens to the expectations of the reader--now partially fulfilled, now disappointed in a way that leads to a higher partial fulfillment, the process repeated again and again to the point of complete fulfillment--parallels the experience of the lovers. (125)

Donald Howard makes a similar observation, noting "authorial interruptions":

> They set up an oscillation between interest and detachment which parallels the ebb and flow of passion during protracted lovemaking. But as it relects the feelings of the lovers, it also imitates the feeling of readers--it is, like the art of reading, an alternation between involvement and aesthetic distance: now we are with the lovers in the chamber, now with the author over his "olde book." Chaucer thus seems to capitalize on that tiniest respect in which lovemaking and reading have

> something in common. He includes us, as readers, in the very texture of the scene; he keeps us with him as we follow the action, and leads our responses to it. The very rhythm of these responses has the rhythm of passion. ("Literature and Sexuality" 448; quoted by Owen, "Mimetic Form" 127, note 3)

The reader becomes intimately involved with the text. In the consummation, the _Troilus_ ceases to be only a part of Trojan history. It becomes relevant to anyone who has ever loved. The narrator believes that his readers are more familiar with this scene than he is. He gives the reader an editorial control to increase or decrease his words. Chaucer seems to tell the reader to use what he or she knows, not to rely on the text alone to make the description perfectly clear. The text is the text, but it becomes what the reader makes of it. Without telling all and by allowing the reader to create the scene, the narrator has created a love scene that is different with each reader. Donald Howard notes that "where the intention of erotic literature is to draw the reader _into_ the work, make him empathize with its particular action, the writer must enlist, rather than alienate, the reader's sexual fantasies--must keep his response from becoming vicarious" ("Literature and Sexuality" 443). The consummation is not frozen history; it is an experience that is recreated not only by the text but by the lovers who are the audience. Note that the narrator places his text

in the "discrecioun" of those who have "felyng" in love (3.1333-34). Owen notes:

> The story is unique; it happened once at a given time in a given place; Chaucer must depend on the ancient accounts for his knowledge of what happened. At the same time, by submitting his account to correction by lovers, the stanzas stress the universality of the story. Each of us through his common humanity has some capacity for evaluating and contributing to the account. Finally, by implication, the story will never be complete. Events, however fully recorded, will never yield to complete understanding or final judgment by men. ("Mimetic Form" 132)

Robert O. Payne discusses 3.1324-1446 and notes the importance of the audience's response to Chaucer's characters:

> Most importantly, the narrator himself warns us openly that his characters speak by the book, that their first existence (at least as far as he, the non-lover, is concerned) was literary, that his re-creation of them is still one degree further denatured, and that a considerable part of whatever "reality" they attain will have to be projected onto them from the sentiments of the audience: (Key of Remembrance 222)

The idea of the text is present throughout the lovemaking of Troilus and Criseyde. They question whether they experience a fiction, "That al this thyng but nyce dremes were" (3.1342). Troilus's gaze never leaves her face (3.1346). His perusal of her face will narrow down to a direct address of her eyes: "Though ther be mercy writen in youre cheere,/God woot, the text ful hard is, soth, to fynde!" (3.1356-57).

Expressions, both physical and verbal, cause confusion. Troilus attempts to read Criseyde's face as though it were a book, and he stumbles. In an article on a fifteenth-century reading of the Troilus, Lee Patterson comments upon the prince's attempt to read Criseyde's eyes:

> Medieval discussions of literature habitually draw an analogy between literary and sexual seduction, and our reader invokes the analogy in his elliptical phrase "sweet poison," which refers to the double temptation of sweethearts and Muses. Chaucer exploits this analogy throughout his poem, and nowhere more explicitly than in the description of Troilus's (mis)reading of Criseyde's eyes. (329)

Note that even as he holds Criseyde, Troilus still has difficulty finding the "mercy" in her eyes. It is there, supposedly, but difficult to read. It is almost as though Troilus has to learn to read the text. He had asked Criseyde to teach him what would please her (3.1293). It is not until he is an initiate that Troilus learns to read love's language.

The narrator has a tendency to remark on occasions when language either fails the speaker or is superfluous. The most notable example of the superfluity of language appears after Troilus's death, when the prince looks down upon the world and laughs (5.1820-25). The consummation of Troilus and Criseyde's love is an experience that the narrator's language may be unequal to, yet language is all that he has to describe it. When

the lovers are silent, the narrator must rely on his own ability to describe. In one stanza (3.1359-65), he describes Troilus's sighs, Granted, the sighs are indicative of their actions; they have dispensed with words. It is up to the reader to imagine what they are doing. The narrator expects his reader to know why Troilus sighs. Ironically, the greatest peace in this story set in war and filled with references to language comes with the breakdown of language:

> And evere mo, when that hem fel to speke
> Of any wo of swich a tyme agoon,
> With kissyng al that tale sholde breke
> And fallen in a newe joye anoon; (3.1401-04)

When Troilus and Criseyde are one, they do not need to talk. Nevertheless, they tell their histories to each other because neither really knows what the other has been through. They "speken," "pleye," and "rehercen" their love (3.1396-97).

The narrator expands this focus on the talk of Troilus and Criseyde to people who "lye" (3.1380) about love; he declares that he will "rede" their fate to us (3.1383). His knowledge of love's wrath is as academic as his knowledge of love's delight. Those who consider love to be madness or stupidity will recieve love's vengeance; however, "every lovere in his trouthe avaunce!" (3.1386), a line remarkably like the narrator's "so hope I my sowle best avaunce" (1.47). The word <u>trouthe</u> implies more than <u>truth</u>. It may

refer to the pledge one makes in a relationship. Since the narrator has no earthly <u>trouthe</u> to worry about, he considers his soul. Since his knowledge of love is academic, he falls back on his old books to illustrate his material. He picks the historical Crassus and the Ovidian Midas as examples of individuals who are made miserable by their greed (3.1387-93). According to the narrator, neither was a lover. Their avarice is contrasted with the generosity of Troilus and Criseyde.[6] The image of Crassus with his mouth filled with molten gold is an image of silence. Midas was pardoned for his stupidity in wishing his touch turned objects to gold, but Apollo punished him with ass's ears for criticizing his music. Midas is a musical dunce. He cannot appreciate what he hears. The narrator may never have known love, but he appreciates what he has read about it to the point that he wonders why he did not sell his soul.

The narrator notes that it is reasonable that he does not speak of their sleeping. In any event, their rest has nothing to do with his material (3.1408-10). Even their lack of sleep is a cause for self-reflexivity: if they sleep, the narrator has nothing to write about. Criseyde's comment in her apostrophe to night is ironic. She blames night for leaving and not allowing the lovers to rest (3.1435). In her argument, she refers to old books, mentioning Almena (311428).

She notes that "as folk in bokes rede" night was created by God to allow man to rest (3.1429-32). Even her complaint is intertextual.

By using the _aube_, Chaucer takes a literary convention of the Middle Ages and uses it to help tell his story. We as readers are supposed to respond to the story. The characters, however, respond to each other's _aubes_. Troilus not only listens to the words of Criseyde's _aube_, he felt them; it is as though tears of blood melt from his heart (3.1443-44). The words cause a physical sensation. The couplet in Criseyde's _aube_ will be picked up by Troilus in his _aube_; it also anticipates the description of Criseyde's departure from Troy. Criseyde's couplet, "For now, for thow so hiest out of Troie,/Have I forgon thus hastili my joie!" (3.1441-42), is echoed at 3.1450 and 1452 in Troilus's _aube_, in which day is cursed for ruining the lovers' "joie" and coming into Troy. The balance of the _aubes_ is perfect. Criseyde complains about night, whereas Troilus rails at day. She complains about night's departure; he begrudges day's arrival. The _Troie/joie_ rhyme of the couplet at 3.1441-42 is inverted to the _joie/Troye_ rhyme at 3.1450 and 1452--the rhyme is inverted and switched from couplet to alternate rhyme just as the address to the night is switched to day. A couplet in Book 5 echoes these lines in that the time is

morning and Criseyde herself is leaving: "But Troilus, now far-wel al thi joie,/For shaltow nevere sen hire eft in Troie!" (5.27-28).

Day is the ultimate jelos. Day creates rumor by revealing lovers. Troilus tells day to sell its light to those who "grave" small seals (3.1461-62); Kaske notes that this reference to grave as "apparently anticipating" Criseyde's use of it at 3.1499 (177). Criseyde uses the engraving image to speak of her engraved heart: "Ye ben so depe in-with myn herte grave" (3.1499). Her reference to the engraving of her heart is a response to a request of Troilus, who wished to know whether he is as firmly set in Criseyde's heart as she is set in his (3.1486-89). These lines are a fulfillment of the eagle allegory of 2.925-31. Criseyde answers that this "game" they are playing has become too serious to be erased from her heart:

> The game, ywys, so ferforth now is gon
> That first shal Phebus fallen fro his speere,
> And everich egle ben the dowves feere,
> And everich roche out of his place sterte,
> Er Troilus oute of Criseydes herte. (3.1494-1498)

The impossible will never happen! Criseyde's earnest speech from 3.1493-1518 is difficult to reconcile with her betrayal. Nevertheless, she has called the relationship a game, although she seems to be taking it quite seriously now. Troilus will never be out of her heart or her mind. Note the crucified syntax of

her protest, in itself a suggestion of the torture she refers to:

> "Ye ben so depe in-with myn herte grave,
> That, though I wolde it torne out of my thought,
> As wisly verray God my soule save,
> To dyen in the peyne, I koude nought.
> (3.1499-1502)

Granted, Criseyde protests that even if she were tortured to death, she would not be able to rid her heart of Troilus. Yet 3.1502 in isolation foreshadows the Criseyde who is "slydynge of corage" (5.825): she could not die in pain. Even as she contemplates suicide in Book 4, she intends to starve to death because she will use "neither swerd ne darte/ . . . for the crueltee" (4.771-72). Troilus wants to know that he is fixed in Criseyde's heart (3.1485-89); Criseyde wants him to keep her in his mind (3.1506-07). She hopes to "wiste sothly" (3.1508) that she is in Troilus's mind, just as he would be able to endure his pain if he could "wiste outrely" (3.1486) that he is in her heart. Both are making a request to memory, an essential not only to history and poetry, but--at least in the Middle Ages--to good sexual relations as well:

> In the human being, desire was aroused not only by the natural appetite, but by the animal appetite (that is, the appetite born of the soul). The sensations of former experiences were retained, in the *imaginatio*, and memory, by recalling them, encouraged one to renew the pleasure. (Jacquart and Thomasset 82)

Troilus and Criseyde commit themselves to each

other's memory until they meet again. Addressing Troilus as "herte myn" (they are engraved on each other's hearts), she tells him "withouten more speche" (3.1510) that she is totally his and that he must be true to her. She tells him, "Beth glad, forthy, and lyve in sikernesse!/Thus seyde I nevere er this, ne shal to mo" (3.1513-14). Perhaps she will remain true to the letter of this promise; however, she will certainly be false to its spirit. Then again, it may be partly true. She may indeed never have said the words even to her husband.

Criseyde is so miserable at Troilus's departure that, when he says farewell, "no word for sorwe she answerde" (3.1527). This silence parallels her earlier silence when, after protesting her innocence of the Horaste affair, she wraps herself in a sheet and remains quiet. While they are apart, Troilus and Criseyde imprint the beloved on their memories. Remember, the Middle Ages considered memory or imaginatio to be an important element of the human sex drive (Jacquart and Thomasset 82). Just as the memoria of the beloved was important to the relationship, the memoria of the relationship will be important to history. Troilus and Criseyde record each other in their memories as one would record memories into books. The memory of the previous night "may nevere out of his remembraunce"

(3.1533):

> And in his thought gan up and down to wynde
> Hire wordes alle, and every countenaunce,
> And fermely impressen in his mynde
> The leeste point that to him was plesaunce;
> And verraylich of thilke remembraunce
> Desir al newe hym brende, and lust to brede
> Gan more than erst, and yet took he non hede.
> (3.1541-47)

He imprints her words and her expressions in his mind as though it were the book of Criseyde. We do not know what Criseyde looks like. (There are descriptions of her hair at 4.736 and 816; we lack a fuller physical description until 5.806-26). Troilus alone has the key to the book of his "remembraunce." A reader may only imagine and interpret. He began to commit Criseyde to memory in Book 1 (1.297-98; 1.365-67). His desire increased even more when he received her letter in Book 2 (2.1336-37). The fact that he takes no heed is a bit sinister. Troilus's memory of Criseyde will eventually entrap him. He will spend chunks of Book 5 looking at places where he saw her laugh and visiting her empty palace. In a sense the *Troilus* is the narrator's book about the memories of Troilus and Criseyde as well as of the memory (history) of the lovers. Troilus comes close to this opinion in Book 5, when he calls into his "memorie" his wars with Cupid and says that someone could write a book about them (5.583-85). Even though Troilus and Criseyde will eventually dispose of their memories quite differently, their pattern of memorizing

is similar. Compare, for example, Troilus at 3.1541 and Criseyde at 2.659. Like Troilus, Criseyde will memorize the beloved (3.1548-54).

The morning after conversation between Pandarus and Criseyde echoes phrases from earlier in the poem. Pandarus commiserates with Criseyde that she had so little "laiser" (3.1559) because of the rain--an irony, since the previous evening he had praised the weather as good to sleep in (3.657). The word "laiser" has been used by Pandarus before, primarily as a description of the time when he would bring Troilus and Criseyde together (3.200). When Pandarus asks Criseyde how she feels, she banters with him, denigrating his "wordes white" (3.1567), a term that he had used to describe bluffing off a fool (3.901). Wordes white may be spoken for a purpose other than their literal meaning. The phrase forms a wonderfully suggestive introduction to the next two stanzas, 3.1569-82, the infamous, ambiguous, encounter of Pandarus and Criseyde.

What occurred between Pandarus and his niece is unclear. We read that Criseyde hid her face in the sheet and that Pandarus started "to prie" under it (3.1569-71). It is possible that he merely uncovered her from her face to her neck. What makes us wonder about what happened is the narrator's reference to what he does not say:

> I passe al that which chargeth nought to seye.
> What! God foryaf his deth, and she al so

> Foryaf, and with here uncle gan to pleye,
> For other cause was ther noon than so.
> (3.1576-79)

Notice that the narrator does not say that the information is missing from his source. The language of the passage suggests that he is being selective about the material. The word pleye has a multitude of meanings, and "other cause was ther noon" may be interpreted as "there was no reason" or "there was no choice." The narrator may be suggesting that Criseyde is manipulated in this scene. We are told that she forgives Pandarus--whether for the manipulation of the previous evening or for the current transgression is unclear--just as she had absolved both Pandarus and Troilus earlier in the poem (2.595; 3.1177-80). If it "chargeth nought to seye" what happened, the implication is that the narrator has read something in his source and decided that it is either unimportant or unsavory. Whatever the activity is, the narrator excuses Criseyde (3.1579). The reader is left to infer that the narrator has read something that makes him uneasy. Of course, a reader may see nothing suggestive in this passage. It is the type of material that may make a reader wonder whether he or she has a "dirty mind." Evan Carton notes:

> It seems to me that the first and perhaps most crucial observation to be made about this post-nuptial encounter is that it is, if nothing else, the consummate instance of evasive language. Here, more inexorably than anywhere else in the poem, the reader is responsible

> for the meaning he produces; and that, I believe, is the meaning of the scene. (57)

The scene at Criseyde's bedside finds its echo in the next scene, in which Pandarus is summoned to the prince's bedside. Again we find vocabulary that has appeared earlier in the text; moreover, the rendezvous has evolved into a story, a glorious memory. Each of the lovers has spent the morning remembering the night before. Pandarus warns Troilus that there is no worse misfortune than to achieve something and "remembren" it when it has vanished (3.1625-28). He again warns the prince to curb his "speche" (3.1635); Troilus responds that Pandarus need not stress "this matere" (3.1643). Their conversation is filled with references to language. Troilus "gan . . . telle hym of his glade nyght" (3.1646). The consummation has become a story that Troilus may share only with Pandarus. Troilus "Was nevere ful to speke of this matere" (3.1661), and for the rest of the day "This tale ay was span-newe to bygynne" (3.1665). The love of Troilus and Criseyde is "matere," a story that Troilus loves to hear in contrast to the warning "matere" of Pandarus. The previous night has become part of Troilus's history. Since he has experienced Criseyde's love, he feels "a newe qualitee"; he even admits to not knowing exactly what it is (3.1653-54). This quality is never clearly identified. Perhaps the audience of lovers is expected to know what

it is. Pandarus may not understand it, for he comments that someone in such joy "feleth other weyes, . . . /Than thilke tyme he first herde of it seye" (3.1658-59). The remark is poignant, for we must recall that Pandarus has never gone far beyond hearing about love.

The lovers meet a second time. The "forme and al the wise" (3.1674) of their meeting is the same. We have been informed that "in forme of speche is chaunge" (2.22); we also know that the form of this romance is doomed to change. The idea of mutability is even suggested by Pandarus in his morning-after speech to Troilus (3.1621-38). The mention of _forme_ is a subtle reminder of language. The narrator explains that he will not "devyse" the manner of their meeting because we already know it (3.1676, 1681-84). Remember, one may _devyse_ a situation or a story (see Stevens, "Winds of Fortune" 306, note 17; quoted above 99). These lines point to a narrator-audience relationship. Troilus and Criseyde act within a "forme" in their love affair. The audience sees this "forme" through the "forme" of language. We are reminded that the story has a form, supposedly dictated by the narrator. The narrator decides what he does not need to say, suggesting that he is omitting material from his source. He will not go into the details of their love, although he admits that this

meeting was a thousand times better than the last one, which was heaven. He will say no more about it: "this nedeth nought enquere" (3.1681-84). They had as much joy as is possible (3.1687); the audience can figure out whatever that means. The narrator, however, has some difficulty describing their happiness:

> This is no litel thyng of for to seye;
> This passeth every wit for to devyse;
> For ech of hem gan otheres lust obeye.
> Felicite, which that thise clerkes wise
> Comenden so, ne may nought here suffise;
> This joie may nought writen be with inke;
> This passeth al that herte may bythynke.
> (3.1688-94)

The narrator has begun to show a dissatisfaction with the old books that will become more evident in the last two books. The word used by the clerks is not accurate enough to describe the experience. The narrator is at a loss for words. His language falls short of the description he wishes to give, yet the language is all he has and he must make the best of it. Book 3.1694 all but contradicts 3.1687, in which the heart may "comprende" joy. Apparently, the heart may "comprende" but not "bythynke." The emotion may be felt or intuited, but it will not be measured by reason. The language can give no rational understanding of love; only the heart may intuit it. The word _devyse_ at 3.1689 echoes _devyse_ at 3.1676--though at 1676, devising was unnecessary. At 3.1689, devising is impossible. The suggestion of something beyond speech continues into the

next stanza in which Troilus and Criseyde knew "by sygnes" that day was approaching (3.1695-96).

The verbal allusions continue. Troilus's fame increases, and "a vois" and "a stevene" about him is broadcast so that his glorious reputation is heard even to the gate of heaven (3.1723-25). Troilus composes a song, a "proces" (3.1739) that he sings to Pandarus. Unlike the letter he wrote to Criseyde in Book 2, the composition of the song needs none of Pandarus's assistance. God, "that auctour is of kynde" creates a bond from which no one knows a way of escape (3.1765-68). This is quite unlike the song of Book 1, in which the prince wondered what love is (1.400-20). Troilus has known love; he no longer stumbles in his descriptions.

There are a few hints of trouble. Troilus is the preeminent knight, "And certeynly, but if that bokes erre,/Save Ector most ydred of any wight" (3.1774-75). The suggestion has been made that a book may be wrong, and this idea will interest the narrator more as Criseyde defects. The narrator will question whether the sources lie about her at 4.20, only a few stanzas away. No other beauty may undo the slightest bit of any "knotte" that Criseyde has made in capturing Troilus's heart (3.1732-33). This knot image will be undone in Book 5, when both Troy and Troilus will slide "knotteles" through Criseyde's heart (5.768-69).

The poem still stresses talk. Troilus's speech is

devoted, for the most part, to love and virtue (3.1786). He is delighted whenever he hears about the success of other lovers (3.1791-92). He can "devyse" so well that anything he says or does seems good (3.1796-99). While hiding his romantic involvement, Troilus nevertheless presents a clear text to the world.

The last two stanzas form an envoi to Book 3, a farewell that did not appear in either of the previous books. It is the narrator's farewell to the first part of his text--the "wo to wele" section (1.4). He acknowledges the help of Venus, Cupid, and the muses; he adds that he "kan namore" (an important phrase throughout the poem), but since they "wol wende" he praises them (3.1812-13). The indication is that these benefactors of love are disappearing; the final books will not be aided by such patrons of love as Venus and Cupid, nor such patrons of art as the muses. Through these deities the narrator has made the "song" (3.1814) of Book 3. He has told the joys, but he admits "that ther was som disese among,/As to myn auctour listeth to devise" (3.1816-17). Although he mentions his source frequently (and will mention his old books with a vengeance when he must write something he would rather not record), the references to "my song" (3.1814) and "My thridde bok now ende ich in this wyse" (3.1818) suggest a certain autonomy from the source. He ends his book

with the lovers together "in lust and in quiete" (3.1819), without indicating that the "quiete" is about to be destroyed by the effects of war and history on their private lives.

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[1] Among several studies of the differing representations of Venus is Robert Hollander's Boccaccio's Two Venuses (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977). In The Elements of Chaucer's Troilus, Chauncey Wood notes other studies on the topic, including Earl G. Schreiber, "Venus in the Medieval Mythographic Tradition," JEGP 74 (1975): 519-35; and George D. Economou, "The Two Venuses and Courtly Love," in In Pursuit of Perfection: Courtly Love in Medieval Literature, ed. Joan M. Ferrante and George D. Economou (Port Washington, New York, 1975) 17-50. See Wood, Elements of Chaucer's Troilus 187, note 9.

[2] Stokes notes that Pandarus avoids using the term bauderye, but that Troilus uses the word in his reply at 3.397, "probably to the great vexation of" Pandarus ("Wordes White" 24).

[3] Stokes comments on 3.587-88: "the words plainly have the subsidiary function of indicating that she does assent to it, so long as Pandarus sees that all is 'well' in the sense of discreetly handled, rather than morally 'well' ("Wordes White" 28).

[4] Martin Stevens notes, "For Pandarus, Fortune is a distant, incalculable force. He acknowledges but disregards her" ("Winds of Fortune" 295). Stevens notes that "in the second half of the poem, despite his best efforts, he is impotent in his attempts to thwart the power of Fortune" ("Winds of Fortune" 297).

[5] Lionel J. Friedman, "Gradus Amoris," Romance Philology 19 (1965): 166-77; cited in Hanson 300.

[6] Crassus is a historical figure. For the story of Midas, See Ovid, Metamorphoses 11 (pages 252-55 in Melville's translaton). Oddly enough, Chaucer uses both history and myth to make his point. See also Wetherbee's comments, "Descent from Bliss" 300.

CHAPTER FOUR

Book 4 is all about talk. But, the first word of the proem to Book 4, lets us know that there is to be a major shift in the tone of the story. As Ganim notes:

> Qualifications of the efficacy of language and reason, and by extension the sorts of human happiness derived from them, occur most often in the fourth book. This is significant, almost symbolic, for it is here that the physical expression of despair dominates, even prevents the action. . . . The poet, and the chief characters, here qualify their use of language, as if to move from verbal art and narrative movement towards silence and stasis--perhaps to shore up defenses against the encroachment of time, but also to deny the movement of narrative, as if in protest against the preordained course of the plot. ("Consciousness and Time in Troilus and Criseyde" 99)

Fortune is a storyteller who

> semeth trewest whan she wol bygyle
> And kan to fooles so hire song entune
> That she hem hent and blent, traitour comune!
> (4.3-5)

Fortune, apparently, has an expression that causes her to be misread. She blinds those who believe in her, much as Pandarus blinds Deiphebus and his dinner guests in Book 2. In Book 1, Pandarus advised Troilus that Fortune is "comune" (1.843). Now she is "traitour comune!" The meaning of 1.843 and 4.5 is basically the same, but 4.5 is more sinister. (For a discussion of Fortune and her effects on the characters and the structure of the poem, see Martin Stevens, "The Winds of Fortune in Chaucer's Troilus.")

The narrator assumes a tone that is reminiscent of his tone in Book 1, in which he asked Thesiphone for help: "t'endite/Thise woful vers, that wepen as I write" (1.6-7). The verses weep, although their tears seem to apply by extension to the narrator. In the Book 4 proem the narrator's heart bleeds (4.12). He adds, "And now my penne, allas, with which I write,/Quaketh for drede of that I moste endite" (4.13-14). In the Book 1 proem, the verses weep, seeming to mirror the narrator's feelings; in the proem to Book 4, the pen seems to become an extension of the narrator. Perhaps it is quaking because of the narrator's emotions. It seems to be personified. It is as though the writing materials themselves rebel against what they are forced to write, just as the narrator must write according to his source. They mirror his discomfort. The _write/endite_ couplet at 4.13-14 echoes the _t'endite/write_ couplet of 1.7-8--but in reverse. The narrator is not only caught up in telling his story, he is self-conscious about the telling. The third stanza of Book 4 is a synopsis of the affair:

> For how Criseyde Troilus forsook--
> Or at the leeste, how that she was unkynde--
> Moot hennesforth ben matere of my book,
> As writen folk thorugh which it is in mynde.
> Allas, that they sholde evere cause fynde
> To speke hire harm! And if they on hire lye,
> Iwis, hemself sholde han the vilanye.
> (4.15-21)

The narrator is compelled to tell the story as he

finds it. Though he must dutifully translate what he reads, he does not necessarily have to trust it. At 3.1774, he suggested the possibility of a textual mistake, but the context of that remark implies that an error is unlikely. In Book 4, however, the narrator is somewhat hostile to his sources. The suggestion is not that the source has made a mistake, but that the source may have lied.

Scholars have discussed parallels between the first two books and the last two. According to William Provost, "With Book III as the center, content patterns of parallelism and contrast relate Books I and V and Books II and IV" (82). Martin Stevens has found parallels between Books 1 and 2, Books 1 and 4, Books 2 and 4, and Books 2 and 5 ("Double Structure" 162). At the beginning of Book 4, Chaucer puts us back in Book 1, invoking Thesiphone and her sister Furies, who themselves are narrators--they "compleignen" (4.22-23). The first stanza of Book 4 proper echoes the beginning of the story proper. Compare "Liggyng in oost, as I have seyd er this,/The Grekes stronge aboute Troie town" (4.29-30) to the first line of Book 1 proper: "Yt is wel wist how that the Grekes stronge" (1.57). The "er this" of 4.29 refers to the beginning of the story back in Book 1 (1.57-63). Ector and his barons "Caste" for a day on which they will fight the Greeks (4.34). We have seen

other characters "casting": Calkas (1.75); Pandarus (2.74), and Criseyde (2.659). Caste recalls Calkas's flight in Book 1 and makes us mindful of the reason for his departure: Troy is doomed. In the next few stanzas of Book 4, Troy experiences a setback and agrees to an exchange of prisoners, an exchange that will bring Calkas back into the story. This first stanza of Book 4 proper (4.29-35) unites the very beginning of the story in Book 1 with our knowledge of what will ultimately happen to Troy. We are also back in Book 1 in the sense that another rumor is circulated, one that will torment Criseyde far more than the first rumors about her father. The news about the proposed exchange is

> couth in every strete,
> Bothe in th'assege, in town, and everywhere,
> And with the firste it com to Calkas ere.
> (4.61-63)

Calkas was the cause of rumor back in Book 1, when Criseyde "alday herd at ere/Hire fadres shame, his falsnesse and tresoun" (1.106-07). Notice the verbal parallel: Criseyde "herd at ere" the rumors about Calkas. The information about the exchange "com to Calkas ere." Both episodes begin with hearsay. Calkas will make this new rumor work to his advantage, just as he used the oracle for his own benefit in Book 1. Book 4 is really the first time we see and hear Calkas in action; all of the references to him in Book 1 are hearsay--he himself

is nothing more than a rumor to us. Now that we see him in person, we are given his expression as well as his words. He sat with the Greek lords as was his custom, but "with a chaunged face" (4.66-68). Duplicity is evident in Calkas's expression and his words. Diomede will later tell Criseyde that Troy is doomed--unless Calkas has spoken "a word with two visages" (5.899). In Book 1, Calkas listens or reads, and interprets; in Book 4 he speaks, changing his face to make the Greeks read him as he wishes. Both scenes refer to Calkas's knowing--"So whan this Calkas knew by calkulynge" (1.71) and "Whan Calkas knew this tretis sholde holde" (4.64).

The information of the prisoner exchange comes to Criseyde as rumor, after the Trojan parliament agrees to exchange her for Antenor:

> The swifte Fame, which that false thynges
> Egal reporteth lik the thynges trewe,
> Was thorughout Troie yfled with preste wynges
> Fro man to man, and made this tale al newe,
> How Calkas doughter, with hire brighte hewe,
> At parlement, withouten wordes more,
> Ygraunted was in chaunge of Antenore.
>
> The whiche tale anon-right as Criseyde
> Hadde herd, she, which that of hire fader
> roughte,
> As in this cas, right nought, ne whan he
> deyde,
> Ful bisily to Jupiter bisoughte
> Yeve hem meschaunce that this tretis broughte;
> But shortly, lest thise tales sothe were,
> She dorst at no wight asken it, for fere.
> (4.659-672)

Book 4.679 echoes 1.96: "As she that nyste what was best to rede" (1.96); "So that she nyste what was best

to reede" (4.679). The echo of her uncertainty is obvious. The only difference between the two lines is the difference in the two subordinate conjunctions as and so and the inversion of she and that. Criseyde is placed in much the same predicament as she was in the first book. In Book 1, she seems to fear for her life because of the rumors. Ector promised her that she could live in Troy as long as she "list" (1.118-19). The situation in Book 4 has nothing to do with what she may "list"; indeed, no one even bothers to tell her exactly what is happening, and even Ector cannot help her. She must piece the story together from a rumor that is "al newe" as it passes from one person to the next. The rumor is a source that changes with each "newe" auctour, each new gossip.

Criseyde went to Ector to ask his protection in remaining safely in Troy; Calkas goes to the Greek lords to have her taken from Troy. We never hear what Criseyde says to Ector; we know only that she weeps and excuses herself (1.110-12). We do, however, have Ector's reply (1.117-23). In contrast, Calkas talks and the Greeks listen in Book 4. There is a certain comedy in the description of Calkas's talk with the lords. He asks them "For love of God, to don that reverence,/To stynte noyse and yeve hym audience" (4.69-70). The use of noyse is humorous in what appears to be a highly

important discussion. Calkas seems to have the gift of making people listen to him. His audience, however, is supposedly a courteous group. Ector's audience is not quite so genteel in parliament. His defense of Criseyde will be shouted down by the "noyse" of the Trojan citizens (4.183).

The "audience" that Calkas asks for implies not only that the Greek nobility will hear him but that he will give a performance. Calkas begins by relating recent history.

> ich was
> Troian, as it is knowen out of drede;
> And, if that yow remembre, I am Calkas,
> That alderfirst yaf comfort to youre nede,
> And tolde wel how that ye shulden spede.
> (4.71-75)

Calkas asks the lords to remember. Through Calkas's request, the audience remembers his actions in Book 1. He is essentially introducing himself to Chaucer's audience with "I am Calkas," for we have never heard him speak. He is, like Pandarus, a manipulator of events. He has told the Greeks an important story:

> "And in what forme, or in what manere wise,
> This town to shende, and al youre lust
> t'acheve,
> Ye han er this wel herd me yow devyse;
> This knowe ye, my lordes, as I leve.
> (4.78-81)

Because the Greeks have heard Calkas's whole tale, they know how to win. His appeal is couched in the language we have seen used to describe language, writing, and love. Love, literature, and war are created. All

are planned activities. Each seeks permanence but brings change. Love as devised by Pandarus is a planned assault. The narrator referred to the "forme" of the lovers' meeting (3.1674); in Book 2, he remarked that "in forme of speche is chaunge" (2.22). He told Troilus to keep the "forme" of his subject as he wrote a love letter (2.1040). Calkas speaks of the "forme" of a Greek victory (4.78). Devyse is as multipurpose as the word forme. (See, for example, 3.56, 160, 203, 238, 428). Devyse is applied to love, language, and war, all of which require skill and strategy. Calkas has told the Greeks how "t'acheve" their "lust"; Pandarus could have said the same words to Troilus about Criseyde. Both Troy and Criseyde are desired goals. Their pursuers need the advice of a Calkas or a Pandarus to tell how they may be possessed. Calkas is a whetstone, come "To teche in this how" (4.84) the Greeks may defeat the Trojans. (Compare the actual use of wheston and Pandarus's remark that his own mistakes in love are "scole" for Troilus at 1.631-35.)

Calkas is the only main character (with the exception of Ector) who does not lie. Pandarus lies to Criseyde; Troilus lies his way out of the Horaste episode; Criseyde will tell Diomede that she never loved anyone other than her late husband. One cannot even be too sure of the total honesty of the narratorial voice, who has gone so far as to suggest that books can

lie (4.20). Calkas declares his integrity and even cites his sources for his predictions: "Appollo," "astronomye," "sort," and "augurye" (4.114-16). He has not relied on one source; he has four, all of which need his skill as an interpreter of signs. As Calkas looks to the future, he grounds his predictions in the past. Neptune and Phebus are still furious with Troy because of Laomedon's refusal to pay for the walls built by the two gods (4.120-26). This episode lends the weight of history to Calkas's interpretation and to the audience's appreciation of the situation.

Calkas is an impressive speech maker. "Tellyng his tale alwey, this olde greye,/Humble in his speche and in his lokyng eke" (4.127-28) gets his way. His expression matches his words, a rhetorical ploy that the narrator mentions in his first proem (1.14). The Greek lords are faceless to the reader. They are Calkas's audience much as we are the narrator's. They say nothing. They are not described. We cannot hear their thoughts. They seem capable only of making "noyse" (4.70). We may even wonder whether they were moved by Calkas's words or simply wished to silence him:

> So longe he gan of socour hem biseke
> That, for to hele hym of his sorwes soore,
> They yave hym Antenor, withouten moore.
> (4.131-33)

The "withouten moore" is almost anticlimactic, the same tone as Calkas's request that his audience

of Greek aristocrats "stynte noyse" to listen to him (4.70).

In a sense, Calkas parallels Troilus. Each eagerly waits for someone else to bring Criseyde to him. When the Greek lords grant Calkas's request, the narrator comments, "But who was glad ynough but Calkas tho?" (4.134). The line parallels the narrator's comment as Troilus waits in Pandarus's stewe: "But who was glad now, who, as trowe ye,/But Troilus" (3.599-600).

Part of the tragedy of the Troilus is that the prince must not tell his own story because of courtly convention. All he can do is change his facial expression so that no one may read the concern in it. The narrator gives only "th'effect" of the preliminary proceedings of parliament (4.144-47). He immediately moves to Troilus's viewpoint as the trade of Criseyde for Antenor is suggested.

> For which ful soone chaungen gan his face,
> As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde.
> But natheles he no word to it seyde,
> Lest men sholde his affeccioun espye;
> With mannes herte he gan his sorwes drye,
> (4.150-54)

Calkas "with a chaunged face" (4.68) asked the Greeks for Criseyde. Now Troilus's face changes. We recall how he had to recapture his expression when he first saw Criseyde in the temple (1.280). He seems to have acquired a man's heart since he has loved Criseyde. Pandarus suggested twice that he lacked one (3.736,

3.1098). The references to discourse continue. He finds himself in the middle of an interior debate between "Love" and "Resoun," each of whom advises him (4.162-168). He must "caste" how the situation stands (4.161). He decides that "for the beste" (4.169, a poignant echo of the good intentions frequently voiced by the main characters), he decides that he will "telle" (4.172) Criseyde what the parliament "mente" (4.172) to do. When Criseyde "hadde seyd hym hire entente," he would follow her orders (4.173-75). His "Resoun" tells him that if he asks for her to stay without her permission, she will say that the love affair "is iblowe"--it has become a rumor (4.164-68). This entire passage is created out of telling.

There is a contrast between Troilus and Ector. The only occasions when Ector speaks in the Troilus are at 1.117-23 and 4.179-82 and 214. Every word he says in the poem is for Criseyde's benefit. In four lines (4.179-82), Ector protests the suggestion. Like Troilus, he has heard the proposal (4.176-77); unlike Troilus, Ector can speak. The Trojans do not trade women (4.182). Ector is as true to his words as is possible. He had told Criseyde that she would have the respect of the Trojans as far as he could "enquere or here" (1.123). Now he hears that the Trojans will trade her, and he is powerless against the great "noyse

of peple" (4.183).[1] Ector seems to have the only individual voice in the Trojan parliament. Calkas asked the Greek lords to cease their "noyse" so that he might speak (4.70). Calkas gave the Greeks something that could be used to their advantage: the information concerning the destruction of Troy. Ector, however, has nothing with which to placate the mob. The narrator takes refuge from the noise in an old book. He addresses Juvenal, using the Trojans as an example of Juvenal's "sentence" that people generally do not realize that the thing they want may harm them. The Trojans want Antenor, who will eventually betray them (4.197-205). The narrator explains the situation by using an old book. The mob is glossed by a classical auctour.

In contrast to the noise of parliament, Troilus leaves in silence, "withouten wordes mo" (4.219). He once again immures himself in his room. The narrator describes him in lines that are derived ultimately from the *Aeneid*, although another derivation appears in Dante's *Inferno* (*Aeneid* 6.309-12); *Inferno* 3.112-14).[2]

> And as in wynter leves ben biraft,
> Ech after other, til the tree be bare,
> So that ther nys but bark and braunche ilaft,
> Lith Troilus, byraft of ech welfare,
> Ibounden in the blake bark of care,
> Disposed wood out of his wit to breyde,
> So sore hym sat the chaungynge of Criseyde.
> (4.225-31)

In assimilating the Vergilian image, Chaucer connects his "litel bok" (5.1786) to the classical world.

Winthrop Wetherbee has discussed the image as it is used in Vergil, Dante, and Chaucer (<u>Chaucer and the Poets</u> 38-41; 174-76). Wetherbee notes the pun on "wood" and the possible pun on "bark" (175). He detects some comedy in the stanza and discusses how it tempers our response to Troilus:

> But the comedy <u>is</u> unmistakably there, and its function is to distance us a little from his reactions. The tree simile shows Troilus's reactions being programmed by Dante's which in turn are controlled by Vergil's. The governing presence of convention is thus strongly emphasized, and in the long scene that follows we see the strength of Troilus's feelings affirmed and at the same time undermined by the conventional means through which they are expressed. (175-76)

Interestingly enough, Troilus focuses on himself. If the poem is self-reflexive, so is Troilus. The images from the older texts comment on this text. Wetherbee sees "self-consciousness" in Chaucer's use of the tree simile at 4.225-31 (<u>Chaucer and the Poets</u> 175). Martin Stevens notes Troilus's "self-obsessed thought" in Book 1 ("Winds of Fortune" 288).

The image of the bark is crucial because it at once recalls the image of Charon's boat from the <u>Aeneid</u> and the <u>Inferno</u> and ties that image to previous images in the <u>Troilus</u>. Stevens has studied the medieval figure of a boat blown by Fortune's winds. "As Chaucer envisions the figure, Troilus is set adrift in a rudderless boat destined, when he despairs, for the port of death" ("Winds of Fortune" 286). Stevens sees "the winds of

fortune figure as a structural metaphor for the progress of the narrative" ("Winds of Fortune" 301). The stanza at 4.225-231 could be associated with this figure because of the nautical metaphor and the change in the prince's fortune. Fortune has soured; this is a death barge. Troilus looks "lik a ded ymage" (4.235); he is unreadable to us because he has temporarily lost his mind. The narrator must "devyse" (4.238 and 259) the prince's actions, his going berserk in his room, for Troilus cannot talk.

> His speche hym refte; unnethes myghte he seye,
> "O deth, allas, why nyltow do me deye?
> Acorsed be that day which that Nature
> Shop me to ben a lyves creature!" (4.249-52)

The affair was built in speech; it begins to come undone in silence. Troilus's self-pity that he is alive recalls that he is "lik a ded image" (4.235)--he has only the _image_ of death; at this point, he wants the reality. (He seems to have truly lost the "chere" that he nearly lost at 1.280.) When Troilus does recover his speech, he curses Fortune, and is deeply concerned about his reputation:

> O Troilus, what may men now the calle
> But wrecche of wrecches, out of honour falle
> Into miserie, in which I wol bewaille
> Criseyde--allas!--til that the breth me
>   faille? (4.270-73)

Troilus is not only afraid of losing Criseyde; he is concerned about the stories that will breed. He has been called many things, from "Ector the secounde"

(2.158) to a "wrecched mouses herte" (3.736). He had told Pandarus back in Book 1 that his beloved could not be won by a "wrecche" such as he (1.777). Part of Pandarus's response was to mention Troilus's reputation. If Troilus's lady did not know that he was pining for her, she would believe that he died in fear of the Greeks (1.799-812). Troilus is once again considering his image and the stories it may create.

He has begun to picture himself not only as being dead, but as being a memory. Implicit in his becoming a memory is the idea that his love will become a story. He apostrophizes lovers, asking that they "Remembreth" him at his burial place (4.327-28). There is a dark echo of one of Pandarus's humorous remarks. At the first meeting of the lovers in Book 3, Pandarus addressed the god of love as "Immortal god . . . that mayst nought deyen,/Cupide I mene" (3.185-86). Troilus addresses the absent Calkas: "O oold, unholsom, and myslyved man--/Calkas I mene" (4.330-31). Since Troilus is only thinking these lines and not speaking them to anyone, the reference to whom he means is unnecessary to his own thought. It is useful, however, to the audience. Pandarus's "Cupide I mene" is a joke, but without it the audience <u>may</u> question which immortal god Pandarus means.

Part of the joy of Book 3 was the physical expression that took over when words became inadequate

(3.1401-1404). In this scene in Book 4, Troilus sighs "A thousand sikes" (4.337-43) in a manner which is the reverse of the "thousand" sighs of the consummation (3.1359-65). The "esy sykes" of the consummation were themselves compared to sorrowful sighs. The sighs of Book 4 become a reflection of the sighs of Book 3. The sighs function as signifiers for an individual too emotional to put his feelings into words. The sighs of Book 3 are vital; those of Book 4, however, are hopeless.

The audience was not informed of Pandarus's presence in parliament during the debate. We learn that he was there only when he visits Troilus. He approaches the bed in much the same quiet manner that he neared the sleeping Criseyde in Book 3, when he was in charge of the situation. Pandarus could stage manage what went on in his own home. He cannot control the history of Troy, which is fated to disrupt the love story. Pandarus, skilled talker that he is, apparently never tries to take on the Trojan parliament. If he did so, the narrator never mentions the fact. Pandarus's skill with words may only be convincing with willing listeners. At this point, his words have escaped him: "So confus that he nyste what to seye;/For verray wo his wit was neigh aweye" (4.356-57). The language recalls Troilus's loss of speech when Criseyde walked into his

"sickroom" (3.83-84). We have never before seen Pandarus at a loss for words. Even when he was unsure of what to say, he always said something. In Book 1, he made comments "for the nones" in order to anger Troilus into speech (1.561-64). Now both Pandarus and Troilus are dumbstruck: "And specheles thus ben thise ilke tweye,/That neither myghte o word for sorwe seye" (4.370-71; note that the content of this couplet is similar to that of 4.356-57).

Troilus and Pandarus mirror each other. Troilus declares, "I am ded" (4.376); Pandarus is described as "ful ded and pale of hewe" (4.379). He rhetorically asks, as much of himself as of Troilus, whether anyone would think such a thing could happen (4.383-85). Pandarus, so sure of himself throughout the first three books, resigns himself to uncertainty with "But who may al eschue, or al devyne?" (4.389).

He gives Troilus some heartless but practical advice. He can find a dozen ladies, at least one or two more lovely than Criseyde. Hasn't obtaining his desire satisfied Troilus? He has not had so much as a friendly glance from his lady (4.393-427). His argument is based on an old book. Zanzis may be unidentified, but Pandarus cites him as the authority who wrote that a new love drives out the old love, a well-known proverb that has been traced to Ovid (Barney, Explanatory Notes to Troilus in Riverside Chaucer 1046, note to lines 414-

15). He assures Troilus that the memory of Criseyde will fade: "Som cas shal putte it out of remembraunce" (4.420). A story that is out of remembrance is a story that no longer exists. The story of Troilus and Criseyde's love never existed in rumor. If Troilus puts it out of his mind, it will cease to exist for him. The narrator finds a reason for Pandarus's lack of subtlety; "He roughte nought what unthrift" he uttered (4.431). As in Book 1, when he tried to anger the prince into conversation, these words are spoken "for the nones" (4.428).

Pandarus's advice goes in one of Troilus's ears and out the other (4.434). The prince will not "leere" (4.441) what Pandarus has suggested and informs his friend that he is killing him with his words (4.455). Without explicitly noting Pandarus's tendency to treat both love and language as games, Troilus asks him whether he plays "raket" (4.460). As far as the prince is concerned, Pandarus's rhetoric is useless:

> O, where hastow ben hid so longe in muwe,
> That kanst so wel and formely arguwe?
>
> "Nay, God wot, nought worth is al thi red,
> For which, for what that evere may byfalle,
> Withouten wordes mo, I wol be ded. (4.496-500)

The prince had questioned his friend's advice in Book 1 (1.622-23); now he rejects it. Book 4 shows Pandarus becoming reticent, but still finding it necessary to say something. He "gan holde his tunge stille"

(4.521). The word _gan_ is strongly indicative of Pandarus's reaction. He merely started to keep quiet. He feels that he must speak in order to keep Troilus from dying (4.524-525). Apparently, he still believes that words can solve the problem. His advice is desperate: abduct Criseyde. This is very different advice from all of his earlier emphasis on keeping the love a secret. He tells Troilus that he should "kith" that he is "a man" (4.538), another reminder of the mouse heart slur at 3.736. The consummation and its prelude as designed by Pandarus were highly verbal. Now the reasons that Troilus cannot keep Criseyde are verbal. Troilus presents Pandarus with a very well-ordered argument:

> But whi this thing is laft, thow shalt wel
> here;
> And whan thow me hast yeve an audience,
> Therafter maystow telle al thi sentence.
> (4.544-46)

Troilus begins with a memory--and a story. The whole war is the result of "ravysshyng of wommen so by myght" (4.548). If he should ask for Criseyde, he would suffer "blame" from everyone (4.551), which is the same thing as rumor. If he asks Priam for Criseyde, the request in itself would be "hire accusement" (4.556). The secret love would be public. The language referents continue. Priam cannot go back on his word. Since parliament has "enseled" the exchange of Criseyde, Priam will not let "his lettre be repeled" for Troilus

(4.558-60). To ask for Criseyde would be a "dis-claundre to hire name" (4.564). He would "diffame" her (4.565). Troilus is caught between the words said in parliament and the words that must not be said to prevent the creation of a rumor.

Pandarus had once urged Troilus to beware of rumors that could hurt Criseyde's reputation. Now Pandarus says that if he were as in love with a woman as Troilus is with Criseyde, he would elope with her

> Though al this town cride on this thyng by note.
> I nolde sette at al that noys a grote!
> For whan men han wel cryd, than wol they rowne;
> Ek wonder last but nyne nyght nevere in towne.
> (4.585-588)

His argument is practical, but not cogent. For example, he tells Troilus that Fortune helps those who help themselves (4.600-02). He seems to have forgotten the lament he has just made over Fortune (4.384-88). He notes that Paris has a love; why shouldn't Troilus? This last argument ignores Troilus's point that the whole war started because of Paris's love. Pandarus is, however, prophetic in one comment. If Criseyde wants to be exchanged, she is false (4.615-16).

The next several stanzas concern the relaying of information. The theme functions as a bridge between the scene with Pandarus and Troilus and the one with Criseyde and her women friends. In the Pandarus/Troilus

scene, we hear echoes of expressions that we have heard earlier in the text. Pandarus promises Troilus, "I wol myself ben with the at this dede" (4.624), a line that recalls his promise to Criseyde before the consummation: "I wol myself be with yow al this nyght" (3.914). When Troilus agrees to Pandarus's scheme at 4.632, his language echoes his reply at 1.936, with which he answered Pandarus's order to beg forgiveness of the god of love. Book 4 is a collapsed, inverted parallel of Books 1, 2, and 3. It contains a public shock to Troilus that he must keep hidden. (This time, however, the shock comes through his ears in parliament, not through his eyes in the temple.) Pandarus argues with Troilus, trying to keep him from dying in misery. Pandarus goes to Criseyde to arrange a meeting. Criseyde hears rumors about her father. There is a contrived meeting and a final consummation.[3]

When Pandarus discovers that Troilus has not learned Criseyde's intentions, he sets out to "shape" a meeting for them to talk, much as he claimed to "shape" a meeting for the same purpose in Book 3 (4.652; 3.196). Ironically, when Pandarus arranged the first meeting, he had something other than talk in mind; now he really wants them to discuss their problem. He orders the prince, "Be glad, and lat me werke in this matere" (4.651), a remark that recalls one of his parting comments in Book 1, as he went about Troilus's proxy wooing

(1.1041-43), although the remark about "swetnesse" in 1.1043 is dropped.

The rumor that she is to be traded finally reaches Criseyde. In the rumor she is "Calkas doughter" (4.663); her own identity seems to be subsumed in the story. We are back to the Criseyde of Book 1 who "nyste what was beste to reede" (4.679; see also 1.96), afraid even to verify the story. In the midst of her uncertainty about the rumor, Criseyde's friends visit in order to cheer her.

> And with hire tales, deere ynough a myte,
> Thise wommen, which that in the cite dwelle,
> They sette hem down and seyde as I shall
>   telle. (4.684-686)

The women have arrived like rumor, uninvited, and sit down to talk. Their words are cheap, and the materialistic vocabulary describing their conversation points out its utter lack of value. (See the description of Troilus's worthless lie, 3.1161.) They "spende" "alle hire tales" on Criseyde, but their words contain "naught"; their talk is "vanyte" (4.702-03). They are not only poor storytellers, they are poor readers. Criseyde begins to cry tears

> That yaven signes of the bittre peyne
> In which hir spirit was, and moste dwelle,
> Remembryng hir, fro heven into which helle
> She fallen was (4.710-13)

Criseyde is "remembering," playing her own story out in her head, seeing herself in a fall from heaven to hell, the archetypal fall of ruin. The women think that

she cries because she will give up their company. Their reader response is to join her in tears. The response is correct; they do weep for Criseyde's unhappiness, but they are unable to correctly interpret the _signes_. They "with hire tales wenden hire disporten" (4.724), but they make her feel worse. Criseyde does not even hear their supposedly distracting "tales" because she is thinking of her own story.

The narrator juxtaposes his narration with the emptiness of the women's talk. He says that "after al this nyce vanyte" the women go home (4.729-30), a poignant reminder of Criseyde's displacement from her own comfortable palace. The last word in 3.729 is _vanyte_, a reference to the women's _tales_. That _tales_ appears three times within this scene (3.684, 702, 724) indicates that the narrator is concerned with their storytelling. The last word in 3.735 is _devyse_, part of the narrator's declaration that he will tell us Criseyde's actions. He is clearly comparing his narration to the women's.

Criseyde reacts like Troilus. She falls into bed as though she is dead (4.733), much as Troilus lay on his bed as though he were "a ded ymage" (4.235). As he sighed a thousand times in sorrow (4.337), she cries a thousand times to die (4.753).

Cursing her birth, she decides to end her life. If the misery of leaving Troilus does not kill her, she

will starve to death "syn neither swerd ne darte/Dar I noon handle, for the crueltee" (4.771-72). She will neither eat nor drink, she says, "Til I my soule out of my breste unshethe" (4.775-76). The word unshethe would seem to be more appropriate if it were used with swerd; indeed, its presence suggests the earlier reference (see Stokes 26, quoted 246 below). Although starvation appears to be a passive form of suicide, Criseyde uses an active expression. She will unsheathe her soul just as one would unsheathe a sword.

She protests too much. She adds that her clothes will be black "in tokenyng, . . ./That I am as out of this world agon" (4.779-80). The rules of her "ordre" will include "abstinence" (4.782-84). We have never seen Criseyde dressed in anything other than mourning. (See 1.109, 170, 175, 177, 309; 2.110, 222-223.) In one sense, she has been "out of this world" since her husband's death. Her talk about her black robes and her "ordre" recalls her joking with Pandarus in Book 2. He asked her why she wished "to disfigure" herself in mourning (2.223). She joked that as a widow, she is more suited to reading saints' lives in a cave than dancing in praise of May (2.117-19). Criseyde never actually specifies what she will abstain from, although she is clear that she will take neither meat nor drink. She seems to imply that she will abstain from desire

in Troilus's absence. (Criseyde is an unusual widow. Unlike Dido, she never mentions her late husbands's name and only refers to him once, when she tells Diomede a tale that totally eclipses Troilus at 5.975-78).

Criseyde as a nun is even more ridiculous than Criseyde as a widow. Gordon notes the irony of Criseyde's abstinence:

> . . . the irony which depicts her intention to be true to Troilus in this extravagant rhetoric becomes a way of bringing her later failure more pointedly into the present picture, so that we are aware, at one and the same time, both of the fervency of the intention and of the failure--which must qualify, even at this point, the value of the intention, give it a kind of hollowness, even though she means it all in good faith. (105)

Myra Stokes has commented, "Criseyde can . . . use words to deceive herself, as well as others" (26). Stokes discusses 4.771-84, noting Criseyde's ability to deceive herself. Stokes also comments on Criseyde's use of "unshethe":

> What is interesting here is the scarcely perceptible transformation from the literal into the metaphorical. The literal unsheathed sword Criseyde cannot face is compensated for by the metaphor in 776, applied to the prospect of a less violent death by starvation. Death itself, however, has quietly slid from literal to figurative by the next verse (as out of this world agon). And the image of the nun here operates, like unshethe, to substitute a metaphor for the reality, as Criseyde exploits the common conception of religious as being 'dead to this world'. Her ability to find words that will disguise her reluctance to face death is interesting. (26)

Criseyde compares herself and Troilus to Eurydice

and Orpheus, confident that they will be reunited in the Elysian fields (4.789-91). The reference once again recalls Ovid, putting us back in a classic, old book. Gordon, moreover, notes that by Chaucer's time, the Orpheus myth dragged a great deal of commentary in its wake. She remarks that "the ineptitude of her choice of Orpheus and Eurydice as an analogy . . . becomes more pointed in view of the moralistic meanings that were attached to the Orpheus legend from the sixth century onwards" (105-06; noted by Astell 285; for further development of the Orpheus legend in Troilus, see Astell's article). Granted, as a pagan, Criseyde would not know the Christian commentaries; nevertheless, a reader may recall them as he or she reads Criseyde's words.

Criseyde finally suggests that Troilus cast the problem out of his memory, that he forget her (4.796-97). Her request is at cross-purposes with the narrator's need to keep the memory alive. In the very next stanza, he will discuss the difficulty of preserving Criseyde's expression:

> How myghte it evere yred ben or ysonge,
> The pleynte that she made in hire destresse?
> I not; but, as for me, my litel tonge,
> If I discryven wolde hire hevynesse,
> I sholde make hire sorwe seme lesse
> Than that it was, and childisshly deface
> Hire heigh compleynte, and therfore ich it
> pace. (4.799-805)

The narrator complains that he cannot accurately depict Criseyde's sorrow and does not know how it could

be recreated. Yet it must have been depicted in his source in order for him to mention it. He claims that he will pass over her "compleynte," but what he has described for several stanzas has been nothing but complaint.[4] Perhaps the narrator has actually seen something childish in Criseyde's response to her predicament and to make her words more acceptable, describes his own rendition as childish. Ida L. Gordon has commented on the "touch of exaggeration" that Criseyde displays in Book 4 (104). The narrator already knows the ending of the poem, and he is in a quandary. How can he show Criseyde's misery and keep a reader's sympathy when that reader already knows the outcome? The narrator sees his words as though they form an ekphrasis. He does not wish to belittle Criseyde's sorrow, or build it up to the degree that he will "deface" our view of Criseyde. Donaldson remarks, "It would be too much to say that the passage childishly defaces a subject that its overt purpose is to avoid childishly defacing, but as a rhetorical enhancement of Criseide's grief it leaves something to be desired" ("Criseide and Her Narrator" 73).

When Pandarus arrives at Criseyde's house, he finds her alone, miserable, and wearied by the women's conversation. She has become the text: "Whoso me seeth, he seeth sorwe al atonys--/Peyne, torment, pleynte, wo, distresse!" (4.841-42). The narrator feared that his

description of her complaint would "deface" her sorrow, but Criseyde has defaced herself. Astell notes that both Eurydice and Criseyde have two faces, and Criseyde's face changes in Book 4 (292). When Pandarus walks into her chamber, she hides her face, an asset she has shown to good advantage in the first three books. The only other times she hides her face are in Book 3, when she defends herself to Troilus against the Horaste accusation (3.1055-56) and when Pandarus pays her a morning-after visit (3.1569-70). The circles around her eyes betoken such sorrow, "to biholde it was a dedly thyng" (4.871). Criseyde has become a portrait of death:

> She was right swich to seen in hire visage
> As is that wight that men on beere bynde;
> Hire face, lik of Paradys the ymage,
> Was al ychaunged in another kynde.
> The pleye, the laughter, men was wont to fynde
> On hire, and ek hire joies everichone,
> Ben fled; and thus lith now Criseyde allone.
> (4.862-868)

The narrator has created an ekphrasis; without even using the word <u>death</u>, he has depicted it on Criseyde's face. She has been desexed; she resembles a dead "wight." If her face is no longer that of Paradise, it is of Hell. Chaucer manages to emphasize not only Criseyde's feelings but those of the person looking at her. He creates a reader response with Criseyde as the text. Pandarus bursts into tears when he sees her (4.872-73). At 2.274-81, Criseyde's face was a

beautiful mirror. At 2.1638, she was the bier Pandarus brought for Troilus's repose. Now she looks not like the bier, but like the corpse bound to it.

In telling her about Troilus's torment, Pandarus is in the same quandary as the narrator was in describing Criseyde's sorrow to his audience. According to Pandarus, "may non erthly mannes tonge seye" Troilus's misery (4.881). (The narrator will make a similar comment at 4.1695-98). However, he still goes through the form of arranging the situation. Just as in Book 2, in which he counseled that the strength of every tale was its end (2.260), he gives "short and pleyn, th'effect (4.890) of his story.

Pandarus modifies his own function in the romance. Instead of finding the solution to the problem, he delegates the task to Criseyde. Barbara Hakken Andrews makes a similar comment, and notes that Pandarus "has once again used his manipulative powers to motivate her, but he has failed to supply her with a plan of action on which she can follow through" (157). He advises Criseyde: "shapeth yow his sorwe for t'abregge" (4.925) and "shapeth how destourbe youre goynge" (4.934). Just as in the earlier books, he urges her to heal Troilus, telling her she should "with som wisdom . . . his sorwe bete" (4.928). Love was supposed to cure Troilus in the first three books, but love has become part of the problem. Pandarus tries to make Criseyde a Lady Philosophy

to cure Troilus with wisdom. If Criseyde resembles any Boethian female at the moment, she resembles one of the sorrowing muses, who "ne asswagen noght his sorwes with none remedies, but thei wolden fedyn and noryssen hym with sweete venym" (<u>Boece</u>, Book 1, Prosa 1). Pandarus tells Criseyde, "Wommen ben wise in short avysement" (4.936). What Pandarus does not take into account is that Criseyde does not make snap judgments. She calculates what she will do under the guise of being put-upon (see 3.1210-11; 5.764-67).

When Pandarus later finds Troilus in a temple, the prince launches into a discussion on divine prescience for over one hundred lines (4.958-1078). His talk has received attention because of its Boethian content. More interesting to our discussion is the passage that questions the "clerkes olde" (4.972). In his proem to Book 4, the narrator declared that Criseyde's desertion must be his subject, "As writen folk thorugh which it is in mynde" (4.18). He does not particularly wish to write it, but follows the materials of those who have <u>remembered</u> it, who put the subject into the narrator's own memory. The sources are not necessarily infallible.

Troilus examines the opinion of these old clerks. The arguments may be seen not so much as a philosophical argument between God and man as a problem between author and character. The narrator claims to have inherited

Troilus and Criseyde. They are not his creations. The narrator, however, stands in loco poetae. Chaucer has recreated Troilus and Criseyde, taken the old story and made it anew.

Troilus's discussion leads into a consideration not so much of knowing as of the language through which one knows. The argument anticipates the later debate between Troilus and Criseyde about how one knows what is best to do.

> "But natheles, allas, whom shal I leeve?
> For ther ben grete clerkes many oon
> That destyne thorugh argumentes preve;
> And som men seyn that nedely ther is noon,
> But that fre chois is yeven us everychon.
> O, welaway! So sleighe arn clerkes olde
> That I not whos opynyoun I may holde.
> (4.967-73)

He declares that he does not know which opinion to have, yet he has already given the opinion that the gods' foresight has always known that Troilus would have to lose Criseyde (4.960-62). The character's relationship to the narrator is comparable to man's relationship with God. The narrator knows what will happen and does not even wish to relate what will happen, yet the characters seem to have free will. As God sees everything in an eternal present, so the narrator at any instant knows the past, present, and future of Troilus and Criseyde as characters in his text.[5] The fictional paradigm of narrator-characters parallels Troilus's discussion of his action in relation to the

foreknowledge of the gods. In the fictional paradigm, we are constantly reminded of the narrator, who, unlike Troilus, knows the ending of the story.

When Pandarus hears the prince analyzing prescience, he mimics him and deflates the entire argument (4.1086-87). Troilus, in considering the gods' knowledge, has not been practical: Criseyde may know a way out of their problem (4.1100-04). He urges Troilus to visit Criseyde "to make of this an ende" (4.1115), an ironic echo of his plea to Criseyde, "make of this thing an ende" (3.118), "this thing" being Troilus's unfulfilled passion. It seems as though Troilus and Criseyde, as well as the narrator, are makers: "And how they wroughte, I shal yow tellen soone" (4.1127).

When the lovers meet, neither "myghte o word out brynge" for their sorrow (4.1133). The narrator calls attention to their loss of speech. Criseyde has a "broken vois, al hoors forshright" (4.1147). She has laid her head on Troilus and "loste speche" (4.1151). It is as though Criseyde soul leaves her lips for her "spirit . . ./ . . . with the word, alwey o poynt to pace" (4.1152-53). The emphasis on the two stanzas at 4.56-69 is on signs. Troilus looks at Criseyde for a sign of life and interprets her as being dead. Her limbs are cold, her eyes are rolled up, her mouth is cold. She is speechless. There is no "signe of lif"

(4.1164). In the third book Troilus tried to read Criseyde's eyes but encountered a difficult text (3.1357). Just as the text of her eyes was difficult to read in the consummation, she has once again become unreadable. The only argument for her condition is her complete lack of signifiers:

> She cold was, and withouten sentement
> For aught he woot, for breth ne felte he non,
> And this was hym a pregnant argument
> That she was forth out of this world agon.
> (4.1177-80)

The "pregnant argument" is anything but life-bearing. As a sign of death it is very convincing. When he first examines her for any vital signs, he lays her out "long streght," (4.1163), a reminder of "hire streghte bak and softe,/Hire sydes longe" (3.1247-48) that he enjoyed during the consummation.

Troilus rails against Jove and Fortune in a speech that he intends as his swan song before suicide (4.1192-1210). His rhetoric gives humor to what should be a sad scene, for he talks so much that Criseyde awakens. Though both Troilus and Criseyde have told Pandarus that they would rather die than separate, Criseyde would rather be alive. When Troilus asks her whether she lives, she answers, "Ye, herte myn, that thonked be Cipride!" (4.1216). When Criseyde understands that Troilus was about to kill himself, she comments on how nearly they were both dead, saying that she would have killed herself with the same sword (4.1232, 1240-41).

The narrator makes no comment, but the reader cannot help remembering that Criseyde has already said that she would never use a sword to destroy herself (4.771-72). Alfred David notes this earlier reference to suicide, but states that even without it, a reader would not believe that Criseyde would kill herself ("Chaucerian Comedy and Criseyde" 100). The scene recalls the story of Pyramis and Thisbe, and thus hints at another old book. Criseyde, however, awakens before the plot can be advanced.

As soon as Criseyde says that she would have killed herself if Troilus were dead, she changes the subject. Declaring that the two of them have had "ynough of this" (4.1242), she suggests they go to bed and discuss the matter there (4.1243-44).

The conversation of the consummation was joyous--where conversation even existed. Much of the substance of that scene consisted of the narrator's commentary because the main characters were otherwise occupied. In Book 4, the lovers lecture each other. From 4.1254 to 1687, there is little interruption from the narrator, except for a 3½ stanza interruption at 4.1415-39, in which he comments on Criseyde's words and Troilus's reaction to them.

Martin Stevens sees this meeting in Book 4 as a "mirror" of the meeting in Book 3 ("Double Structure" 163). According to Stevens, "The two scenes form a

contrastive set. The former ends with the prophetic oath of union, . . . the latter ends with the prospect of certain separation" (164). There are other similarities. Criseyde begins a lecture that goes nonstop for 23 stanzas (4.1254-1414). Both Marjorie Curry Woods (32-33) and Linda Tarte Holley (131-33) recognize the similarity between Criseyde's and Pandarus's speeches. Adrienne R. Lockhart comments that "Criseyde's attempts to devise a way out of the dilemma are a parody of her uncle's ingenuity: she creates not one but a series of fictional plans to ensure her return" (115). The greatest likeness between the lectures of Criseyde and Pandarus is in the self-consciousness of their language. Criseyde intends to use "art" (4.1266) to remedy the situation, and she proceeds to use art in her speech:

> "For which I wol nat make long sermoun--
> For tyme ylost may nought recovered be--
> But I wol gon to my conclusioun,
> And to the beste, in aught that I kan see.
> And for the love of God, foryeve it me
> If I speke aught ayeyns youre hertes reste;
> For trewely, I speke it for the beste,
> (4.1282-88)

For Criseyde's lines 4.1282, 1283, 1284, compare Pandarus at 2.965, 3.896, and 2.259-60. (Holley notes the similarity between Criseyde's getting to her conclusion and Pandarus's theory that the conclusion is the main point of every story at 2.260-63. See Holley 132.) The narrator also refers to not making a "long sermoun" at 2.1299. Although Holley notes Criseyde's

argument that she and Troilus must "shape" a means out of their problem (4.1302) and the fact that "shape" is one of Pandarus's expressions (Holley 133), Marjorie Curry Woods makes an even better point: this shaping is Criseyde's creation of a "pleasant fabrication" like that of Pandarus at the conclusion of Book 1 (33). What is interesting about Criseyde's use of "shape" is not only its echo of Pandarus but its use as a comment upon language. Criseyde's shaping is futile. She can devise a scenario but not a real course of action.

Criseyde is not only planning to use "art" (4.1266) on her father; she is already using it on Troilus. She falls back on memory for part of her argument: the lovers do not see each other for days at a time; they do not speak with each other. Certainly they should be able to endure ten days' separation (4.1324-30). She has done everything in her power to avoid rumor; however, she will use rumor as an argument to ease Troilus's distress over her leaving. Because of the truce, Troilus will hear about her (4.1313). She goes on to contrast what Troilus knows about her life--that her family, possessions, and lover (in that order) are in Troy--to what Calkas does not know about her (4.1331-44). Besides all of this, she would be petrified living among the Greek soldiers (4.1362-63). Criseyde swears by God's reading of her soul that she cannot see what Troilus fears (4.1364-65).

Just as Pandarus had noted that Criseyde snared Troilus "withouten net" (2.583), Criseyde uses the same expression to describe the manner in which she intends to decieve Calkas (4.1370-71). She explains her plan to Troilus: "And how I mene, I shal it yow devyse" (4.1379). What Criseyde _means_ is artifice. She _devyses_, a term that has been used repeatedly by the narrator and Pandarus. Pandarus devised the romance and expedited it; the narrator devises his story from old books. Now Criseyde devises a lie. She is quite concerned with what she will "seye" (see 4.1381, 1388).

She intends to play on Calkas's greed, concocting a fiction about a friend who wishes to send some possessions to Calkas (4.1380-89). However, Calkas is not known to be greedy; his reason for leaving was his knowledge that Troy is doomed. He even told the Greek lords that he did not mind leaving his possessions in Troy; he only regretted leaving his daughter (4.85-93).

In Book 4, Chaucer focuses on perception and interpretation. The emphasis on language in Book 4 is on the manipulation of someone's perception in order to gain something from him or her. Here perception and potential deception are shadowed by doom. The problem of multiple perception and single meaning extends to the speech of the gods, a situation that Criseyde hopes to exploit in covering her lies with the gods' words. She intends to use her lie to deceive her father, and then

try to make him doubt his own interpretation of the gods' revelations:

> I shal hym so enchaunten with my sawes
> That right in hevene his sowle is, shal he
> mete;
> For al Appollo, or his clerkes lawes,
> Or calkullynge, avayleth nought thre hawes;
> Desir of gold shal so his soule blende
> That, as me lyst, I shal wel make an ende.
>
> "And yf he wolde ought by hys sort it preve
> If that I lye, in certayn I shal fonde
> Distorben hym and plukke hym by the sleve,
> Makynge his sort, and beren hym on honde
> He hath not wel the goddes understonde;
> For goddes speken in amphibologies,
> And for o soth they tellen twenty lyes.
>
> "Ek, 'Drede fond first goddes, I suppose'--
> Thus shal I seyn--and that his coward herte
> Made hym amys the goddes text to glose,
> Whan he for fered out of Delphos sterte.
> And but I make hym soone to converte
> And don my red withinne a day or tweye,
> I wol to yow oblige me to deye."
> (4.1395-1414)

Language is no longer a means of winning love; it is an instrument of betrayal. In "Semantic, Moral, and Aesthetic Degeneration in Troilus and Criseyde," Adrienne R. Lockhart examines what happens to the ideal concepts of honour, worthinesse, gentilesse, manhod, and trouthe when they are made to function in the real world. Lockhart observes:

> The pattern of semantic deterioration . . . in relation to these concepts is thus a metaphor for the artistic process itself; in that sense, the structural pattern of debasement in meaning parallels the central moral issue of Troilus and Criseyde, as it is explicitly stated in the epilogue. (117)

Certain expressions, then, become unstable as the

narrative progresses. Criseyde, however, is planning to lie. If even the integrity of the voice of the gods is questionable, old books can be suspect. Criseyde intends to deceive Calkas at first with an outright lie. If he suspects her, she will then attempt to make him doubt his own ability to interpret. She will make him "don" her "red." She will replace the gods' text with the reading she wants him to make, and will attempt to make him believe that his fear made him misread Apollo's message. There is nothing in the text about Calkas's leaving to suggest that he stole away in fear. The text stresses his wisdom and his foreknowledge. Calkas compared sources in his reading of the future (1.71-72). Criseyde intends to make him believe he is mistaken by supplying him with an alternate text. When she dismisses Calkas's "Appollo," "clerkes lawes," and "calkullynge," she does not seem to realize that she is dismissing texts far more powerful than any artifice she could ever create, nor could she deceive someone so capable of reading those texts.[6]

Criseyde's own words refer to language. If she disturbs her father as he interprets the gods, she herself will at least have to pretend to interpret them in order to suggest that he has made an error. Her interruption alone should make Calkas suspicious. There is no indication in the text that Criseyde ever dealt with

"calkullynge." She is not a subtle reader when she says that the gods' ambiguities yield one truth for twenty lies. An ambiguity is not a lie. It is a word or group of words that yields potentially different meanings. Various interpretations may result from an ambiguity, though the words themselves represent truth in some form. (This discrepancy between truth and its verbal revelation or perpetuation is one of the narrator's problems with his sources.) Criseyde wants to substitute a lie for an ambiguity.

Criseyde's argument does not hold up under analysis. She told Troilus that she would show him "an heep of weyes" (4.1281) in which she could return. She has really only shown two. The first was not even a scheme, just the simple truth that she could move freely if peace were declared (4.1352-58). The second way is to lie and work on Calkas's greed, a characteristic that has not been attributed to him by anyone other than Criseyde.

The narrator makes clear to us that he bases his comments upon the text on what he has found in his sources:

> And treweliche, as writen wel I fynde
> That al this thyng was seyd of good entente,
> And that hire herte trewe was and kynde
> Towardes hym, and spak right as she mente,
> And that she starf for wo neigh whan she
>   wente,
> And was in purpos evere to be trewe:
> Thus writen they that of hire werkes knewe.
> (4.1415-1421)

Note the repetitions of trewelich and trewe. Dinshaw has noted such repetitions in Book 5 (5.826, 1051, and 1086), and comments:

> Vicarious participant in the affair, the narrator wants to believe in Criseyde; he tries rather desperately to control those gaping holes, rushing in with a "But trewely . . ." after nearly every ambiguous or difficult detail that occurs to him: (Sexual Poetics 45)

This stanza anticipates the "But trewely" stanzas in Book 5. It is also more condensed, having three references to trewe in one stanza. As he translates Criseyde's words about lying, the narrator stresses his own integrity. He has truly found it in his source. (Yet we cannot be sure that the source is true. For that matter, neither can the narrator.) Criseyde has said what she meant. Her words to Troilus do not contain lies. (Note, however, they are about lying.) Yet her words are only promises; they will not be fulfilled. The narrator does not vouch for Criseyde's words himself; he vouches only for what "writen they that of hire werkes knewe" (4.1421); "they" say it is true.

Troilus "with herte and erys spradde" listens to Criseyde "devysen to and fro" (4.1422-23). The "to and fro" suggests the somewhat erratic nature of her argument, its jumping from one extreme to another. She seems to cover everything, but one cannot be quite sure how well she has thought out her ideas. We saw her "rollen up and down" her opinion of Troilus's attributes

(2.659); she will turn "up and down" (5.1023) the words of Diomede. Troilus's reaction to Criseyde's argument vacillates; he agrees with her, he is unsure of her, then he decides to trust her and take "it for the beste" (4.1424-28). His reaction to her words is very similar to his reaction to her first letter, which he read and "took al for the beste" (2.1324). While they agree, they make love, and the narrator calls attention to the happiness of their words (4.1432-35). Yet by the next stanza, Troilus begins to doubt her plan. He cannot put the thought of her leaving "out of his mynde" (4.1437). She is becoming a memory even as she lies in his arms.

Troilus realizes that she intends to lie, and he does not believe that she can deceive her father. He reminds her that one may not "atrede" a wise man (4.1456). The word atrede contains rede, with all of its connotations of reading, advice, and interpretation. Criseyde's red (4.1413) to her father, all lies, is advice based on her attempt to make him believe that he has misread, misinterpreted the gods. Criseyde is not equipped to fool Calkas. If she believes that she can, she is a poor reader of circumstances. In Book 5 she will lament her lack of prudence and her inability to see (or read) the future (5.743-749). Troilus attempts to reason with her:

> "For trewely, myn owne lady deere,
> Tho sleghtes yit that I have herd yow stere
> Ful shaply ben to faylen alle yfeere.
> (4.1450-52)

The juxtaposition of trewely and sleghtes is ironic and highlights Criseyde's falsehood. The word shaply underscores the fact that her ideas are impractical. She will not be able to shape a way out. Criseyde's creation is doomed. According to Troilus, Calkas is "Argus eyed" in deception; Criseyde could not possibly "blende" him (4.1459-62). The idea of metaphorically blinding people was Pandarus's theme throughout the dinner party; however, someone as cunning as Calkas cannot be deceived. Troilus implies that Criseyde is blind; to believe that Calkas would one day return to Troy is only "fantasie" (4.1469). He will never be able to return because he has "lost . . . his name" (4.1467).

Troilus's argument becomes increasingly language referential:

> "Ye shal ek sen, youre fader shal yow glose
> To ben a wif; and as he kan wel preche,
> He shal som Grek so preyse and wel alose
> That ravysshen he shal yow with his speche,
> (4.1471-74)

Most of the verbs that Troilus uses in this hypothetical seduction concern language: glose, preche, preyse, and alose. This vocabulary is very interesting given that the Middle Ages appreciated the seductive power of literature.[7] He warns Criseyde that Calkas may compel her to do "as he shal teche" (4.1475); if she

does as he teaches, Criseyde will do Calkas's <u>red</u>, not vice versa (see 4.1413).

He again tries to convince Criseyde to run away with him, using arguments that he believe will make her agree. He knows that she is concerned about her honor, and refers to it twice within two stanzas (4.1515, 1524). Lockhart comments that "the activity of conducting the relationship debases the ideal of <u>honour</u> to the practical issues of secrecy and the preservation of their reputations" (104). Criseyde's honor cannot become the subject of nasty rumors. She listens to the prince "devyse" (4.1529) his plan, which for her consists of "fantasies" (4.1615)--she has appropriated the word that Troilus used to describe her own hopes at 4.1470. Neither thinks the other is particularly able to deal with the reality of the situation. Criseyde stresses the integrity of her words. She invokes Juno and the other gods to "Ber witnesse of this word that seyd is here" (4.1550): she will never forsake Troilus. She then becomes pragmatic. It would be bad enough if Troilus were to forsake Troy at this time, but if their plan to run away were known, her life would be threatened as well as his honor--and Criseyde places her life literally before Troilus's honor in the same stanza (4.1555-61). She uses some of Troilus's own arguments against him. Troilus said that Calkas would never return because of his loss of name (4.1467-68).

Criseyde uses the same argument: if Troilus elopes with her, he will lose his name and be unable to return to Troy (4.1562-68). She discusses his honor and her honesty in successive stanzas (4.1569-82). She wants to keep both from turning into rumor.

> "What trowe ye the peple ek al aboute
> Wolde of it seye? It is ful light t'arede.
> They wolden seye, and swere it out of doute,
> That love ne drof yow naught to don this dede,
> But lust voluptuous and coward drede.
> Thus were al lost, ywys, myn herte deere,
> Youre honour, which that now shyneth so clere.
> (4.1569-75)

The common people will never understand the situation. They cannot understand courtly love. It is easy to read what people will say, will read into the elopment. Criseyde does not see the potential rumor as the nine days' wonder predicted by Pandarus (4.584-88). This argument about the way people interpret a situation without full knowledge of it is similar to Pandarus's approach to the lovesick Troilus: if your lady does not know you are dying for love of her, she will assume that you have died for fear of the Greeks. The rest of Troy will think the same way (1.799-805).

The text Troilus presents to the world is one that is honorable. He must not deface it. As she has stressed his _honour_, so she stresses her _honeste_ (4.1576-1582). The two words are similar. Both have connotations of genteel behavior, virtue, courtliness, and discretion if not chastity. If she should elope

with Troilus in the "forme" (4.1579) he suggests, she will never win back her name, not even were she to live "unto the werldes ende" (4. 1580-81). In Book 5, she will bemoan that "unto the worldes ende" nothing good will be written about her because books will destroy her reputation (5.1058-1060). By that time, she will have lost her "name of trouthe in love" (5.1055).

The emphasis develops on meaning and trouthe, concepts that are verbal and changeable but that Criseyde protests are stable. She declares that she "mene" to return on the tenth day after her departure (4.1594-95). Troilus's "wordes" clearly show that he does not trust her (4.1606-07). Yet she herself can assure Troilus only with words. The routhe/trouthe couplet appears at 4.1609-10 and is inverted at 4.1672-73. The use of trouthe at 4.1610 and 1617 is important in discussing integrity because the word means more than a factual truth or something that may be supported by evidence. In this use trouthe suggests pledge, a giving of one's word. The rhymes are ironic. A trouthe cannot grant routhe if the trouthe is a falsehood. The narrator and readers already know that Criseyde's trouthe will be broken. She defends her thinking, claiming that she is not so foolish that she cannot "ymaginen a wey" (4.1626) to return. Criseyde's ymaginen is an ironic echo of her accusation that Troilus indulges in fantasies (4.1615) She imagines and will continue to

imagine her return, but all of her imagination will not make the return a reality.

In support of her own _trouthe_, she begins to show a little doubt in Troilus. No other woman must displace her from his "remembraunce"; "men rede" of the "bisy drede" that love entails (4.1641-45). She has changed her mind rom 4.796-97, in which in an apostrophe she asked Troilus to forget her. Her wish for _remembraunce_ is a wish that he will hold her in memory, reliving their experience; it is a reminder to us that the characters have a history, and it is reinforced by _rede_. The word may mean _advise_ in this context, but it also suggests _read_. One may read about love as a "bisy drede"; one may even say that is one of the themes of the _Troilus_. If Troilus were to replace her, no lady would ever be as betrayed as she, who can "entende" "alle troute" in Troilus (4.1646-49). The irony of the line comes from Criseyde's intention. The narrator notes that her protests about her intention to return to Troy were recorded by those who knew her story, who claimed that she said these things "of good entente" (4.1416). Troilus "kan no more" (4.1659); his fidelity will be proven. Criseyde declares that she will die if Troilus replaces her (4.1650-51); however, the earlier episode of Troilus's attempted suicide and her intention to starve to death rather than use a sword are strong indications that Criseyde has no intention of dying.

She explains to Troilus that "moral vertu, grounded upon trouthe" was the reason she first took "routhe" on him (4.1672-74). The end rhyme is the trouthe/routhe rhyme that appears throughout the poem. When she first saw Troilus riding by her palace in Book 2, she thought "it was a routhe/To sleen swich oon, if that he mente trouthe" (2.664-665). In Book 2, Criseyde was unsure of his "trouthe"; she uses the conditional. In Book 4 she is certain of his fidelity. As she remembers the beauty of the love affair, she begins the last stanza of her speech: "And this may lengthe of yeres naught fordo,/Ne remuable Fortune deface" (4.1681-82). Her words are true to a degree. Neither time nor Fortune may undo what has been. The love of the past did exist and will continue to exist in memory.

But though the past is frozen, the future may cause it to be reinterpreted. At the time the words are spoken, they mean one thing; but when they are recalled in a later time, they are seen from a new perspective. Time itself will not deface the joy they shared, but it will deface both Criseyde and the language. (Troilus himself will be defaced. See 5.617-18.) The joy of Book 3 cannot be sullied. Even if Criseyde's later actions spoil the scene in retrospect, the words of Book 3 cannot be interpreted as anything other than joyous. Reconciling Criseyde's actions in Book 5 with her actions in Book 3 may deface Criseyde but not

Book 3--unless Book 3 is a glorious lie. The narrator used <u>deface</u> when he said that he would "childisshly deface/Hire heigh compleynte" (4.804-05) if he wrote of her sorrow. <u>Auctours</u>, readers, and interpreters may <u>deface</u> the love story. The love as it existed between Troilus and Criseyde may be defaced if the words that signify it are misinterpreted.

The departure of Troilus from Criseyde is very different in Book 4 from his departure after the consummation in Book 3. Criseyde's last line in Book 4, "And fareth now wel, for tyme is that ye rise" is both an order and a conclusion (4.1687). There is a haste in Book 3 as though Troilus has stayed too long. In Book 4, the pace is dirge-like, especially with the repetition of <u>and</u> that rehearses the motions of their separation (4.1688-93). Moreover, Troilus seems to leave in silence. "Withouten more out of the chaumbre he wente" (4.1701), the last line of the fourth book, indicates frustration. There is nothing to be done, so there is nothing more to say. Even the narrator is at a loss for words:

> For mannes hed ymagynen ne kan,
> N'entendement considere, ne tonge telle
> The cruele peynes of this sorwful man,
> (4.1695-97)

The narrator all but admits that his words are not equal to the pain, just as he feared he would "deface" Criseyde's grief if he tried to describe it (4.804). The narrator has tried to express what cannot be

imagined. Notice that it is the head that cannot imagine; this sorrow comes from the heart. Criseyde's lecture has come from reason, from the head; Troilus's sorrow, in contrast, is heartfelt. We have been told that we cannot imagine Troilus's sorrow, but we must try to do so, using words that may not be quite up to the task. In presenting his story to us, the narrator expects us to imagine, to recreate just as he has. The language may not give us a perfectly accurate idea of Troilus's feelings, but it is the only means by which the narrator can present the story.

The time references show Book 5 as a continuation of Book 4, with the time lapse between the two books being the difference between dawn and prime, a sequence analogous to Book 3 as an immediate continuation of Book 2. Moreover, these opening lines tell us the duration of the affair--three springs. "Aprochen," the first word of Book 5, sets the tone of this book that lacks a proem.

What approaches is "the fatal destyne" (5.1) to which Troilus and Criseyde appear to be subject. Both the narrator and the characters are caught in the web of a retrospective destiny--history. Morton Bloomfield has commented on the narrator's "bondage to historical fact" (81):

> Bound by the distance of time and space, of art and religion, Chaucer sits above his creation and foresees, even as God foresees,

> the doom of his own creatures. . . . But Chaucer is like God only insofar as he can know the outcome, not as creator. . . . He is not the creator of the events and personages he is presenting to us; hence he cannot change the results. On the other hand God is the creator of his creatures; but He is bound by His own rationality and His foreknowledge. (83)

Lacking a proem, the opening lines of Book 5 do not contain any authorial apologia. Unlike the earlier proems, there is no "I," no denial of responsibility for the text. The first narratorial "I" in Book 5 does not appear until line 51, and then it is a comment on Troilus's actions, not the narrator's. The action of Book 5 starts at the third stanza, with Diomede "Ful redy" (5.15) to take Criseyde to the Greeks.

Compared to this "redy" Diomede, we have a Criseyde we have seen before, she who "nyste what was best to rede" (5.18). The expression is identical to 1.96 and 4.679. Within these four lines with their stress on Diomede's readiness and Criseyde's lack of rede, the narrator has made the two characters opposites who will eventually attract. The play on Criseyde's lack of rede continues, for "men" may "rede" in books that "Men" knew no woman who so hated to leave a city (5. 19-21). The irony is that Criseyde supposedly did not know how to act in her own time, but those who never met her, who know her only through books (such as the narrator and his readers) know (or think they know) the way she acted. Moreover, Troilus himself is "withouten reed or

loore" (5.22).

Just as we have seen a Criseyde who appears unsure of her next move, we have also seen a Troilus who changes his expression (1.280; 4.150). He hides his sorrow so that it cannot be seen in his "chere" (5.30-31). The reason the narrator gives for Troilus's not creating a disturbance is the same reason that has plagued the lovers throughout the story: rumor. Troilus fears that word of the affair might cause Criseyde to be murdered (5.52-54). The narrator appears to disblame Troilus for his lack of initiative and attests to his reasoning; this section contains several self-reflexive remarks such as "That shal I seyn" (5.51), "as I seyde yore" (5.55), and "withouten wordes more" (5.56)--this last phrase could refer to Troilus's silence on the subject or the narrator's conclusion of this discussion.

When he says goodbye to Criseyde, Troilus says "No word" to Diomede (5.87), leaving him to draw his own conclusions, especially about the prince's silence:

> Of which the sone of Tideus took hede,
> As he that koude more than the crede
> In swich a craft, and by the reyne hire hente;
> (5.88-90)

Line 89 above is reminiscent of "Criseyde, which that koude as much good/As half a world" (3.638-39), the narrator's remark made when Pandarus invited her to spend the night at his house during the famous storm. Both lines suggest the character's realization of the

obvious, along with his or her awareness of a subtext. Troilus's silence could be interpreted as anything from a snub to an inability to speak--being all choked up. Troilus's love, ironically, is not betrayed by rumor, but by silence, for Diomede suspects there is something between Criseyde and the prince (5.102-104). The rhyme of the couplet at 5.90-91 summarizes the immediate action and foreshadows the last book. Diomede "hente" Criseyde by the rein and Troilus "wente" back to Troy.

The narrator does not tell us Diomede's intention but allows his thoughts to reveal it. We begin to see his character more clearly at 5.98: the man is a fool who will forget himself. Diomede intends to work on something for his own benefit. He considers, "Certeynlich I am aboute nought,/If that I speke of love or make it tough" (5.100-101); The next lines show his suspicion that he would be competing with Troilus; Diomede cannot be blatant at this point. Nevertheless, he resolves, "I shal fynde a meene/That she naught wite as yet shal what I mene" (5.104-05).

Myra Stokes comments that "the frightening thing about Diomed is that he thinks like Pandarus, but speaks like Troilus" (22). Although I do not fully agree that Diomede's speech is like Troilus's, Diomede has the ability to manipulate through language. He will find a "meene" that she not know what he means. With Pandarus, a "meene" himself in the sense of a go-between (3.254),

one had the sense that Criseyde was able to read a subtext in his courtly language, to "felen what he meneth" (2.387). Note also that Pandarus uses <u>meene</u> with its two different meanings at 3.254-56. The difference between Diomede and Pandarus is clear at 5.98, when Diomede thinks that a fool forgets himself. Pandarus did not become a go-between from self-interest. Diomede is self-interested through and through. Diomede's words as he ponders how to handle Criseyde are a coarse version of Pandarus's consideration of the best way to present his argument at 2.267-73. Stokes observes the "similar idioms" Pandarus uses at 2.268 and 4.525 to Diomede's lines at 5.95 and 5.101 (Stokes 22 and 22, note 13).[8] Moreover, Pandarus told Troilus to avoid "argumentes tough" in his first letter to Criseyde (2.1025). Unlike Troilus, Diomede calculates. Troilus was dumbstruck; Diomede is a smooth talker (see 5.107).

Some of Diomede's expressions echo words used by Criseyde in the consummation. Diomede asks her to love him as a brother (5.134). In her response to Troilus's first letter, Criseyde tells the prince that she would please him as though she were his sister (2.1224). Diomede tells Criseyde that he is "sory" she is distressed and asks her not to be "wroth" with him (5.140, 145). This proximity of <u>sory</u> and <u>wroth</u> recalls Criseyde's remark as she protested her innocence in the

Horaste affair, saying that she was "right sory but nought wroth" over Troilus's jealousy (3.1044). Diomede would tell Criseyde his "entente" if they were not in sight of Calkas's tent (5.148-151). In the consummation, the narrator says that she opened her heart to Troilus and told the prince "hire entente" (3.1239). Diomede tells Criseyde that Calkas "sen us both may" (5.149). The remark recalls Pandarus' comment when he staged Troilus's appearance in front of Criseyde's house: "he seeth us, I suppose" (2.1254). When Diomede protests that he belongs to Criseyde, he tells her "Thus seyde I nevere er now to womman born" (5.155); he also tells her that he never before loved a woman "As paramours, ne nevere shal no mo" (5.158). The vocabulary recalls her words to Troilus, when she tells him to be secure in her love: "Thus seyde I nevere er this, ne shal to mo" (3.1514).

According to the narrator, Criseyde scarcely pays attention to Diomede's speech: "in effect, she naught his tales herde/But here and ther, now here a word or two" (5.179-80). Note the reference to Diomede's story-telling. She must have listened to some of it, for she thanks him for his offer of friendship (5.183). The narrator's summary of her response is ambiguous. We have none of Criseyde's actual speech in these lines. The repetition of eight <u>ands</u> in the stanza at 5.183-89

may be an indication that Criseyde is giving a rote, polite answer. The narrator claims that she "lite answerde" Diomede's "purpos" (5.176), but with every _and_ she adds a comment. Her offer to do what would please him and her saying that she would "tristen" him does not sound entirely innocent (5.187-88). The word _tristen_ alone carries all of the baggage of its associations with the trust and _trouthe_ of the love of Troilus and Criseyde. The _and_ repetition continues as Criseyde meets her fater at 5.190-96. Criseyde is impossible to read at this point, standing "muwet, milde, and mansuete" (5.194). We cannot even determine what she said. She is only a trace of a text; she has become a paraphrase.

The narrator switches to Troilus, "With feloun look and face dispitous" (5.199). Now he has truly lost the "chere" he has tried to maintain throughout the poem. He is afraid that Criseyde will lose her "chere," becoming "pitous, pale, grene" (5.243). He sinks to the inarticulate (5.257-59). His sadness is such that the narrator tells us that it a "wonder was to here his fantasie" (5.261). The word _fantasie_ appeared in Book 4 when Troilus told Criseyde her plan was doomed to failure and Criseyde accused Troilus of an overly gloomy imagination (4.1470; plural at 4.1615). Troilus has gone from reason to _fantasie_, a word that will creep

into the text again with Troilus's constant thinking about Criseyde.

Just as he could not quite describe the consummation, the narrator has difficulty describing Troilus's grief:

> Who koude telle aright or ful discryve
> His wo, his pleynt, his langour, and his pyne?
> Naught alle the men that han or ben on lyve.
> Thow, redere, maist thiself ful wel devyne
> That swich a wo my wit kan nat diffyne;
> On ydel for to write it sholde I swynke,
> Whan that my wit is wery it to thynke.
> (5.267-73)

If no one can describe this torment, how was it presented in the source? The narrator claims that the reader may "devyne" it for himself. By having his audience create Troilus's response, he absolves himself from his own description, just in case he was not quite accurate. Within three stanzas, we are told that Pandarus "koude wel devyne" that Troilus was in misery; indeed, Pandarus "knew . . . withoute book" that the prince would discuss his sorrow with him (5.288, 290-91). Pandarus parallels the reader. Both are diviners of Troilus's sorrow.

The language of Troilus's sorrow is self-referential not only to Troilus, but to language itself. The prince is convinced that he is dying of sorrow, and Pandarus listens to him "devysen" "the forme" of his sepulchre (5.299-300). Pandarus is to make all of the arrangements and to give the ashes of Troilus's heart

to Criseyde "for a remembraunce" (5.315).

Pandarus realizes that the prince's imagination has run away with him when Troilus complains that his dreams are destroying him. Pandarus reminds the prince that he is being foolish, adding that he "kan namore" (5.325-26). Pandarus has no use for "swevnes ek and al swich fantasie" (5.358). The word fantasie appears again--an illusion, a fiction. Declaring that "Ther woot no man aright what dremes mene" (5.364), Pandarus begins his own denunciation of dream interpretation (5.365-85). In his discourse on dreams, Pandarus examines the beliefs of priests and of doctors and the evidence found in books. Everyone has a different opinion on how to read a dream. According to Pandarus, "Who woot in soth thus what thei signifie?" (5.371). They are illusions, revelations, something that one ate. What they "signifie" depends on the interpreter. No one can read them and have a single, true interpretation. (This last point is true of the Troilus.) One may read about dreams in books, but Pandarus does not seem to think any such literary reference is a guarantee of validity--a point that the narrator suggested in Book 4 (4.20-21). Note that Pandarus condemns divination (5.380-83) before Calkas's prediction comes true. Ironically, Pandarus declares that "no man" knows what dreams mean (5.364); Cassandra, however, is quite accurate. Pandarus's lecture on dreams foreshadows Troilus's dream of the boar,

that Pandarus will dismiss but that Cassandra will interpret correctly, reaching back into memory, into history to explain it. Trying to bring Troilus out of his "fantasie," Pandarus orders the prince out of bed "withouten moore speche" (5.388). One of the ways to spend the time is through memory, by telling tales; they will "speke of lusty lif in Troie" (5.393). The tales may make Troilus feel better, but he also throws the old caution about other stories at the prince: people will say he is a coward and only pretending to be sick (5.412-13).

Troilus assents to Pandarus's "reed" (5.428) to pass the time at Sarpedoun's house. Pandarus's plans, usually perfect, backfire. Troilus cannot enjoy himself because the one "that of his herte berth the keye" is missing; "his fantasie" is that no one should make merry while she is gone (4.460-62). This is the key of remembrance. The key of his heart is missing: he has only his memory of her. He is befuddled, "so faste ymagenynge/That glade, iwis, kan hym no festeyinge" (4.454-55). The language stresses fantasy and imagination to show the artifice and futility of Troilus's attempt to recreate what was. He talks to himself, but the words are addressed to Criseyde (5.463-67). He had pointed out the "fantasie" of Criseyde's plan in Book 4 (4.1470); now he is living in his own "fantasie."

Troilus cannot reason, and he begins to recall her image through her words. He uses her letters to revive his memories of her:[9]

> The lettres ek that she of olde tyme
> Hadde hym ysent, he wolde allone rede
> An hondred sithe atwixen noon and prime,
> Refiguryng hire shap, hire wommanhede,
> Withinne his herte, and every word or dede
> That passed was; (5.470-75)

"Refiguryng" suggests that Troilus is again doing what he did back in Book 1, in which his mind became a mirror "In which he saugh al holly hire figure" (1.365-66). In Book 5, Troilus can use her words for his mental re-creation. In Book 1, he had only her look from which to create an image. The narrator and Troilus become increasingly caught up in memory in Book 5. Throughout the poem, the narrator has had to use the memories of others in order to recreate Criseyde. Troilus uses her letters. No matter how much he indulges in fantasy and imagening, Criseyde is fast turning into _memoria_.

Still in his search for memory, he rides by her empty palace, "For which with chaunged dedlich pale face/Withouten word" he passes, allowing no one to see his face (5.536-39). His face is a giveaway of his feelings. The narrator continues his description of Troilus's "chaunged face," noting that it was so wretched that anyone would pity him (5.554-60). He begins to tell Pandarus of his former happiness and

his present misery. These tales that he has begun lead him further back into his "remembraunce" (5.562). From 5.561 to 581, he finds the locations in which his affair took shape. These three stanzas of memory resolve themselves not only in a recollection for us of the earlier books but they are shown to be of themselves the fabric of literature:

> "O blisful lord Cupide,
> Whan I the proces have in my memorie
> How thow me hast wereyed on every syde,
> Men myght a book make of it, lik a storie.
> (5.582-85)

The love, as intense and immediate as it is to him, has existed only in <u>memoria</u> since Criseyde left. It is his story. The narrator has always been aware that the Troilus is created from memory, and Troilus sees the potential for his memories to be turned into a book. In the middle of the saga of the Trojan war, Troilus focuses on a subplot: what he believes is Cupid's war with him, his own little <u>geste</u>. His love has indeed been a "proces," a creation conceived by Troilus and shaped by Pandarus. Troilus does not see this "storie" as potential fiction; it is history. His romantic problem has become a war with a god, much as the Trojan War pitted the Olympians against one another. Yet note Troilus's use of <u>myght</u>; Troilus's love affair is supposed to remain a secret, and unless that secret is divulged, the memory of the love should die with him and Pandarus and never be recorded.

Troilus's recreation of what was distorts his conception of what is. He "ymagened" that he did not look well and that people talked about his appearance, but this was only his "fantasie" (5.617-23). He "ymaginen" that people pity him (5.624-27).

The narrator switches to Criseyde, among the "Grekes stronge" (5.688), a phrase that recalls the first line of the story proper at 1.57. Even the end rhyme is repeated; the rhyme for <u>stronge</u> is <u>longe</u> at both 1.59 and 5.690. Criseyde is not so much distressed over her separation from Troilus as she is over her present situation. As she sees it, no matter what action she takes, she will have "unthonk on every side" (5.699).

She also spends her time recreating the past, calling her lover into "remembraunce" (5.721) and "al his goodly wordes recordynge" (5.718). Troilus was able to complain to Pandarus. We could read those conversations as well as the narrator's reports on Troilus's thoughts. The narrator declares that the worst part of Criseyde's sorrow was that she had no one to share them with (727-28). We hear only Criseyde's internal dialogue and the narrator's comments on her thoughts. Criseyde's sorrow over Troilus is more about herself than about him. She wonders what he is doing and whether he thinks of her (5.734-35). Criseyde's misery is more a case of

mourning <u>her</u> situation than <u>their</u> situation, and she feels sorry for her own stupidity. She should have listened to the "loore" that Troilus had "redde" her (5.736-37). She could remember the past and see the present, but she was unable to see the future (5.746-49).

She intends to keep to her "purpos" to return to Troilus (5.754). She denounces rumor and says that anyone who believes it will "nevere thryven" (5.755-63--a remark that does not say too much for those who must rely on sources, such as the narrator). She decides "withouten any wordes mo" 5.764) on the "conclusioun" (5.765) that she will return to Troy. Pandarus had said that every tale was made "for som conclusioun" (2.259). Criseyde's story, however, will not have the conclusion that she wishes. Before two months have passed (forget ten days), Troilus and Troy "Shal knotteles thorughout hire herte slide;/For she wol take a purpos for t'abide" (5.769-70). The shift in Criseyde's intention is marked with the word "purpos" at 5.754, 770, and 1029.

Criseyde's "purpos" has changed; the narrator's "purpos," to tell Troilus's double sorrow, has not. He now focuses on Diomede, who uses "al the sleghte and al that evere he kan" (5.773) in order to win Criseyde. Again the use of <u>kan</u>--all he knows, all he is able to do. He has been "arguynge" "withinne hymself" (5.772).

Diomede is verbal, not eloquent. Incapable of the Boethian ponderings of Troilus, he is able to debate the practical methods of winning Criseyde. He realizes that he may not be able to win her love, because as "wise folk in bookes it expresse," it is impossible to court someone who is miserable (5.790-91). Whereas Criseyde cannot stick to a "purpos," Diomede will not give up his pursuit: "To this entent he koude nevere fyne" (5.776). He realizes that he is going against the usual procedure in trying to woo an unhappy lady, but if he does win her love, he will be "a conquerour" (5.794). He will have proved the auctours wrong. He can only lose words, and words are cheap to Diomede, so unlike the tongue-tied prince of Troy.

The description of Diomede's interview with Criseyde on the tenth morning of her arrival is written on various levels of meaning. Diomede intends something other than he purports. We cannot really be sure of her intentions. The narrator is certainly aware of Diomede's ulterior motive: "But what he mente, I shal yow tellen soone" (5.846-47). Although he has supposedly come to see Calkas, Criseyde's father does not even seem to be present (5.862, 897, 904-07). The conversation calls attention to the speech of Diomede and the interpretation of Criseyde, the narrator, and the audience. The first three stanzas (5.848-68) summarize

their words. The narrator calls attention to his narrating as he glosses over Criseyde's welcoming actions: "at shorte wordes for to telle" (5.848). We are told that "they speke of this and that yfeere,/ As frendes don, of which som shal ye heere" (5.853-54). The reference to Diomede and Criseyde speaking as friends is suspicious, given that "love of frendshipe" was what Pandarus said that he was urging on Criseyde (2.371). If we hear only "som" of the conversation, we must wonder whether the narrator is suppressing something or whether he knows the entire story.

Diomede knows how to manipulate a conversation. It is brought from the broad to the personal. We run from the general news of the war, to Criseyde's opinion of the siege, to Criseyde's feelings among the Greeks (5.855-61). Diomede claims to want to listen to her and asks her opinions. No one asked her opinion of the trade. He asks her why Calkas delays finding her a husband (5.862). The question is not subtle, though Criseyde seems to pretend that it is: "It semed nat she wiste what he mente" (5.868). We know only that it appears that Criseyde does not know what Diomede is suggesting. In Pandarus's proxy wooing of Criseyde, we saw her attempt to "felen" out his subtext (2.387). In this passage concerning Diomede's courtship, we see and hear only what Diomede sees and hears. There is very little commentary from the narrator.

Diomede's speech focuses on two images: Criseyde in sorrow and Troy under siege. He never "koude" (5.875) see Criseyde except in grief. He "kan" (5.876) not say why she looks so sad. He thinks it ridiculous that Criseyde may be grieving for some Trojan. He creates for Criseyde an image of the leveled Troy; its destruction will be remembered until the end of the world (5.894-96). The Greeks will deface Troy. Such an image is Diomede's brutal way of telling Criseyde to stop her mourning and cheer up:

> Drif out that bittre hope, and make good
> cheere,
> And clepe ayeyn the beaute of youre face
> That ye with salte teris so deface,
> (5.913-15)

Diomede stops his speech long enough to make various expressions in a stanza (5.925-31) Muscatine notes as giving "tactical Diomede the air of a Troilus" (163; cited by Gordon 123-24). The repetition of <u>And</u> as the initial word for each of lines 5.925-30 suggests the steps that Diomede uses as he begins to develop his argument. He is as "gentil" as any Trojan. He talks about his lineage (5.932-38). He has never begged to serve any other woman, and wishes to speak with her at "bettre leyser" (5.930-45).

Diomede's speech is remarkable in that it provides an ironic retrospective of the initial visit of Pandarus to Criseyde. As Muscatine has commented, "Diomede is Pandarus again in his power of speech and in his

tactical sense, in his idiom and in his gesture" (163; cited by Gordon 123). When Pandarus first visits Criseyde on Troilus's behalf, she is reading about the siege of Thebes with her ladies. The material she reads seems to be almost legendary, yet if Diomede's father was involved in it, for her it is contemporary history. Diomede's wish to discuss his yearning for her when they have more leisure is reminiscent of Pandarus's comment that he would invite Troilus and Criseyde to a clandestine tryst at his house so that they may speak of their love at "leiser" (3.199-200). At the end of Diomede's speech the narrator stresses the acts of speaking and reporting in a single stanza:

> What sholde I telle his wordes that he seyde?
> He spak inough for o day at the meeste.
> It preveth wel; he spak so that Criseyde
> Graunted on the morwe, at his requeste,
> For to speken with hym at the leeste--
> So that he nolde speke of swich matere.
> And thus to hym she seyde, as ye may here,
> (5.946-52)

One gets the impression that the narrator does not particularly relish repeating Diomede's words. Just as Criseyde began to be interested in Troilus because of Pandarus's words, she grants Diomede an interview because he has spoken so well. Remember, one of the first questions she asked about Troilus was whether he could speak well about love (2.503). However, Diomede's speaking ability may not be the only reason that she decides to allow him to visit again. Throughout the

first four books, everyone knows that Calkas is a traitor, but there is no exact reference among the Trojan people to what he foresaw. Diomede has made it clear. Troy will be destroyed:

> "And but if Calkas lede us with ambages--
> That is to seyn, with double wordes slye,
> Swiche as men clepen a word with two visages--
> Ye shal wel knowen that I naught ne lie,
> And al this thyng right sen it with youre yë,
> And that anon, ye nyl nat trowe how sone;
> Now taketh hede, for it is for to doone.
> (5.897-903)

Diomede also tells Criseyde that Calkas knows that no one in Troy will survive (5.908-09). Either Diomede is lying or Calkas is not completely correct, for Aeneas and Antenor will survive. These predictions will come true unless Calkas's words were deceptive. Criseyde was going to deceive her father by suggesting that he misunderstood the "amphibologies" of the gods (4.1405-07). Perhaps she takes his predictions more seriously. Crisedye seems to take ambiguities and lies for the same thing; they are not. However, words create images, and a word with "two visages," two possible meanings, is potentially dangerous insofar as it must be interpreted correctly. A lie cannot yield a true interpretation. The image of a ruined Troy will come true. It will come to nothing only if Calkas has intentionally misled the Greeks.

The narrator comments that Criseyde answers Diomede "strangely" (5.955). Her speech is jumbled but

diplomatic. We hear no internal dialogue, only the narrator's comment that her heart was still set on Troilus (5.953-54). She begins her answer with what she knows. She knows that the Greeks want revenge on Troy and that her father is "wys and redy" (5.960-66). She knows the "heigh condicioun" of the Greeks (5.967), but the Trojans are equally "konnyng" (5.970). She <u>believes</u> that Diomede "koude wele . . . serve" a "lady" (5.972; note that she may only "trowe" this point at 5.973: she does not <u>know</u> it as an experienced fact). She has passed from what she and Diomede both know to what she believes. She then comes out with a statement that we take as a lie: she has never loved anyone other than her late husband (5.974-78). We have moved from what Criseyde and Diomede both know about the political situation to what Criseyde believes about Diomede to what none of us wants to believe about Criseyde. We never hear Diomede's thoughts in these lines. Criseyde tells Diomede that she has heard that he is an aristocrat, and cannot understand why he teases her (5.981-82). She says that "God woot" that she has had little to do with love (5.983). She would prefer to die lamenting and not loving. She informs Diomede that "as yet" she "list nat pleye" (5.987). Her speech is darkly reminiscent of her reply to Pandarus's invitation to dance: it would be more appropriate for her to read saints' lives in a cave (2.117-18).

Just as Diomede is busy with the war, her heart is at war with itself, "in tribulacioun" (5.988). She makes her own amphibology, a promise to Diomede without being clear exactly what she promises:

> Peraventure so it happen may
> That whan I se that nevere yit I say
> Than wol I werke that I nevere wroughte!
> This word to yow ynough suffisen oughte.
> (5.991-94)

If she ever has mercy on any Greek, she will have mercy on Diomede. She charmingly avoids an answer.

> "I say nat therfore that I wol yow love,
> N'y say nat nay; but in conclusioun,
> I mene wel, by God that sit above!"
> (5.1002-04)

Her real meaning is indecipherable. She echoes Pandarus's words when he first visited her at Troilus's behest: "I mente naught but wel" (2.592). Criseyde may mean well, but we are not sure what that means at this point. The narrator describes the beginning of her shift in allegiance. His language echoes his description of her earlier consideration of Troilus's suit. Criseyde may change lovers, but her thought process is consistent:

> Retornyng in hire soule ay up and down
> The wordes of this sodeyn Diomede,
> His grete estat, and perel of the town,
> And that she was allone and hadde nede
> Of frendes help; and thus bygan to brede
> The cause whi, the sothe for to telle,
> That she took fully purpos for to dwelle.
> (5.1023-29)

Compare the above lines to her consideration of Troilus:

> And gan to caste and rollen up and down
> Withinne hire thought his excellent prowesse,
> And his estat, and also his renown,
> His wit, his shap, and ek his gentilesse;
> But moost hire favour was, for his distresse
> Was al for hire, and thoughte it was a routhe
> To sleen swich oon, if that he mente trouthe.
> (2.659-65)

She "rolls up and down" Troilus's prowess and fame, Diomede's words and Troy's danger, and the "estat" of both men. Her "up and down" consideration is indicative of her nature, "slydynge of corage" (V,825). Her consideration of them is similar, though she seems to be physically attracted to Troilus, not Diomede. She never considers Diomede's "shap," and she apparently thinks nothing of his "gentilesse"--if he has any. Criseyde is drawn to Troilus because he is miserable for her. We are given no such sympathy for Diomede's feelings. (The narrator reports later that she makes a fuss over Diomede after Troilus wounds him. See 5.1044-50). The reason for her remaining with the Greeks began "to brede" within her; Troilus's many attributes made love "myne" "withinne her" (2.677). We are told that she did not give her love "sodeynly" to Troilus (2.673). Diomede himself is "sodeyn."

Just as the narrator commented that jealous people may "jangle" that Criseyde fell in love with Troilus too quickly (2.666-67), he tries to explain Criseyde's defection. He cannot explain it; he is forced to rely on

his source. Of course, he prefers to rely on his sources to try to avoid being blamed for Criseyde's betrayal. He gets the telling over with as quickly as possible, afraid that he will be interrupted by his audience. Notice that he refers to his own narration--he stresses that he is making the new seduction as brief as possible:

> And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke,
> So wel he for hymselven spak and seyde
> That alle hire sikes soore adown he leyde;
> And finaly, the sothe for to seyne,
> He refte hire of the grete of al hire peyne.
> (5.1032-36)

The language is forceful. He "refte" her of her sorrow. Diomede's initial act of seduction is to speak well. Troilus had feared that her father would speak so well about a Greek that Calkas would "ravysshen" Criseyde "with his speche" (4.1474). Diomede, however, needs no go-between.

The narrator sums up everything his sources say. He refers to the "storie" in the initial lines of the next three stanzas (5.1037, 1044, 1051). Indeed, he makes the information as impersonal as he can by saying "the storie telleth us" (5.1037, 1051), as though the tale were not the responsibility of a narrator. The only comment that the narrator makes about Criseyde occurs in his catalogue of her responses to Diomede. She gives Diomede a brooch that had belonged to Troilus; the narrator feels that there "was litel nede" (5.1040) for

such a gift. The brooch was a signifier from Troilus to Criseyde, given as a "remembraunce" (5.1663, 1691). It becomes the sign of Criseyde's betrayal when Troilus sees it on Diomede's cloak (5.1660-1665). John Fleming makes a similar observation:

> Remember the striking word used by Vergilian Deiphoebus in describing his hideous wounds--"monimenta." Deiphoebus, left wearing through the eternal life of the underworld the signs of Helen's wickedness, becomes himself _signifier_, a sign-bearer. . . . It is indeed in his role as sign-bearer that we last see Deiphebus in Chaucer's poem. The fifth book is, for Troilus, a long series of hermeneutical challenges and hermeneutical failures. Among other things, he is called upon to interpret a dream and to interpret a text, and in each he fails, tragically, to read the signs of the times. But one sign he reads correctly, or nearly so. At his parting from Criseyde he gave her, as a "monimentum," a jewel, a brooch. One day he sees in the streets of Troy a sight that chills his heart--the jewel given to Criseyde, pinned onto a garment seized from Diomede by Deiphebus. . . . The sign of Deiphebus's victory is for Troilus a sign of his own defeat. . . . His last interpretive act, an implicit one, is that he has been destroyed by a woman; and it seems to me no better than the ones that have preceded it. . . . There is only one other "reader" within the poem sufficiently shallow and self-absorbed to embrace Troilus's interpretation: that is, of course, Criseyde herself. (198)

The narrator has dealt with an aristocratic, well-bred lady (5.821). He tries to extricate himself from her condemnation: "Men seyn--I not--that she yaf hym hire herte" (5.1050). That Diomede "refte" her of her sorrow is one thing; however, she gives Diomede the bay horse that Troilus gave her, possibly the very bay horse he was riding when she first considered him as her

lover (5.1038-39; see 2.624). The narrator, still excusing his tale through his sources, comments,

> But trewely, the storie telleth us,
> Ther made nevere womman moore wo
> Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus.
> She seyde, "Allas, for now is clene ago
> My name of trouthe in love, for everemo!
> For I have falsed oon the gentileste
> That evere was, and oon the worthieste!
>
> "Allas, of me, unto the worldes ende,
> Shal neyther ben ywriten nor ysonge
> No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende.
> O, rolled shal I ben on many a tonge!
> Thorughout the world my belle shal be ronge!
> (5.1051-62)

Just as the narrator makes sure that his readers are aware that he has based his story on sources, keeping a perspective on the past, Criseyde is aware of her literary future. Alain Renoir notes Criseyde's concern: "The irony here is that the books which she fears will be written are _already_ written and that she is allowed to come unwittingly within immediate reach of one of them _before_ committing the deed for which they blame her" ("Thebes, Troy" 17; cited above 84). Renoir refers to Criseyde's reading about the siege of Thebes in Book 2; this history was associated with and frequently bound with the Troy legend ("Thebes, Troy" 15-16). Criseyde complains that her treachery will be remembered until the world's end, the same time span that Diomede claims men will fear to abduct any queen because of the fall of Troy; in short, the history of Troy will never be forgotten (5.894-96). Criseyde's own reputation is

inseparable from the history of Troy. She sees herself becoming a memory, a story, and nothing good will be remembered about her. Books by as yet unborn authors will be her ruin. The reputation she has guarded since we first saw her will be destroyed by something worse than rumor--books, which will perpetuate rumors about her far worse than the nine days' wonder described by Pandarus (4.588). The narrator refuses to admonish Criseyde "Forther than the storye wol devyse" (5.1094). It is as though there is no storyteller. The story itself devises Criseyde's fate. One of the reasons the narrator gives for not judging Criseyde is that "Hire name, allas, is publisshed so wide" (5.1095; an alternate reading is punysshed; see Barney, Textual Notes to Troilus in Riverside Chaucer, 1176, note to 1095, and Ludlum, "Chaucer's Criseyde"). Criseyde's name, or rather her loss of it, is her punishment.

Criseyde's apostrophe to Troilus is a series of weak protests (5.1071-85). She will never hate him. He will always have "frendes love" from her--ironically, the type of love that Pandarus said people would believe she shared with Troilus (2.370-82). Troilus will always have her "good word"--she will only say good things about him and not create any evil rumors. Her two-stanza apostrophe is a list of her remaining feelings for Troilus. Of the fourteen lines, eight begin with And--and seven of these are said by Criseyde. She

utters nine <u>ands</u> within these two stanzas, as though she is struggling to find one redeeming feature in her catalogue of emotions and memories. The last line of this apostrophe turns out to be her last line in the book, with the exception of her letter to Troilus. "But al shal passe; and thus take I my leve" (5.1085). It is difficult to tell whether she is taking her leave of Troilus or of the audience. Her speech is disjointed. Her offers of friendship and her promise never to hate Troilus are anticlimactic. Her statement that "al shal passe" contradicts her fear of the inevitable rumors. Once Criseyde has become a story, her infamy will not fade until the world's end.

On the tenth day of the lovers' separation, Criseyde is to return to Troy. Troilus's reactions throughout the day are a study in misinterpretation. Standing on the walls, Troilus and Pandarus thought that every approaching figure was Criseyde "Til that thei koude knowen hym aright" (5.1117). When she does not show up early in the day, Troilus deliberately reads the situation to suit himself, saying that Calkas made Criseyde dine with him. The pragmatic Pandarus sees this as an opportunity to have his dinner (5.1121-30). Troilus will assume later in the day that she intends to come at night. He declares that he will inform the "unkonnynge" gate keepers to hold the gates open (5.1139). The irony is that he is "unkonnynge" when he

says,

> "By God, I woot hire menyng now, Pandare!
> Almoost, ywys, al newe was my care.
>
> "Now douteles, this lady kan hire good;
> I woot she meneth riden pryvely.
> I comende hire wisdom, by myn hood!
> (5.1147-51)

He declares twice that he knows what Criseyde means to do, but his knowledge is based solely on his own wishful thinking. Without a signifier from Criseyde, he is forced to create his own signs. Without a sign from or of Criseyde, he says that he understands another meaning for Criseyde's delay. His eagerness for her causes him to misinterpret signs. Joyfully he shouts to Pandarus that he sees Criseyde, but all that Pandarus sees is the reality, a cart (5.1158-62). Forced to see the cart, Troilus nevertheless holds onto his illusion. Something good will happen. When Criseyde still does not come that night, he finds another interpretation. Declaring "I understonde have al amys" (5.1186), he remembers that Criseyde said that she would return before the moon has passed into Leo (5.1186-1190). Troilus is not responding to a sign, but to a lack of one.

He becomes "defet," unlike himself. He loses his "cheere." When his family asks him why his "cheere" is so sad, he tells them that the trouble is in his heart (5.1219-32). They cannot interpret his "cheere," and he glosses it for them with an ambiguity. Troilus does not

lie when he claims to be sick at heart, but since the members of his family do not know of his affair with Criseyde, they cannot make a correct interpretation.

Troilus takes his dream about Criseyde and the boar to be a revelation (5.1233-48). Awaking from the dream, he tells Pandarus that he is now sure of what has happened to Criseyde. The dream is a text for Troilus; however, it has no substance and is no real proof of her infidelity. In its lack of substantial evidence, the dream as a source has something in common with history. The story may be true, but it is not necessarily verifiable and is subject to interpretation. Troilus compares the text of Criseyde's words with his new text, the dream: "God wot, I wende, O lady bright, Criseyde,/That every word was gospel that ye seyde! (5.1264-65). He "wende" that she spoke the truth; he believed it at one time, but his belief was mistaken. Troilus did not know the gospels as sacred texts, but the use of <u>gospel</u> as <u>good news</u> or sacred truth would be apparent to Chaucer's audience. If the narrator is allegedly translating the text, his use of <u>gospel</u> indicates that Troilus considered Criseyde's words to be true beyond question. The choice of <u>gospel</u>, however, carries religious connotations. The words that were the equivalent of a gospel to Troilus have become a lie. To the audience, they are unfulfilled promises. Taken

in its old meaning, <u>good news</u>, the word is strikingly appropriate to Criseyde. There has been no news, good or otherwise, about her.

Troilus complains that no one can "bigile" someone more than the person he most trusts (5.1266-67). Pandarus counters that dreams "bigile" (5.1277). Dreams may deceive if people misinterpret them, "expounden hem amys" (5.1278). (A source may deceive in the same way if it is translated or understood incorrectly. One must wonder about the narrator's own accuracy.) A misinterpretation yields false information. The dream may mean one thing, but it may be read as something else. Pandarus warns Troilus, "thow kanst no dremes rede" (5.1281). Pandarus feels that Troilus does not know how to read the dream yet Troilus has made an accurate interpretation. Pandarus reads the dream differently. The boar may "signifie" Calkas. With such an interpretation, one might "aright expounde" the dream (5.1283-88). Note that Pandarus does not say that the interpretation itself is correct, only that it may be the correct way to interpret it. The distinction is subtle. Pandarus and Troilus are two different readers giving two different interpretations.

Pandarus's "red" is that since Troilus can "wel endite," he should write a letter to Criseyde (5.1291-1302). If there is a reason for her delay, she will explain it "in som clause" (5.1301). Although Pandarus

sounds encouraging, his final comment in the passage suggests his own doubt and anticipates his final line in the poem: "Ther is namore to done" (5.1309; see 5.1743). Writing is the only action left to Troilus in his relationship with Criseyde. The physical reality of their love is reduced to words on paper.

When Troilus first wrote to Criseyde on Pandarus's advice in Book 2, Pandarus suggested that he splotch the letter with tears for effect (2.1027). Now no prompting is needed. Troilus has cried so much over the letter that it is "defaced" (5.1335). We may wonder whether the text of it is legible. He tells her that his tears would complain to her if they were able (5.1337). The tears themselves are signs. They are inarticulate; they cannot "speak" the way a word would speak to her, yet their meaning is obvious. The tears have "defaced" the letter much as Troilus himself has been defaced by his misery (5.1219-32). Yet the "first" thing that Troilus begs Criseyde is that she not believe her "eyen clere" to be "defouled" as she reads the letter (5.1338-39). The letter not only expresses his feelings but has appropriated his physical expression.

The letter subtly notes the problem of time. At 5.765-777, we see Criseyde determined to return immediately to Troy, but we are told that she changed her mind within two months. (We watch her "purpos" change

from "t'abide" at 5.770 to "dwelle" at 5.1029). At 5.1100, we return to Troilus on the ninth night from Criseyde's departure. On that dawn we see him waiting for her. The time sequence has become muddled. (For a discussion of Chaucer's manipulation of time in the Troilus, see Henry Sams's "The Dual Time-Scheme in Chaucer's Troilus.) Not until 5.1348 do we realize that two months have passed for him. In his letter he suggests that more time will have elapsed between his writing the letter and her reading it. He tells her that he is ready to die in his misery; the only thing keeping him alive is the hope of a word from her (5.1369-72). His life depends on her writing, but all she will know of his situation is that he was alive and sorrowful when he wrote the letter. Note the irony. Troilus does not ask specifically for a letter, but for "sight" of a "sonde" (5.1372). The sight of a message means seeing a letter. Troilus, however, will not be positive of her treachery until he interprets a completely nonverbal signifier: the sight of his own brooch on Diomede's cloak (5.1660-66; see also Fleming, "Deiphebus Betrayed" 198; cited above 294.)

The letter cannot contain everything he wishes to say to her. He tells her, "I say namore, al have I for to seye/To yow more than I telle may (5.1408-09). The lines have a subtext. Criseyde should understand what

it is he cannot say. Whether Criseyde allows him to live or die, he still wishes her well: "Yet pray I God, so yeve yow right good day" (5.1411), the exact wish that Criseyde makes for him when she decides to be faithful to Diomede (5.1074).

The narrator gives the text of Troilus's letter but summarizes Criseyde's; he will reverse this process with her final letter, in which we have a summary of Troilus's message but the text of hers. She will return; she does not know when. She "made . . . swich festes" over Troilus and swore that she loved him "best" (5.1428-29). The word <u>best</u> carries with it an implied comparison. The promises are empty, "botmeles bihestes" (5.1431). Troilus may and well go whistle, such is the world, God protect us from misfortune, "And every wight that meneth trouthe avaunce" (5.1432-35). Troilus had begged her to consider her "trouthe" (5.1386); the narrator does not explicitly condemn her in this passage, but he calls her "trouthe" into question by referring to those who "meneth trouthe," who keep their promises. By her own admission, Criseyde's "name of trouthe in love" is gone (5.1055). Criseyde and the narrator both know of the loss of her "trouthe." Troilus does not wish to see it yet. He prefers to misread Criseyde's "menyng" (5.1147) as he stands on the walls of Troy waiting for her to return.

"Ymagynyng" that Criseyde has betrayed him but not

certain of the fact, Troilus becomes ill (5.1441-42). The "boar dream" poisons his reason; it will "nevere oten of his remembraunce" Jove has become a story-teller, showing Troilus in the "figure" of the boar the "significaunce" of Criseyde's treachery (5.1443-49). The "boar" is the signifier, but Troilus does not realize that he has understood the dream correctly. He seems unsure of his own ability to interpret the dream.

Cassandre, however, does have the ability to gloss the text of the dream, which is intertextual. It not only reveals the truth of Troilus's story, but it requires an explanation by someone who is familiar with old books. In rendering the old stories, Cassandre gives the genealogy of Diomede and reveals history:

> If thow a soth of this desirest knowe,
> Thow most a fewe of olde stories heere,
> To purpos how that Fortune overthrowe
> Hath lordes olde, thorugh which, withinne a throwe,
> Thow wel this boor shalt knowe, and of what kynde
> He comen is, as men in bokes fynde.
> (5.1458-63)

The story of Meleager and the Caledonian boar hunt is a bit of the Troy story in miniature, with the unnamed "mayde" (5.1473, actually Atalanta) receiving the contested spoils and causing great upheaval. (See Anderson's article 10-15 for an analysis of the similarities between Cassandre's stories of the Caledonian boar hunt/the seven against Thebes and the legend of Troy.)

Cassandre runs through the story "as olde bokes tellen us" (5.1478), noting the relation of Tideus to the story "or ellis olde bookes lye" (5.1481). We might be perfectly willing to agree with the fact that old books lie. The only trouble in disagreeing with Cassandre's rendition is that she herself is an unimpeachable source, fated to tell the truth but be thought a liar.

Cassandre is not only a prophetess here; she is a narrator. In the narrator's summary of her story, the words <u>tolde</u> or <u>telle</u> appear eight times (5.1485, 1491, 1492, 1494, 1498, 1506, 1510, 1512). The story includes "how Amphiorax fil thorugh the grounde,/How Tideus was sleyn" (5.1500-01). When Pandarus first visited Criseyde in Book 2, she and her ladies had been listening to the story of the siege of Thebes. They stopped at the rubrics: "How the bisshop, as the book kan telle,/Amphiorax, fil thorugh the ground to helle" (2.104-05). We hear nothing about the death of Tideus until Diomede tells Criseyde that if his father had lived, he would have been a king (5.932-34). In Cassandre's version, the death of Tideus immediately follows the fall of Amphiorax. Troilus hears an edited text from Cassandre; she omits Meleager's death "For al to longe it were to dwelle" (5.1484); she sounds not unlike the Chaucerian narrator. Troilus had said that someone could write a book about his war with Cupid

(5.582-585); what he has not realized is that his story is wrapped up within the larger wars of history. Troilus may be a victim of the world crashing in on his love affair, but his story is a victim, and as a victim a creation, of intertextuality.

Troilus's reaction to Cassandre's interpretation is to label the whole thing a lie. Cassandre, according to Troilus, is a "fool of fantasie" (5.1523). In rejecting Cassandre's story, Troilus refers to another text:

> "As wel thow myghtest lien on Alceste,
> That was of creatures, but men lye,
> That evere weren, kyndest and the beste!
> For whan hire housbonde was in jupertye
> To dye hymself but if she wolde dye,
> She ches for hym to dye and gon to helle,
> And starf anon, as us the bokes telle."
> (5.1527-1533)

Alceste was wonderful--unless the stories lie. Troilus cannot see the irony of his own argument. He has rejected Cassandre's story, an accurate story, by comparing his lady to Alceste--yet he includes a condition, but men lye. He prefers to believe in Criseyde's loyalty, even though all of the evidence is against it. In this scene, both Cassandre and Troilus make conditions for their stories: the things they say are fact unless their sources have lied (5.1481, 1527). Both Troilus and Cassandre seem to suggest that their sources are not likely to be wrong. Cassandre bases her history of Diomede on books; Troilus recounts the Alceste story as books have told it. Cassandre is

infallible, but Troilus does not know this fact. If he accepted her infallibility, he would be able to read the situation clearly. In refuting Cassandre, he cites a text that has nothing to do with his own story. Cassandre's story is an old book, certainly no less open to question than any other old book. Yet her story is more accurate than any other old book because she herself is an accurate source. A source, however, no matter how perfect, is useless if the reader does not respond to it.

Only three stanzas are devoted to Ector's death (5. 1542-1568). We are told only that "The fate wolde his soule sholde unbodye,/And shapen hadde a mene it out to dryve" (5.1550-1551). The verb _shapen_ has appeared in _Troilus_ with meanings such as _to contrive_ or _to manipulate_ (for example, 2.281, 1092; 3.196). The verb may also mean _to create_--as in _to write_. Now we see fate as the arch shaper.[10] Ector can do nothing to prevent his own death (5.1552). Ector's death in a sense anticipates Troilus's death in that Troilus is the second Ector. Both men are slain by Achilles. Fate decrees that Ector's "soule sholde unbodye" (5.1550); Troilus's "lighte goost" (5.1808) will ascend to the spheres. Since Ector's death is a foreshadowing of the fall of Troy, the narrator refers to his sources to reinforce his historicity. For Ector's death, "as olde

bokes tellen us,/Was mad swich wo that tonge it may nat telle" (5.1562-63). When the narrator describes the sadness caused by Troilus's death, he describes the scene from Troilus's vantage point, as the dead prince looks down from the spheres on those who mourn for him (5.1819-22). Troilus laughs. It is possible to refer to an old book for a description of Ector's death; the source material in that case occurs within history. The scene in which Troilus views his own mourners, however, occurs outside of history, and the narrator cites no source for this scene.

Sorrowing for his slain brother, Troilus makes excuses for Criseyde (5.1574). He has already lost his "cheere" in his misery. We have seen his expression so altered that he is scarcely recognizable (5.1219-20). Now he sets out to alter his image in order to see Criseyde. He was often "in purpos grete" to disguise himself as a pilgrim in order to visit her; however, "he may nat contrefete" or "fynde excuse" in the event he "knowen were" in the Greek camp (5.1576-81). At 5.1574 he excuses Criseyde, but at 5.1580, he is unable to find an excuse for himself. Troilus's expression may appear altered to those who know him well; the Greeks, however, do not know Troilus as an individual and may not see the change in his expression. Troilus's image is as much his viewer's (or reader's) response as it is an appearance. He cannot "contrefete"; his

image at this point is not what he wills it to be, but what others perceive it to be.

He writes again to Criseyde. The narrator says that she answers him out of pity; at least, that is the way that the narrator sees it (5.1587-1588). She remarks on the tear stains on Troilus's letters, saying that the paper itself was "al ypleynted" (5.1597-1600). The letter carries Troilus's grief in its physical composition as well as in its words; the tears are signifiers. Criseyde tells Troilus that there is nothing in his "remembraunce" but his own pleasure (5.1607-08). The theme of "remembraunce" will appear again with a vengeance, for very soon after Troilus reads Criseyde's letter, we will see him make the correct interpretation of the brooch on Diomede's cloak. He gave to ornament to Criseyde as a "remembraunce" of himself on the day that she left Troy (5.1663 and 1691).

The reason that Criseyde gives for her delay is "wikked speche" (5.1610).

> "For I have herd wel moore than I wende,
> Touchyng us two, how thynges han ystonde,
> Which I shal with dissymelyng amende.
> And beth nat wroth, I have ek understonde
> How ye ne do but holden me in honde.
> But now no force. I kan nat in yow gesse
> But alle trouthe and alle gentilesse.
> (5.1611-17)

Criseyde does not specify what it is that she has heard. She blames rumor for the delay, but does not repeat the rumor. She says that she will fix the situation by dissembling, yet it is dissembling that has

created this predicament. She has heard more about their relationship than she _wende_--the suggestion is that she was, perhaps, mistaken about their love. She never clarifies what "moore than I wende" means. She will, however, try to put an end to the stories by dissembling, creating another story in an effort to elicit a different response.

She says that she "kan nat . . . gesse" anything underhand in Troilus. Her language is both ambiguous and suggestive. The "kan nat . . . gesse" anything except gentility juxtaposes knowing and guessing because of the several possible interpretations of _kan_. She has heard more than she mistakenly thought she knew; she understands that Troilus is only misleading her. Yet what she should _know_ is Troilus's loyalty. She should not have to guess at it.

Asking Troilus to understand the reason for her brevity, Criseyde closes the letter:

> "Yet preye ich yow, on yvel ye ne take
> That it is short which that I to yow write;
> I dar nat, ther I am, wel lettres make,
> Ne nevere yet ne koude I wel endite.
> Ek gret effect men write in place lite;
> Th'entente is al, and nat the lettres space.
> And fareth now wel. God have yow in his grace!
> (5.1625-31)

Criseyde knows how to write a letter; we watched her compose one in Book 2. She is familiar with the language of love, for she asked Pandarus whether Troilus could speak it well (2.503). She certainly does

give an "effect" in her letter. She relegates her meaning, however, to the way in which Troilus will "take," will interpret, her words. Her message is unsettling; her meaning is unclear. Perhaps she is writing "under sheld," (5.1327). Troilus will see the beginnings of a change in her letter (5.1644). He does not know what the change is, and she has not said anything specific enough for him to make an accurate interpretation. Throughout the letter, Criseyde begs Troilus to "beth nat wroth" with her for her delay and for the content of her letter (5.1609 and 1614). Her excusing herself for her deeds and her words will be picked up before the close of the poem by the narrator and by the other manipulator, Pandarus. The end of Book 5 is obsessed with excuses. Troilus tries to find an excuse if he should visit the Greek camp and be caught (5.1576-81); the narrator will excuse himself for writing about a treacherous woman (5.1772-78); Pandarus will excuse his actions, saying that he only did as Troilus wished (5.1731-43). Criseyde's final letter is full of excuses.

Both Pandarus and the prince defend themselves as _auctours_ and interpreters. Troilus reminds Pandarus of the latter's mockery of his dream interpretation. Troilus points out that he read the dream accurately (5.1709-15). Pandarus is a better reader of reality (5.1170-76), but he will be at a loss for words and

will say nothing (5.1725-29). When he finds his voice, Pandarus protests that he has done only as Troilus wished (5.1734-41). He would change things if he could. Even Pandarus, whom Wasserman has called "the greatest of verbal manipulators" (210), cannot re-do history. History may be recreated in a text; however, if the text is inaccurate, history is nothing more than a lie. The narrator, not wishing to change history, only to re-create it as accurately as he can, may only consult his sources, which he seems to doubt. Like a nondefinitive source, he picks and chooses from historic events:

> And if I hadde ytaken for to write
> The armes of this ilke worthi man,
> Than wolde ich of his batailles endite;
> But for that I to writen first bigan
> Of his love, I have seyd as I kan--
> His worthi dedes, whoso list hem heere,
> Rede Dares, he kan telle hem alle ifeere--
>
> Bysechyng every lady bright of hewe,
> And every gentil womman, what she be,
> That al be that Criseyde was untrewe,
> That for that gilt she be nat wroth with me.
> Ye may hire gilt in other bokes se;
> And gladlier I wol write, yif yow leste,
> Penolopeës trouthe and good Alceste.
> (5.1765-78)

The narrator chose to write about the love of Troilus, not his battles. When he began his story, he intended to tellen (1.1) Troilus's tale. The verb to tell is reminiscent of Vergil's cano: they both suggest oral storytelling. (Donaldson picks up on the similarity of these lines to the first line of the *Aeneid*. See "Ending of *Troilus*" 94; see above 67, note 3.) At the

close of the book, the narrator emphasizes the written text. Within two stanzas (5.1765-78), he uses a form of write three times. Wasserman makes a similar note about the last stanza of the Troilus:

> Referring to the Divinity as "Uncircumscript and al maist circumscrive" (V, 1865), the poet casts his prayer in terms which at least implicitly evoke the trope of writing as the medium through which Divine Will is worked. (198)

Moreover, Pulsiano notes an emphasis on writing in the source for this last stanza. Pulsiano remarks "that Dante uses metaphors of writing and sculpture as he approaches the vision of the Trinity beginning in canto XIII and culminating in canto XIV, the source for the prayer in the Troilus" (166).

Before he reaches the Trinity in the last stanza, the narrator must deal with his own text. Those who do not like his account may read another one. The writer of history is himself a reader and must make his own interpretations. Those readers who make a different response to his tale may look elsewhere. The trouble with history, with remembrance, is that it is essentially a patchwork of individual interpretations. Like Criseyde in her last letter, the narrator begs his readers to "be nat wroth" with him (5.1775; see also 5.1609 and 1614). Unlike Criseyde, the narrator is responsible only for what he writes, not for taking any action within the plot. His guilt, however, is the fact that what he has written constitutes Criseyde's guilt

for the reader. The narrator is culpable for what he has chosen to write, perpetuating Criseyde's infamy. Criseyde has betrayed Troilus, but the narrator has perpetuated that betrayal. Pandarus does not wish to be blamed for Criseyde's infidelity; neither does the narrator. Pandarus throws the blame back to Troilus, protesting that he did the prince's pleasure (5.1731-43). The narrator, however, must blame other books as well as his own readers. He would write about virtuous ladies if his readers would enjoy these stories. (Apparently, then as now, a bad girl was far more interesting copy than a good one.) Pandarus tried to please Troilus. We cannot really be sure whether the narrator tries to please his readers or himself. Cassandre is the only narrator in the poem who asks for no pardon. She knows that she tells the truth, though her interpreters reject it.

Trying to placate his female audience, the narrator introduces an idea into the text that contradicts all of Book 5: women must beware of men who betray them (5.1779-85). He glosses a text that the poem scarcely supplies. (One may say that Pandarus and Troilus tricked Criseyde, but it seems that her shock at their connivance was itself a ruse. See 3.1210-11.)

Criseyde claims that the intention of any letter is its main point (5.1630), but her intention is

ambiguous. It is not in the letter that she shows her intention, but in the brooch on Diomede's cloak, a sign through which Troilus "understod that she/Nas nought so kynde as that hire oughte be" (5.1642-43). The wording of Criseyde's letter is vague, but the brooch, at least to Troilus, is an unambiguous sign. (Fleming [198] discusses the brooch as "sign"; quoted above 294.) Physically, the brooch is a hidden text, because it is worn inside the collar of Diomede's garment (5.1660). Like Troilus's letters to Criseyde, the brooch was wet with his tears when he gave it to her. Troilus says that she gave it to Diomede "But for despit, and ek for that ye mente/Al outrely to shewen youre entente" (5.1693-94).

The sign of the brooch breeds new stories. Troilus summons Pandarus, telling him "word and ende" (5.1669) about the jewel; Criseyde's "name of trouthe/Is now fordon" (5.1686-87). She is no longer a "good" story. She will dissolve into a rumor. Troilus berates Pandarus for ridiculing his dream interpretation (5.1709-1715); neither man offers an alternate explanation for the brooch. Troilus complains that Criseyde "holden" him "in honde" (5.1680), the same accusation she made against him in her letter (5.1615). With the sign of the brooch, the speech of the characters begins to dissolve and the readers are left to the narrator, who denies any and all responsibility for the story

that he finds in his "olde bookes" (5.1753). The language of the characters begins to unravel, both in their words and in the narrator's summary of their silences:

> withouten wordes moore 5.1672
> withouten moore speche 5.1716
> He nought a word ayeyn to him answerde 5.1725
> As stille as ston; a word ne kowde he seye 5.1729
> What sholde I seyen? I hate, ywis, Cryseyde 5.1732

Then there are Pandarus's famous last words: "I kan namore seye" (5.1743). There is no more conversation in the poem. The words are unspoken, or at least unheard, by the readers. The narrator either has edited the conversations or does not know what was said. Diomede and Troilus, according to the narrator's sources, encounter each other frequently "With blody strokes and with wordes grete" (5.1759). This is verbal bravado; it is hardly conversation.

Though Criseyde has put Troilus out of her "remembraunce," Troilus cannot undo the text of the past. He cannot "unloven" Criseyde "a quarter of a day" (5.1698). Notice that Troilus does not say that he cannot <u>hate</u> her; it is as though he cannot use the word in connection with Criseyde even to deny it. Criseyde, however, promises "yow ne haten shal I nevere" (5.1079).

The description of Troilus's fighting as he hopes to die in battle (5.1751-64) leads to the narrator's

apologia for his book (5.1765-79). Anyone who wants to read about the Trojan War and Troilus's part in it should get another book. His reference to Dares enables the narrator to repeat his protest that he works from sources; he himself is not responsible for the story. However, he is responsible for what he chose to write. The narrator is not responsible for history, but he is responsible for selecting and editing and recording certain events in history. When he begs the ladies not to blame him for Criseyde's guilt, he actually contradicts his statement that he chose to write only about Troilus's love. A choice creates a certain culpability. He tries to cover his tracks by warning women to beware of men. Extricating himself from this problem leads to his *envoi*:

> Go, litel bok, go, litel myn tragedye,
> Ther God thi makere yet, er that he dye,
> So sende myght to make in som comedye!
> But litel book, no makyng thow n'envie,
> But subgit be to alle poesye;
> And kis the steppes where as thow seest pace
> Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.
>
> And for ther is so gret diversite
> In Englissh and in writyng of oure tonge,
> So prey I God that non myswrite the,
> Ne the mysmetre for defaute of tonge;
> And red wherso thow be, or elles songe,
> That thow be understonde, God I biseche!
> But yet to purpos of my rather speche:
> (5.1786-99)

The book is alive. It must pay its respects to the classics, being subject to all "poesye"--both the classics themselves and the rules of rhetoric. Yet even though the *libellus* must kiss the steps of Titans, it is

within their company because all literary works are subject to the same problems and rules of language, an ephemeral medium subject to misinterpretation because of ignorance and time. A reader must interpret the work, bringing his own interpretive luggage. Nothing is read in a vacuum.

Throughout the Troilus, the narrator has taken some none too subtle pokes at authorial integrity. (See, for example, 4.20-21.) He does not admit the possibility that he himself has lied. Rather, he blames his scribes and his future readers for any corruption or misunderstanding of his text. The narrator's viewpoint has gone from claiming he is a reader of history to defending himself as a source. In Book 2, he warns his audience that "in forme of speche is chaunge" (2.22) and "in sondry londes, sondry ben usages" (2.28). The word usages is loaded, referring both to language and to customs. The narrator discusses "forme of speche" with his readers to warn them that the words and actions of Troilus and Criseyde may sound unusual to them because their languages and customs are different. In retrospect from Book 5, the change of language is more of a concern to the narrator's textual integrity than his audience's understanding. Conversely, the audience's misunderstanding could change their interpretation of the text. What will constitute his text--what he writes or what they read? The narrator as reader of history

may blame old books; as a source, he cannot quite do this and begins to wonder about his future readers. Some scribe may miswrite a word because of the varieties of English. He fears that someone may miswrite the Troilus, yet the narrator's own writing may seem erroneous to some scribe whose dialect is quite different. Whose dialect is correct? The narrator's dialect is the one in which the book is cast, but what good is that dialect to a scribe who cannot interpret it? The text has a life beyond its author's control. Once the book is read or heard, it has been interpreted. The narrator also fears that it will be mismetered; even the sound will be wrong. Miswritten or mismetered, it may be misunderstood. The text may become something completely different from what he had intended. Once he has written the text and has allowed it to be read, it will leave his control--like a rumor started in innocence.

Throughout the Troilus, the narrator has never confronted his work as a potential source. He refers, even defers, to his own alleged source. It is not until he nearly finishes his little book, seeing it leaving his hands, that he realizes it has a potential to be misread. He has spent much ink disblaming himself for the story, yet someone's misreading of his text could indict him. Paradoxically, he could be condemned out of his own mouth for what he wrote because of what someone

else reads into his words. A meaning is the province of an interpreter. His earlier references to sources placed all of the burden on the source, not on himself as reader. Not until his own creation becomes a source does he see a reader as a potential manipulator of his own words. When he begins to blame his reader, he has become a source. (In his retraction to the Canterbury Tales, Chaucer will disavow his worldly books, thank God for his holy books, and become a reader of his soul through contemplation. See Canterbury Tales 10.1081-92.)

The envoi, the farewell, ironically leads back to the story. Remembering that he has not concluded his "purpos," to tell Troilus's story, he stops his own musings on literary change and returns to his tale. He spends little time describing Troilus's death. He mentions Ector as Troilus's only equal (5.1804), reminding us that Ector is also dead. The last reference to a source in the Troilus occurs in this reference to Ector; Ector was Troilus's equal as far as the narrator "kan heere" (5.1804). Notice that the verb refers to hearing, not reading. History is becoming hearsay. The stanza at 5.1800-06 focuses on the general history of Troy in the thousands Troilus has slain. It moves to a mixture of history and legend in the person of Ector. It ends with Troilus's death in battle at the hands of Achilles. The reference to Achilles is a reminder of

Ector, whom Achilles also slew. A one-line death for Troilus (5.1806) is anticlimactic.

The final theme of Book 5 is _avysement_--of Troilus and the reader. The theme of _avysement_ here recalls for us allof the _avysings_ of the earlier books. It is not until Troilus has loved, been betrayed, and been killed that he sees clearly. Our _avysing_, like the language through which _avysement_ is given, is limited.

Language may change; the spheres, however, are immutable.

> And ther he saugh with ful avysement
> The erratik sterres, herkenyng armonye
> With sownes ful of hevenyssh melodie.
> (5.1811-13)

Troilus has gone beyond rhetoric. He is among the spheres, the ultimate wordless sign of the divine, a place where there is no language, only harmony. From heaven, Troilus "gan avyse" the earth; he laughs at those who mourn for his death (5.1814-22). Since Troilus has gone beyond time, he has gone beyond language. He laughs, but apparently says nothing, though he "dampned al . . . . werk that foloweth so/The blynde lust, the which that may nat laste" (5.1823-24). The narrator mentions no source for this section of the _Troilus_, a section which has gone beyond history. (How does he know that Troilus laughs? A source could not be expected to know this. The narrator makes no apology for making up history.) The narrator never stops to mention that if worldly love and worldly "vanite"

(5.1817, 1837) are only temporary, his book is also a "vanite": it will pass with the world. Yet this vanity of history, doomed along with the world, is the only written record we have of the past. Is history itself a vanity?

The narrator's final mention of Troilus connects the end of the poem with its beginning, and Troilus's death with the beginning of his love for Criseyde. After five lines beginning with "Swich fyn" (5.1828-32), the narrator closes his account of their love: "And thus bigan his lovyng of Criseyde,/As I have told, and in this wise he deyde" (5.1833-34). The end of the story is connected to its beginning through the couplet as well. The last mention of Criseyde rhymes her name with deyde; the first mention of her name takes the same rhyme (1.55-56). Moreover, the first time we hear Troilus say her name, they rhyme is also deyde (1.459-60). The text has come full circle.

Having gone beyond history with his story, the narrator no longer cites a mortal source. The only text he refers to is sacred scripture. (Note, however, that the last stanza, 5.1863-69, has its source in Dante's Paradiso, canto 14. See Pulsiano, 166, cited above 313). The narrator had said that we should turn our hearts to heaven (5.1825). He repeats his advice:

> And of youre herte up casteth the visage
> To thilke God that after his ymage
> Yow made (5.1838-40)

The _Troilus_ has emphasized images, expressions, looks, and signs. The love story started with Troilus's looking at Criseyde's look. The narrator now asks the audience to see not with their eyes but with their hearts--insight versus sight. (See 1.453-54: Troilus's heart, his "brestez yë" is always on Criseyde.) Troilus has passed beyond time and language, but the narrator, still in time, and the reader, also in time, must use language. The sign the narrator focuses on is Christ, who died "Upon a crois, oure soules for to beye" and who will "falsen no wight" (5.1843, 1845). Pulsiano comments on "signs" in the last stanza of _Troilus_ (5.1863-69):

> The verbal signs he has called to mind--the Trinity and the Incarnation--propel him beyond the restrictions of ambiguous language: here, then, for the first time in the poem, a true correspondence is established between signs and their _significata_, and between word and intention. (168)

The closest story Troilus knows to the story of Christ is the story of Alceste, who chose to die in place of her husband so that he might have life (5.1527-1533). In spite of _The Legend of Good Women_, there is no resurrection for Alceste.

The narrator returns to discussing his text after devoting a stanza to Christ at 5.1842-48:

> Lo here, of payens corsed olde rites!
> Lo here, what alle hire goddes may availle!
> Lo here, thise wrecched worldes appetites!
> Lo here, the fyn and guerdoun for travaille
> Of Jove, Appollo, of Mars, of swich rascaille!

> Lo here, the forme of olde clerkis speche
> In poetrie, if ye hire bokes seche.
> (5.1849-55)

The last two lines seem to be a warning to approach a text with care. The first five lines refer to rites and gods that are not the main focus of the poem and are scarcely mentioned. Donaldson notes this last point ("The Ending of *Troilus*" 99) and discusses the unusual nature of the concluding couplet:

> There is a large imprecision about the point of reference of this couplet. I do not know whether its *Lo here* refers to the five preceding lines or to the poem as a whole, but I suppose it refers to the poem as a whole, as the other four *Lo here's* do. If this is so, then the form of *olde clerkes speeche* is being damned as well as the *payens cursed olde rites*--by parataxis, at least. Yet it is not, for the couplet lacks the heavy, fussy indignation of the earlier lines: instead of indignation there is, indeed, dignity. I suggest that the couplet once more reasserts, in its simplicity, all the implicit and explicit human values that the poem has dealt with, even though these are, to a medieval Christian, ultimately insignificant. The form of old clerks' speech in poetry is the sad story that human history tells. It is sad, it is true, it is lovely, and it is significant, for it is poetry. ("The Ending of *Troilus*" 99)

Though the sources may be misinterpreted and language may change, in an imperfect world below a heaven in which the spheres play in harmony and the Trinity is One, language is the only tool we have for expressing our limited selves. The Trinity is "Uncircumscript, and al maist circumscrive" (5.1865). We are only an image of the divine.[11] The Trinity, the

end of signs, reigns from the harmony of the spheres. We do not live in harmony. The closest that language itself comes to harmony is its regulation "In poetrie, if ye hire bokes seche."

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[1] Ganim discusses the parliament scene in "Chaucer and the Noise of the People," Exemplaria 2 (1990): 72; 73-76. Ganim notes that "The Troilus . . . subsumes its values to the view of its aristocratic, even royal, central figures" (73). Ganim continues:

> These figures stand almost as individual, rather than class, heroes, against the vicissitudes of history and the unreliability of the social order. History itself is perceived through the filter of our, and the narrator's, reconstruction of their perspective" (76)

[2] See Barney, Explanatory Notes to Troilus in Riverside Chaucer 1045, note to lines 225-27. Barney notes that Chaucer bases his lines on Dante's, which are derived from Vergil.

[3] Provost, 12-13 and 12-13, note 12 briefly contrasts the opinions of Charles A. Owen and Helen Storm Corsa. Provost notes that Corsa believes Book 4 "repeats 'in miniature' the three books preceding it." Provost cites Corsa, Chaucer: Poet of Mirth and Morality (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964) 43.

[4] Donaldson, "Criseide and Her Narrator," makes a similar observation (72).

[5] In "Distance and Predestination in Troilus and Criseyde," Bloomfield compares the foreknowledge of God and the narrator (83, quoted above 271-72). Bloomfield remarks:

> The sense of distance that Chaucer enforces on us accentuates the parallel with God and His providential predestination. We cannot leap the barriers which life imposes on us, but in the companionship of an historian we can imitate God in parvo. (83)

[6] Dinshaw notes in Chaucer's Sexual Poetics that Criseyde mocks Calkas's "reading of the stars" (216, note 42); In "Both Fixed and Free," Wasserman comments "that while all of the major characters play fast and loose with signs, the two characters who do read accurately are the traitor Calkas and Cassandra, both of whom are greeted with disbelief in Troy" (221, note 34).

[7] See especially Dinshaw, Chaucer's Sexual Poetics 3-27; and Patterson, "Ambiguity and Interpretation" 329.

[8] Other critics have noted the similarity between Pandarus's and Diomede's courtship of Criseyde. Muscatine (163) and Gordon (110, 123-24) comment on it. Both Muscatine and Gordon note the observation of John Speirs that the second courtship is "an inferior and degraded replica" of the first. Muscatine (163) and Gordon (110) cite John Speirs, Chaucer the Maker (London: Faber and Faber, 1951) 79.

[9] Wasserman makes a similar observation, noting that Troilus "attempts to revive her fading image by reading old love letters" (212).

[10] In "Both Fixed and Free: Language and Destiny in Chaucer's Knight's Tale and Troilus and Criseyde," Wasserman makes some interesting observations. He notes that characters in Troilus "deliberately exploit that multiplicity of meaning in order to change or manipulate events within the poem by misinterpreting the signs which portend them" (210). He notes that the Troilus contains "language which is willfully ignored or manipulated, at the least deliberately delimited" (210). He remarks that "like Troilus, the narrator is ultimately at a loss for words to manipulate fate . . . to protect his partial image of" Criseyde (214). He continues:

> Indeed, it is the failure of that verbal manipulation with which the poet demonstrates the limits of verbal manipulation, so that the poem self-consciously falls back upon itself as a series of signs twice removed from their significations, a story about the stories that others have told. (214; Wasserman refers the reader to Shoaf, "Dante's Commedia and Chaucer's Theory of Mediation" 90)

[11] Pulsiano remarks:

> The paradoxical "Uncircumscript and al maist circumscrive" reminds us that God wrote his image in man, and, as a result of the Incarnation, man is able to reciprocate by writing in praise the truth of God's divinity. (168)

CONCLUSION

Most critics will not deny that the Troilus--at least on its textual surface--is a love story. The subtext, however, provides a variety of debatable positions, many of them concerned with language. This is a small sample of critical opinion on the theme of the Troilus. According to Evan Carton, "To write, read, or act in Troilus and Criseyde is to be a partner in the polygamy of speaking and hearing that at once makes up the poem and constitutes its main subject" (49; quoted above 16). John V. Fleming comments, "The Troilus is, and is about, translation, and translation of various kinds--linguistic, cultural, literary, and ethical" (182). Eugene Vance notes that "the progression in the plot of the Troilus (given in language) is doubled by a far more profound 'story' about language, especially poetic language itself, in its relationship to history" (324). Stephen Manning writes that "the transformation of the Narrator into a poet in the fullest medieval sense not only structures the ending of the poem but also emerges as the theme" ("Troilus, Book V: Invention and the Poem as Process" 288). Pulsiano claims the poem "functions, among many other things, as Chaucer's moral and philosophical workshop for exploring the breakdown of language as a vehicle for truth and the acquisition of knowledge" (154). According to Rowe:

> That Chaucer begins Troilus and Criseyde

> not only with a declaration of his subject and an invocation of a muse but also with an assertion of his reasons for writing it, that he includes in his epilogue a farewell to his poem, and that he repeatedly interrupts his narrative to comment not only on the action of the poem but also on the story as story--all, taken together, indicate that Troilus and Criseyde, in some sense, is a poem about poetry. (152)

The Troilus is concerned with itself as poetry. Moreover, it is concerned with the preservation of history, of human experience, in art. It is only in its relevance to the reader that history has meaning. If history is meaningless, so is the poetry in which it is encased. Peter Travis cites Troilus 3.1331-36 and comments,

> As he explicitly encourages his readers to modify and displace his authorial words, feelings, and narration with their own, Chaucer is indirectly asking them--through his narrative persona--whether in fact such a rewriting of his tale is not precisely the interpretive process in which they have been already and always engaged. (203)

Travis's comment recalls a statement made by Todorov in his Introduction to Poetics: "In reading, we trace a passive writing; we add and suppress, in the text read, what we want or do not want to find there; reading is no longer immanent, once there is a reader" (4). Chaucer is quite aware that he does not write in an authorial vacuum, that his reader is important as as the person who interprets his work. Some critics note that Chaucer is more than aware of his reader. Ganim comments: "Chaucer does . . . manipulate his

reader as the narrative progresses, almost as if the reader too were a character" ("Consciousness and Time" 79-80). The reader is not allowed to be passive as he reads the Troilus.

The narrator does not manipulate the facts of history--unless he lies. He can, however, manipulate the way history is interpreted. That Troilus fell in love with Criseyde and that she deserted him is history to Chaucer. However, the manner in which this history is presented affects our view of the characters and of the situation. Our response to the story is directed by Chaucer's manipulation of the language. Although he cannot change what he believes is historical fact without lying, Chaucer can play with his narrative, and through his narrative and his language, he can direct his readers' responses.

Karla Taylor has noted, "The mutual mutability of love and language conditions Troilus and Criseyde's relationship to literary tradition" ("Proverbs and Convention" 291). Lovers wish that their love will last forever; writing may outlast its creator. Both love and language, however, while they exist, undergo change. Part of Troilus's tragedy is his own refusal to change. Pandarus and Criseyde are survivors. Pandarus will tell Troilus that he hates his niece (5.1732-33). Troilus cannot hate Criseyde. He is unable to say the word in relation to her. He instead says that he cannot bring

himself to "unloven" her (5.1698).

This study has not tried to establish a "meaning" for the Troilus. Todorov has said of poetics that "it does not seem to name meaning but aims at a knowledge of the general laws that preside over the birth of each work" (6). That language is a major concern of Chaucer is obvious; he is as concerned with his poetics as he is with his history because it is through his poetics that the story lives. Love and language are both subject to change. This point, however, does not diminish their worth. Though language is mutable, it is the poet's only means of carrying over, of translating, his tale. It is also the only medium through which it can hope for immortality as it kisses the steps of the masters, which are themselves old books and subject to a mutable language.

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