

## Shakespeare Adapts Chaucer: *Troilus and Cressida*

by David Cope

*Troilus and Cressida* presents one of the more complicated Shakespearean subjects for source study; unlike those plays derived from Hollinshed or Plutarch, where many passages are condensed or taken almost verbatim from their sources, this play deals with the matter of Troy, a subject glossed, rewritten and reconceived by numerous Latin and medieval authors and translators. Shakespeare did not follow any of his sources closely, but seems to have drawn on different versions of the story for individual motifs and scenes, and thus any source study of this play is fraught with the difficulty of interpreting which source he used at a given point in his version of the story. Versions that he may have drawn upon include Ovid's story of the quarrel between Ajax and Ulysses over the latter's armor in *Metamorphoses* XIII, Chapman's translation of books I-II and VII-XI of *The Iliad* and Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, a translation of Raoul Lefevre's prose version of the story, for much of the war material.

The love story largely derives from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*—a "rifiamento of Boccaccio's *Filostrato*," the first version to emphasize Pandarus as a galeotto (Bullough 91). He may also have drawn upon Henryson's *The Testament of Cresseid* and Lydgate's *Troy Book*, a "free rendering" of Guido delle Colonne's 1287 *Historia Troiana* (Bullough 92), itself a Latin translation of Benoit de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*, the first version that developed the love triangle of Troilus, Briseda (Cressida) and Diomed (Bullough 90). Other versions of the story include Dictys the Cretan's fourth century *Ephemeris Belli Troiani*, translated by Joseph of Exeter in the twelfth century, and Dares Phrygius's 6th century *De Excidio Troiae Historiae*, both of which influenced Chaucer.

Shakespeare may also have been working from earlier English plays on the subject: the 1515-16 *Story of Troilus and Pander*, comedies such as *Troilus ex Chaucero*, *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune* (1582), and Dekker and Chettle's 1599 *Troyelles & Cresseda* (Bullough 96-98).

Despite this plethora of possible sources, most critics agree that the bard worked primarily from Chaucer for the love story, and from Chapman's *Seaven Bookes of the Iliades* for the story of Hector's challenge and eventual death, yet even here one must be cautious.<sup>1</sup> The great debate over whether the play is a comedy or tragedy stems from the fact that Shakespeare developed his characters as conflicted in ways very different from the characters in the sources, sometimes to the point of obscuring the influence of these sources; Bullough notes that the play "accentuated the weaknesses of human nature which he found in his sources so as to show the evil effects of passion on the judgment in both the political and erotic stories combined in the play" (100). I am most interested in Shakespeare's use of Chaucer's story and will concentrate mainly on that; it will be necessary to not only show what he took, but also how he adapted or changed the materials he received. Accordingly, I shall examine the four major characters of the love story, tracing plot adaptations through the changes in these characters.

#### *Criseyde and Cressida*

The Chaucerian coming to Shakespeare's play after reading *Troilus and Criseyde* is at first taken aback by the relative shallowness which with the four major characters of the narrative are drawn, and only gradually comes to realize that the bard's purpose in telling the story was very different from that of his predecessor. Perhaps this is most

evident in the character of Cressida. Donaldson goes so far as to claim that her personality is "so dissimilar that some scholars have denied that Chaucer's Criseyde had any significant influence on Shakespeare's Cressida" (75). Bayley claims that like Marilyn Monroe she is "discontinuous with any idea of personality" (61); Jill Mann concurs, believing that Shakespeare "carefully *suppresses* all that sense of a living human responsiveness lying behind speech" in her, producing a "new Cressida" as the social context changes (227), and noting that we are denied "access to Cressida's inner life" in a way that forces us to evaluate her according to the values depicted in the society of the play. Greene extends this view, seeing her as "a daughter of the game" (143; 4.5.63) in which the represented society "reduces people to terms of appetite and trade" (137) and in which a powerless woman must make shift to deal with the stresses with which she is forced to live.

This of course raises a further question: to what extent was Shakespeare relying on his audience's prior knowledge of her position (through Chaucer), leaving unstated motivating factors that should give us a clearer understanding of her position? That his audience was familiar with the story is a given. Shakespeare expected them to know parts of the story that he did not present; for example, almost as the play begins, Pandarus expects both Troilus and the audience to assume that he has already "gone between and between" the lovers to arrange their affair (1.1.71-72); further, the earlier episode of Calkas's escape and Cressida's remaining in Troy is assumed when Pandarus snorts that "she's a fool to stay behind her father" (1.1.80-81). Donaldson argues that Shakespeare was the "victim of literary determinism" because in Elizabethan England familiarity

with the story had reduced each of the major characters to types: Troilus as the innocent and true lover betrayed, Pandarus as the scheming pimp, and Cressida as the wanton whore.

Donaldson claims that her character had so deteriorated by Elizabethan times that "there was nothing he could do but present a thoroughly malodorous Cressida" (77); this begs the question in a way similar to the positions of those critics who only see in Shylock the stereotype of the money-grubbing Jewish villain, yet the *text* does present a Cressida who is wanton, "ominously jocular" in her opening scene, where she laughs that she will "spring up in his ears an 'twere a nettle against May" (Thompson 123; 1.2.175-76). The fact that she is objectified—presented without female companions with whom to share thoughts and without the extensive interior monologues central to understanding Chaucer's *Criseyde*—deprives her of motivation for her choices and thus of audience sympathy, and yet Shakespeare also adapted the narrative itself, eliminating scenes and compressing those that do appear in Chaucer in ways which further affect our perceptions of her character.

In *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer prepares us to understand and empathize with Cressida's position by showing us Calkas's departure, and the fact that she is "allone" as the daughter of a traitor is emphasized when she sues to Hector for protection. Further, we learn that she is mourning for her lost husband, and though when she appears in public at Athena's Festival she stands "ful lowe and still allone, byhynden other folk . . . and neigh the dore, ay undre shames drede" (1.178-80), she is nevertheless "debonaire of chere, with ful assured lokyng and manere" (1.181-82). Donaldson takes Chaucer to task

for her "abundance of contradictory qualities" (81), not pausing to recognize that more than one personality trait is at work in a given scene; in the temple scene, for example, we see both Criseyde's true self—the confident beautiful woman—and the concern that she has as a result of her tenuous place in the society around her.

Her interior motivations—and the contradictions that Love forces on one in such a politically charged scenario—are developed much more thoroughly after Troilus shows interest in her. Pandarus claims that Troilus will die without her love and implies that she will be blamed if he does die; she considers what this might mean politically for her, whether he is "worthy" enough to be her lover, how an affair with a king's son might affect her public honor, as well as the fact that she wants "noon housbonde seyn to me 'Chek mat!'" (2.754), considering too "the tresoun that to wommen hath ben do" (2.793) and the fact that "he which that nothing undertaketh, nothyng n'acheveth" (2.807-08). She is later swayed by a discussion of love with her nieces and women in which Antigone sings the praises of love's bliss, and yet even after this Criseyde dreams that an eagle tears her heart out and replaces it with Troilus's. We understand *why* she makes the emotional and intellectual choices she does in ways that Shakespeare never approaches or at best only implies, and as a result Criseyde is a serious character whose fall we will later rue—for even that fall is not capricious, but understood as a choice involving terrible agony on her part.

Shakespeare, on the other hand, initially delivers us the basic character presented by Chaucer in the scenes with Pandarus, the only place where she is free to be her merry self. Cressida is similarly quick-witted in her opening scene in the play, trading quips

with Alexander and Pandarus, mocking Troilus's tears and fending off Pandarus's attempts to bully her when he asks her if she knows what a man is: "Ay, a minc'd man, and then to be bak'd with no date in the pie, for then the man's date is out" (1.2.256-57). The passing of the heroes on stage and her mocking review of them is derived from, though unlike Chaucer's version of the story. There, Troilus passes beneath Criseyde's window twice, first after a battle in which his horse was wounded and his "helm tohewe" (2.638), a moment that moves Criseyde to seriously consider his "excellent prowesse, and his estat, and also his renown, his wit, his shap, and ek his gentillesse" (2.660-62); his second passage beneath her window occurs as Pandarus tries to convince her that ending the mourning period for her lost husband and agreeing to love Troilus was the right thing to do. Here, she "wex as red as rose" and he "gan hire humbly to saluwe," blushing back at her (2.1256-57); their love is tenderly and innocently conceived and full of hope as it begins. This is a stark contrast to Shakespeare's Cressida, who publicly mocks like a barroom bawd, only briefly admitting her attraction to Troilus and the conflict inherent in her choice ("men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is") in her closing soliloquy.

Criseyde's betrayal is handled differently in Chaucer as well. There, she "was allowed to transfer her heart from Troilus to Diomedes in relative privacy and with less shocking immediacy" (Donaldson 114), yet even more importantly she is once again forced to consider the real situation in which she is trapped. Chaucer's Diomedes is a far more cunning seducer than Shakespeare's, first swearing to "ben youre frend" (5.128) as she "thoughte hire sorwful herte brast a-two" (5.180), and later, as she despairs at being unable to see Troilus and dreams of sneaking off to find him, he tells her that "ther shal

nat oon [of the Trojans] to mercy gon on-lyve" (5.888), alternately terrifying her and reminding her of her fortune in escaping, tempering these ploys with his promises of friendship. Further, he is presented as being the model of persistence, wearing her out with his arguments until she finally gives in; she is not a wanton, but assents to the affair largely because she is exhausted and despairs of ever seeing Troy or Troilus again. In Shakespeare, by contrast, the transfer of her affections is rapid and quintessentially public: her change happens during a truce in which Troilus and Ulysses can watch her as Thersites watches them, Troilus's judgments of her as a whore resounding through the audience as Thersites mocks them both in a scene where she is "unanimously awarded the status of whoredom" (Donaldson 114).

Shakespeare changed her character, cut those scenes necessary to Chaucer's version and reinvented the betrayal scenario for two reasons: first, he was satirizing the entire set of love conventions represented by Chaucer's poem and needed to show Cressida in a far different light than that shining over her earlier incarnation. Second, he was faced with a dramatic problem: Chaucer's poem assumes a leisurely and attentive reader; it is largely composed of dialogue, interior monologue and descriptions that would quickly become tiresome on stage, where action has to be quick and clear. Shakespeare solved this problem in three ways: first, by integrating the war plot into the story, he forces the audience to integrate a second level of plot into their perceptions, providing relief from and contrast to the love story; second, by reconstructing Cressida's public persona largely in terms of the private persona Criseyde showed only to Pandarus, he replaces the multiple motivations with comic riposte, attempting to humanize her via the

short soliloquy at the end of her opening scene—though even there she is "aware of herself as a commodity whose value varies with supply and demand" (Greene 139). . . One of the play's major concerns is the problem of human value in a cutthroat universe; she must in some ways represent the values of her society for us to get the full impact of the play's message. Third, Shakespeare eliminates the awkward intimacy of the betrayal scenes by presenting a scene involving the motif of characters overlooking characters, decentering the presentation with comic commentary; this replaces interior agony with dramatic spectacle, while at the same time distancing us from Cressida and again forcing us the question of human value at the heart of the play.

### *Troilus*

Shakespeare's *Troilus* differs from his Chaucerian counterpart in several significant ways. First, Chaucer's *Troilus* initially despises the rites of love as "lewed observaunces" (1.198) and lovers themselves as "veray fooles, nyce and blynde" who "nys nat oon kan war by other be" (1.202-03). He is struck by love in the conventional fashion, love entering his heart as an "inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation" on the one beloved (Capellanus 28); having been snared, *Troilus* suffers the agony of its contrary effects in his first canticus, a Petrarchan song that is both an index of his preoccupation with himself<sup>2</sup> and establishes the hyperbolic tone of his personality: "for hote of cold. for cold of hote, I dye" (1.420). Further, the canticus displays the grounds on which the entire poem will be played—love as contrary, both nurturing and destroying the lover.

The emphasis is sharply different in Shakespeare; barely a hundred lines into the play, Troilus presents a "metaphor of merchandising" that reduces Cressida, though "a pearl of price," to "chattel" (Bryant Jr. 190). Shakespeare's Troilus does not undergo the sea change of emotions when he falls in love and consequently is neither as trapped in his emotions nor as bruised by them. Further, he is far less bashful than Chaucer's Troilus; "exalting woman as goddess, reducing her to object," he unwittingly displays his predatory attitude toward Cressida (Greene 138), implying that his goal is "her bed" (1.1.100). The attitude resurfaces in the discussion of Helen, where his defense of her as "remainder viands" (2.2.70) and soiled silks that should not be returned to the merchant is crass even as praise. Even when he does praise her as "a pearl" (2.81), he points out that her taking has "turn'd crown'd kings to merchants" (83), primarily understanding her as a "worthy prize" (86).

After arguing that the Trojans should defend the taking of Helen, Shakespeare's Troilus does not go to battle, as Helen coyly suggests when she says he "hangs the lip at something" (3.1.137-39). Love's effect on Chaucer's Troilus is precisely the opposite of this: he not only "pleyd tho leoun" in battle, but

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

Despite this ennobling effect, Chaucer's Troilus is a naive and hesitant lover who must be

instructed how to write a love letter (2.1023-43) and whose every move must be planned and guided by Pandarus, even to the point of having to be thrown into bed with Criseyde (3.1097); yet he is also a jealous man who on the basis of a rumor that Criseyde "sholden love oon hatte Horaste" (3.797) accuses her of infidelity even as they first meet. Criseyde defends herself against "fals felicitee" and "mannes joie unstable" (3.814, 820), later complaining against his jealousy (3.988-1054), pulling the sheet over her head as she swears "in thought ne dede untrew to Troilus was nevere yet Criseyde" (1053-54).

Shakespeare's Troilus is nowhere near as hesitant nor as jealous. As in Chaucer's story, Pandarus stays to watch the fun, though here the action takes place in the garden, not in Cressida's bedroom during a thunderstorm. Troilus is "giddy" and "expectation whirls" him around (3.2.18), yet Cressida is the one who draws back and must be persuaded that her fears are groundless. Troilus finds his tongue quickly, swearing that "in all Cupid's pageant there is presented no monster" (3.2.74-75) and that "Troilus shall be such to Cressid as what envy can say worst shall be a mock for his truth, and what truth can speak truest not truer than Troilus" (3.2.95-98). Cressida eventually finds her voice, and they quickly kiss and proceed to vows, his vow betraying egocentrism in his claim that he is "as true as truth's simplicity" (3.2.169), while hers, as previously noted, frivolously plays with the idea of her own falsehood. There is no debate over jealousy, and Troilus is relatively confident—even somewhat egocentric—and more tender than he appears elsewhere in the play.

Shakespeare has changed this part of the story in other ways, too, eliminating the preliminary meeting at Deiphobus's house, where Criseyde had come to seek protection

from the members of the royal family and where Pandarus first brought the lovers together in a brief encounter. Further, Chaucer had carefully shown us the intimacy of their night of love, bringing us to foreplay and his loss as to "what to don" (1253), asking her to "techeth me how that I may disserve youre thonk" (3.1293-94), presenting Criseyde as merciful, drawing him in with her welcome. Once they have come to consummation, Troilus sings his second canticus, a Boethian paean to love "that of erthe and sea hath governaunce" and which "knetteth lawe of compaignie" in which "couples doth in vertu dwelle" (3.1744, 1748-49), giving their love a metaphysical purpose. None of this is in the play.

The playwright also eliminates the three years of courtship that pass before Calchas requests the trade for Antenor, instead foreshortening the plot by bringing Diomed and Aeneas to the lovers' door immediately after their first night of love. By eliminating the prior meeting, Shakespeare cuts away a lot of the tenuousness of their first steps toward love; deleting their intimacy during the night, the paean to Love and the passage of time in which to develop their love, the playwright further distances us from the *meaning* that suffuses their affair, interrupting what little intimacy there is with the demands of the world. The two Chaucerian aubades that the lovers sing as dawn approaches, he bewailing the passing of the night (3.1422-42) and she reproaching the coming of day (3.1450-63), are replaced with a briefly intimate scene in which both lovers are saddened by the passing of night and coming of day. The Shakespearean Troilus, though sometimes presented tenderly and without either the jealousy or naivete that characterizes Chaucer's lover, is nevertheless deprived of the tenuous beginnings,

intimacy and formal courtliness that suffuse the Chaucerian narrative; the bard must, of course, distance us from these things because the play has other purposes than tragic catharsis, focusing instead on satirizing such love.

Shakespeare also handles the passage of Cressida to the Greeks, her betrayal of love and Troilus's reactions to these events in a drastically edited manner. Shakespeare's Troilus discovers the trade as he and Cressida wake from their first night of love, his first reactions questioning whether the decision to trade her is "concluded" and advising Aeneas that "we met by chance, you did not find me here" (4.2.67, 71); he does not initially protest and seems more concerned with the impression his presence makes on Aeneas and with stifling any gossip that might come from it. Chaucer's Troilus, by contrast, learns of it in a parliamentary session; we hear no words from him at first, the narrator instead presenting us with his inner anguish and his motivations: "how to save hire honour" and how to stop the exchange (4.159). Once the trade is concluded upon, Troilus goes to his room and is driven mad by "the furie and al the rage, which that his herte twiste and faste threste" (4.253-54), cursing Fortune and wailing in a series of apostrophes about his lost love.

Pandarus enters and suggests that he could find Troilus another lover, a move that snaps him to awareness; rejecting this advice, he next considers the ramifications of whether he should abduct her, concluding that it will harm her public honor. Later, in a Boethian argument with God, he torments himself with the question of whether his fate was predestined or the result of his own free choice, concluding by praying that Jove "do me deyen sone, or bryng Criseyde and me fro this destresse" (4.1081-82). He finally

comes to Criseyde, where the two of them plan her escape from the Greeks; already he worries that the Greeks will sway her, that she'll never return, his insecurity and jealousy again surfacing, and she again swears that she won't be false. Once Criseyde passes to the Greeks, Troilus tries to maintain hope over the ten days appointed before her escape, but when he learns that she has betrayed him, he goes wild, killing "thousandes" (5.1802) before Achilles kills him. Chaucer ends his tale with the ascent of Troilus's soul to "the holoughnesse of the eighthe spere" where he "fully gan despise this wrecched world" (5.1809, 1816-17), holding all things as vanity. The poem ends as tragedy; Criseyde, having lost hope, turns to a new love, and Troilus's misplaced trust leads him to the despair that drives him onto the field of battle, where he learns, too late, that even love will drive a man to death.

Shakespeare of course retained the main outlines of this story, but effected the transfer in a public manner, reducing the Chaucerian Criseyde's private agony to a public spectacle in which a whorish Cressida kisses most of the Greek warriors in a lavish display of sensuality. He also sets this portion of the story during a truce period, making it possible for Troilus to visit the Greek camp where we see him writhe as Cressida gives her heart to Diomed; his agony is undercut by the presence of Ulysses, who must at the same time admire & be somewhat amused by the agony of the young man, and by Thersites, the Greek warrior who as a kind of privileged fool sees the whole scene as nothing more than the machinations of lechery, laughing at all three lovers as fools lost in their bawdry.

We also see Troilus at the last, enraged and desperate, swearing that "hope of revenge shall hide our inward woe" (5.10.31). The public undercutting of his agony continues: even his hope of revenge is eclipsed in Pandarus's closing speech, mocking traitors and bawds and bequeathing his diseases to the audience. In Shakespeare's version, then, all the private moments in which to fully understand the difficult traversals and delicate agonies of the lovers are eliminated; we are left with those feelings being mocked and thwarted—and nowhere does Troilus ascend to heaven or gain any Boethian understanding of the falseness of this world. This vision is reduced to a desire for revenge—which is itself mocked.

#### *Pandarus*

In both his Chaucerian and Shakespearean incarnations, Pandarus hails from a long line of medieval galeottos, the most famous being Galeotto or Gallehaut in the Lancelot and Guinivere story, Tristan in the story of Tristan and Iseut, and that Paolo of *Inferno* V. Shakespeare takes Pandarus almost intact from Chaucer, but leaves out the Chaucerian pander's most manipulative arguments as well as his most pernicious and self-serving suggestions in book five. When we first meet him, he comes upon Troilus in his distress over having fallen in love and immediately sets about to pry the source of the boy's distress from him. At first, Troilus won't reveal his secret love, but Pandarus appeals to his sense of honor and courage as a soldier, calling him a man with a "coward heart" and a "recreant to his own tene" (1.792, 814), a ploy that startles Troilus into giving up his secret. Pandarus's conception of the love affair may be seen in his reaction to the naming of Criseyde: "here bygynneth game" (1.868); love is essentially a game to

him, not a serious undertaking in which people may be hurt. This cavalier attitude has its sinister overtones; somewhat like Polonius, Pandarus seems a bumbler and yet meddles with the affairs of princes—and people die for it.

Shakespeare's Pandarus, by contrast, is fed up with Troilus when we first meet him, apparently already having "gone between and between" and gotten "small thanks" for his efforts (1.1.71-72); Shakespeare telescopes all the early manipulations of Troilus into these brief comments, picking up the story, as promised, "in the middle" (Prologue 28). The Shakespearean pander gives us little sense of the ploys and deceptions that are made explicit in Chaucer; yet his impatience displays a level of self-awareness and recognition of the limits to which a courtier may be driven that Chaucer's Pandarus lacks.

Chaucer's Pandarus next offers his services to the boy, making a beeline for Criseyde, where he begins his function as a galeotto, first joking about his lack of love and trying to get her to dance with him as a way of elevating her mood and lowering her guard; he hints that he could "tell a thyng to doon yow pleye" (1.121), teasing her with the object of his visit. When she asks how Hector is faring in the war, Pandarus begins comparing him with Troilus, "the wise, worthy Ector the secounde" (158), naming him again and again as being worthy, wise, valiant and gentle—a portion of the narrative followed closely by Shakespeare, with the distinction that the playwright removes the conversation to a window where Cressida and Pandarus comment on the knights passing beneath them. As already noted, Shakespeare also takes up the private jesting between Criseyde and Pandarus—most of it initiated by Pandarus to break the spell of her grieving for her lost husband—and makes this a major key in the components of her personality.

He does not follow the multiple ploys with which Chaucer's Pandarus plies her, deleting the *carpe diem* arguments, the introduction of guilt if she refuses Troilus and he dies, and the rehearsal of the boy's confession of love; yet his Pandarus does work her over, alternately praising Troilus, and when she will not bite, upbraiding her:

Why, have you any discretion? have you any eyes? do you know  
what a man is? Is not birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, manhood,  
learning, gentleness, virtue, youth, liberality, and suchlike, the spice  
and and salt that season a man? (1.2.251-55)

She continues to resist his arguments, jesting about defending herself from the wiles of men until Pandarus presents her with Troilus's token; even there, she mocks, "by the same token, you are a bawd" (1.2.281), and we do not know that he has been successful until her soliloquy after his departure.

Because Chaucer's Troilus is a naive lover, his Pandarus guides the affair much more thoroughly than Shakespeare's; he teaches the boy how to write a love letter and delivers it himself, plans the evening at Deiphebus's house and the ruse to bring the lover's together and, when they are in the bedroom at his house, urges them on, castigating Troilus for not taking the initiative, scolding Cressida for her lecturing the boy on his jealousy. Finally, when Troilus does not act, Pandarus "into the bed hym cast, and seyde, 'O thef, is this a mannes herte?'" (3. 1097-98). None of this is in Shakespeare. In the play, we next meet Pandarus with Helen and Paris, where his repetitions of "fair" and "sweet" mark him as a supremely oily flatterer—and yet he displays some loyalty to the lovers here, for when Paris and Helen ply him for information about Troilus and Cres-

sida, he deflects their inquiries and says nothing. Shakespeare follows the Chaucerian pander's spirit fairly closely in the bedroom scene—like Chaucer's Pandarus, Shakespeare's urges, cajoles and upbraids the lovers to get them into bed, though Cressida does not upbraid the boy for jealousy and Pandarus does not throw him into bed. In both narratives, Pandarus is like a rooster crowing on the morning after their tryst; Chaucer's begins to "pleye" with Cressida, coyly asking "how stant it now this mury morwe" (3.1562-63), while Shakespeare's asks, "how now, how now, how go maidenheads?" (4.2.23).

At this point, the two versions diverge somewhat; Shakespeare abruptly ends the jesting with the appearance of Aeneas and the news that Cressida will be traded for Antenor. Pandarus goes immediately into his defensive mode, claiming only moments after his jests that "I knew thou wouldest be his death" (3.2.86) and repeatedly advising Cressida that she has no choice but to "be gone" (3.2.91-94). The change in Pandarus's attitude is delayed three years in Chaucer's version of the story, and there we see a more callous and sinister uncle who, when confronted with Troilus's sorrow, suggests he can get another lover for the boy. Troilus is astounded:

Thow biddest me I shulde love another  
 Al fresshly newe, and lat Criseyde go!  
 It lith nat in my power, leeve brother,  
 And kanstow playen raket, to and fro,  
 Nettle in, dok out, now this, now that, Pandare?  
 Now foule falle hire for thi wo that care!  
 (4.456-62)

Pandarus follows this ploy with yet another, the suggestion that Troilus should abduct Criseyde, but this too is rejected on carefully reasoned grounds; exasperated, the pander

claims that if he were so caught up in love, he would take her "though al this town cride on this thyng" (4.585) at the same time advising Troilus to "devyne nat in resoun ay so depe ne preciously, but help thiself anon" (4.5-90).

This does not persuade the boy, yet Pandarus stays by Troilus's side, again bringing letters back and forth, this time between Troy and the Greek camp, reassuring Troilus when he begins to despair, reinterpreting the boy's dream that Criseyde made love to a boar as a sign that she loves her supposedly dying father, finally justifying his own actions by blaming Criseyde. Shakespeare's Pandarus does not bow out with such self-justifications, and his Troilus much more clearly lays the blame for his sorrow at the pander's feet, dismissing him as a "broker lackey" (5.10.33). The pander has the last word in the play, mocking the humble bee's death with a quick ditty, begging the prostitutes to weep at his fall and bequeathing his diseases to the audience.<sup>3</sup> Unlike Chaucer's Pandarus, who begins as manipulator and ends with a self-justification and projection of blame in the face of tragedy, Shakespeare's emerges as the mocking manipulator not only of the lovers, but of the audience as well: the lovers' loss and the audience's discomfort are his triumph.

### *Diomedes*

The most formulaic of the characters, Chaucer's Diomedes is more clever, less spiteful than Shakespeare's character, who seems more intent on destroying Troilus, getting at him through Cressida. Chaucer's Diomedes focuses entirely on Criseyde, only noting in passing that Troilus is her lover. Even as he is introduced, we know he is a villain—lusting for Criseyde, guessing that she loves Troilus and revealing that he "shal

fynde a meene that she naught wite as yet shall what I mene" (5.103-04). As he travels back to the Greek camp with Criseyde, he begins his assault on her with a formulaic statement of his submission to the lady; he swears to be her friend and to be submissive to her wishes, displaying that gentillesse that is supposedly the mark of the true knight. Hearing only "a word or two" (5.179), she despairs and yet thanks him for his reassurances; her mind is still with Troilus.

Diomedes returns to Calcas's tent ten days later, first attacking her hopes by asserting that Troy will be destroyed—"ther shal nat oon to mercy gon on lyve" (5.888)—and that "men shul drede . . . from hennesforth to ravysshen any queene, so cruel shal oure wreche on hem be sene" (5.894-96). After destroying her hopes, Diomedes points out that she is fortunate to be alive and out of the city, again claiming that he will serve her himself, blushing, turning his head away and pausing dramatically before asserting that he will be her man and defend her against all others. He speaks well enough so that she grants him another visit on the following day, yet she is confused by his assault, defending the honor of the Trojans and yet accepting that the Greeks will win the war, revealing that she once was married and that loss of that love has left her devastated and "disposed bet, so mot I go, unto my deth" (5.984-85). She does not mention Troilus, claiming that no other love "ther in myn herte nys, ne nevere was" (5.978), hiding her affection for him here as surely as she had done in Troy.

Criseyde has a whole night to consider what Diomedes has said; he continues to press her on the following day, and she finally gives him the gifts that Troilus once gave her—"the faire baye stede," the brooch and a part of her sleeve to be hung as a pennon

(5.1038). At this point she is in total despair, trapped in the futility of continuing to love Troilus, whom she believes has no future, cursing herself for having turned against him and worrying that in the future "my belle shal be ronge! And wommen moost wol haten me of alle" (5.1062-63). We see no more of Diomedes after the seduction is accomplished; Deiphobus brings Troilus the brooch taken from Diomedes in battle, and after absorbing the meaning implied by Diomedes's having possession of it, Troilus resolves to kill the Greek warrior. Even this purpose is thwarted; Troilus dies unrevenged.

Shakespeare's Diomedes is less the shrewd and genteel psychological manipulator, more the crassly assertive and petulant lover. We first observe his spiteful greeting to Aeneas and his deprecation of Helen; far more bitter than Chaucer's Diomedes, he is angry that "for every false drop in her bawdy veins, a Grecian's life has sunk . . . [and] a Troyan hath been slain (4.1.70-73), exposing the stupidity of the war while simultaneously indicting himself and the Trojans for their part in it. In the exchange scene, he follows the same pattern as in Chaucer, musing on Cressida's beauty which "pleads your fair usage," yet without chivalric ploys claiming that she "shall be [his] mistress, and command him wholly" (4.4.118-20). This short speech sacrifices subtlety for compression, simultaneously preserving Diomedes's ultimate purpose while changing our impression of his character. The ensuing argument with Troilus, which is not in Chaucer, further displays Diomedes' sneering, superior attitude; after eliciting Troilus's rage, Diomedes counters by saying, "when I am hence, I'll answer to my lust, and know you, lord, I'll nothing do on charge," mocking the Trojan's love with the claim that Cressida will be prized at "her own worth" (4.4.131-34).

The seduction scene is quite different from Chaucer's; Shakespeare has eliminated the assertions that everyone in Troy will be killed—the psychologizing destruction of her hope—as well as the gradual turning that Criseyde experiences; instead, it appears that she has already pledged herself to Diomedes and promised him a token, now reneging on her agreement. Diomedes is petulant, threatening to leave her; she calls him back, strokes his cheek and brings him Troilus's sleeve. Having given it, she tries to take it back, yet he snatches it, claiming "I had your heart before, this follows it" (5.2.83). When she won't tell him whose it was, Diomedes mocks her by claiming that he'll wear it on his helmet and thus give the unnamed lover grief; as he leaves her, he mocks her, saying "thou never shalt mock Diomed again" (5.2.99). All of these exchanges are public, commented on by the onlooking Ulysses and Troilus, both the lovers and on-lookers in turn viewed with disdain by Thersites. Donaldson points out that Chaucer's Criseyde "was allowed to transfer her heart from Troilus to Diomedes in relative privacy and with less shocking immediacy" than in Shakespeare's version (114), which publicly rehearses the private anguish we saw in Chaucer in a way that mocks both Cressida's anguish and Troilus's grief and anger even as they surface. Further, by not presenting the gradual stages of Cressida's turn, Shakespeare makes her more capricious—and subject to the laughter of both Thersites and, ultimately, the audience.

Diomedes appears three more times in the play; first, having taken Troilus's horse from him in battle, he sends it back to Cressida, claiming that he is "her knight by proof" (5.5.4). This detail is from Caxton's and Lydgate's versions of the story, not from Chaucer (Bullough 107); it functions to further expand the assertiveness and disdain at the

heart of Diomedes' character, while at the same time implying that he would give proof of his love to Cressida. Later, we see a scene in which Diomedes inconclusively fights with Troilus, and a last triumphant appearance, where he announces that Achilles has killed Hector, apparently rubbing it in that he has been victorious in every way. None of this, of course, is in Chaucer, whose narrative dismisses Diomedes after the seduction, concentrating instead on Troilus's despair, demise and ascension.

### *Conclusion*

Examining the four major characters of the love story in *Troilus and Cressida* gives us a key to both the meanings of the play and its relation to its sources. The play displays one of Shakespeare's most intriguing uses of his source materials, the love story played out against the larger matter of Troy with both the love and chivalric honor of the source materials exposed and deflated as false. In order to accomplish this, Shakespeare adapts all of the major characters, eliminating much of their inner reasoning and motivating factors, cutting scenes and interior monologues that would give them a purpose for their behaviors. Cressida is far closer to the stereotype of the wanton, not the conscious figure of Chaucer's poem whose inner agonies and choices give us reason to admire her. Troilus is less naive, less jealous and unsure of himself, less noble, perhaps more cynical in the way he evaluates people. Pandarus is less the organizer than his Chaucerian counterpart, far less the psychological adept who can find anyone's weak spot; he also is less inclined to blame Cressida at the end, but rather sneers in a supremely depraved gesture at the ends of love and at the audience themselves. Finally, Diomedes employs little of the psychological manipulation that brings Criseyde into the Chaucerian

Diomedes's arms; he is more obviously a stock villain, crassly assertive and scornful. As the play ends, each of these characters is left with only the ends to which their actions have led them, their actions further deflated by the commentary of Thersites and Pandarus. These changes and the deflations that occur in Shakespeare's characterization, elimination of scenes and in the running commentary are of course related to the playwright's greater purpose--debunking a misplaced and foolish ideal in a savage comedy that exposes all of its excesses and stupidity. None of this, of course, harms Chaucer's version of the story, which remains one of the two greatest late medieval poems, a model upon which to understand how characters may be motivated by the turns their lives take.

*End Notes*

<sup>1</sup>Ann Thompson summarizes earlier scholarship on Shakespeare's indebtedness to Chaucer as follows: R. A. Small in 1899 saw "considerable evidence" that *Troilus and Criseyde* had served as a source for the play (111), while J. J. Jusserand felt that "Shakespeare seems never to have read Chaucer's admirable version of the story" (112). K. Deighton (1906) felt that Chaucer's influence was "likely but not proved" (112); W. W. Lawrence (1916) and H. E. Rollins (1917) both agreed that Chaucer was the clear source of the love story. Tatlock (1915) minimized the influence of Chaucer, pointing instead to the whole of the Troy matter, and W. B. D. Henderson (1935) argued that Lydgate's *Troy Book* was Shakespeare's primary source. The 1953 variorum editor took a non-committal position, claiming that "if Shakespeare used Chaucer he did so rather casually," yet "the burden of proof is on those who question his connection with a poem which everyone knew to be the authoritative treatment of the Cressida story" (112). Later commentary has generally been favorable to Chaucer. R. K. Presson (1953) noted that several aspects of the Shakespearean love plot are present in Chaucer but not in Lydgate or Caxton (114); M. C. Bradbrook (1958) and Kenneth Muir (1959) both saw Chaucer as the "main source for the love story" (113), and Bullough (1966) argued that Shakespeare was "generally indebted . . . [to Chaucer] for many important features of the Troilus and Cressida relationship" (113). Finally, Robert Kimbrough (1964) accepted Chaucer's influence but was more interested in "what Shakespeare did with the story rather than where he found it" (114).

<sup>2</sup>In the twenty-one lines of the Canticus, Troilus refers to himself twenty-one times. *I*, *ich*, *iwis* are repeated thirteen times; *my*, *myn* are repeated four times; *me* is repeated four times.

<sup>3</sup>The play is of course riddled with disease imagery, which Thompson feels may derive from Robert Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* (Thompson 121), the Scottish Chaucerian's sequel to Chaucer's poem. In Henryson's version, Diomedes uses and discards Cresseid, who later curses Venus; as a result of her curse, the gods give her the plague. The poem ends on an intensely poignant note, Troilus seeing her among the lepers, not recognizing her and yet being reminded of her in the leprous face that he gazes upon. Bullough also mentions the possible influence of Henryson's poem in Cressida's claim that she "shall be plagu'd" (5.2.102; Bullough 100).

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