THREE IMAGES IN <u>TROILUS AND CRISEYDE</u>

THREE IMAGES

A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF NAUTICAL,

BIRD, AND FIRE IMAGERY IN CHAUCER'S

TROILUS AND CRISEYDE

by

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ABSTRACT

Chapter One is devoted to a survey of critical approaches to imagery, particularly as they apply to medieval literature. The primary focus centres on the exegetical tradition, and the work done by Robertson, Kaske and Huppé. The importance of this school is illustrated first through selections from general works on Chaucer by Beryl Rowland and Chauncey Wood, and then through articles by Van and Barney based specifically on Troilus and Criseyde.

Chapters Two, Three, and Four are based on an examination of three different images in Troilus and Criseyde. Nautical imagery is approached by means of a study of the traditional symbolic values attached to the various components of this category -- the sea, ships, voyages, and stars. Chapter Three investigates the classical and contemporary elements of bird imagery and the way in which this enhances the meaning of the poem. Chapter Four is concerned with Chaucer's use of fire imagery in the poem, primarily as an image of concupiscence. The thesis as a whole is designed to improve our understanding of Troilus and Criseyde through an examination of Chaucer's approach to imagery, and to re-emphasize the importance of an understanding of the poem drawn from contemporary medieval interpretations of symbolic elements.

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CHAPTER 1

CRITICAL BACKGROUND

Literary criticism has behind it one prime motivating
force: the desire to reach as complete an understanding as
may possibly be achieved concerning a piece of literature.
This search for understanding embraces a number of different
techniques. One critic may concentrate on the biographical
material available pertaining to the author of his specific
interest, in the belief that a sound grasp of the psychological,
intellectual or emotional background of a writer holds the key
to the interpretation of his works. Another will direct his
attention to the exhaustive study of all extant manuscripts,
feeling that the examination of the polishing process adopted
by the author may determine the direction which he wanted a
specific work to take. The variety of critical approaches is
seemingly endless. However, one of the most widely practised
and useful critical techniques involves the analysis of the
types of imagery used by an author. Although imagery has long
been studied with regard to a poet's ability to create apt
similes or metaphors, the landmark work of Caroline Spurgeon,
Shakespeare's Imagery, introduced the importance of a slightly
different approach to the study of imagery, involving the inten-
sive analysis of images according to categorization. As she
states in the preface:

Shakespeare's images have, of course, constantly been picked out and drawn upon, to illustrate one aspect or another of the poet's thought or mind, but the novelty of the procedure I am describing is that all his images are assembled, sorted, and examined on a systematic basis, the good with the bad, the disagreeable with the pleasant, the coarse with the refined, the attractive with the unattractive, and the poetical with the unpoetical.[1]

This process of intensive image analysis has equal validity for other authors. Elizabethan and Jacobean poets have been probed in depth, and Spenser studies in particular have benefitted from the application of this technique.

The mere cataloguing of images, however, is only the initial phase, a tool for the critic to use in his efforts at interpretation and understanding. After specific images, or groups of images have been isolated, they must be carefully examined in the light of additional information which clarifies not only the author's meaning, but also his purpose in selecting them. It is at this point that the discretion of the critic assumes the utmost importance. Many images are subject to various interpretations, and the critic must investigate these in order to determine which reading of an image provides the most satisfactory understanding of the work. Thus, it is also at this point that critical controversy arises, as scholars differ concerning the relative merits of certain modes of interpretation, and the conclusions drawn therefrom.

The study of imagery in particular has been subject to drastic changes in approach. Both D.W. Robertson, Jr., in A Preface to Chaucer and Rosemond Tuve in Allegorical Imagery stress that, in each age, criticism tends to be coloured by the contemporary aesthetic regarding poetry.[2] Thus, the nineteenth century critic often approached imagery from the terms of Coleridgian dictates on the subject while twentieth century scholars are influenced by the theories of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Increasingly, however, under the influence of critics such as Robertson, Tuve and Huppé, the trend towards this type of criticism is being reversed. The school of historical criticism places primary emphasis on the attempt to recreate an understanding of literature in terms of the aesthetic within which it was written. Hence, Coleridgian definitions are applicable to Romantic poetry, and to some works composed in that tradition, but Spenser must be understood in terms of Renaissance theories of literature, and Chaucer must be studied with attention to the medieval traditions within which he worked. As R.H. Green points out:

> For if we agree that the image is at the centre of poetic expression, and that it derives part of its life within the unique context of the poem from another life in tradition outside the poem, we ought to assent to the probable usefulness of knowing as much as we can about that tradition.[3]

Unfortunately, even agreement as to the central importance of trying to establish an understanding of the poem as

close as possible to the understanding of the audience for which it was originally written does not always lead to critical accord. A prime example of this type of controversy is the problem of 'courtly love' in medieval literature. Taking as their primary source for tradition the work by Andreas Capellanus, De Arte Honeste Amandi, usually termed The Art of Courtly Love, twentieth century critics arrive at vastly different conclusions concerning the understanding of the medieval audience.

Exponents of the theory of 'courtly love' see in this document substantial contemporary information which establishes the desirability of extra-marital love and the supremacy of women. William George Dodd, for example, states with assurance that "gathered about several small courts, there existed, as early as the eleventh century, a brilliant society, in which woman held the supreme place..... Definite rules governed the sexes in all their relations, and especially in matters of love ... the book of Andreas furnishes us a ready means of understanding the abstract principles and laws underlying the courtly system."[4] Citing evidence drawn from The Art of Courtly Love, Dodd argues that courtly love is sensual, illicit, usually adulterous, and must be kept secret, yet he also insists that "it must be noted that the ideals of the courtly system, if we disregard the element of sensualism, were high."[5] Dodd's approach to the work is in no way unique or aberrant; even so highly regarded a critic as C.S. Lewis accepted that medieval

court circles embraced the doctrine of courtly love, and stated that Chaucer was "the great living interpreter in English of l'amour courtois... it was, then, as a poet of courtly love that Chaucer approached Il Filostrato".[6] This is, however, only one side of the critical approach to the concept of courtly love.

Other critics have taken a totally different view of the information contained in The Art of Courtly Love. First, they point out that the title of the treatise is much more accurately translated as The Art of Honest Loving, and that the word 'courtly' is in no way involved or implied. They then proceed to cite those sections of the treatise which are tactfully ignored by the advocates of courtly love, or dismissed as sops to convention. These passages actively dissuade the reader from attempting to put into practice any of the 'arts' mentioned. Capellanus states in the preface that he created the work "because I know clearer than day that after you have learned the art of love, your progress in it will be more cautious".[7] In the Third Book the message remains essentially the same:

> ...we believe though, that any man who devotes his efforts to love loses all his usefulness. Read this little book, then, not as one seeking to take up the life of a lover, but that, invigorated by the theory and trained to excite the minds of women to love, you may, by refraining from doing so, win an eternal recompense and thereby deserve a greater reward from God.[8]

In A Preface to Chaucer, Robertson devotes extensive space to a moral reading of The Art of Courtly Love which contradicts virtually all of the conclusions drawn by earlier critics in the courtly love tradition.[9] Thus, it is apparent that even in such ostensibly straight-forward work as the elucidation of an explanatory medieval text, the burden of reaching the most accurate understanding rests with the discretion of the critic.

The problems involved in establishing a satisfactory approach to the interpretation of medieval literature are clearly presented in Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature. Although the sections dealing with the influence of studies pertaining to mythology, classical fable, and Dante are interesting to the student of this period, the main focus of attention must rest in the three opening chapters devoted to the arguments for and against the method of interpretation referred to as patristic exegesis. This approach was brought to the attention of the literary world in an article by D.W. Robertson, "Historical Criticism", published in English Institute Essays in 1950. The following year Robertson, in collaboration with B.F. Huppé, published Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition, in which he attempted to demonstrate that the type of criticism applied to Scripture by the Latin Fathers of the Church had some validity for medieval secular literature as well. The full scope of this critical technique is best presented in Robertson's major work, A Preface to Chaucer. In it he shows the necessity of developing a broad background in the Scriptures,

patristic writings, art and secular literature of the period
in order to gain an awareness of contemporary significance of
certain words, phrases and concepts. Critics opposed to the
method, such as E. Talbot Donaldson, feel that the technique
basically imposes a necessity to read an allegorical interpre-
tation promoting charity into everything written during the
Middle Ages. As it is generally practiced, however, it involves
a willingness to consider the moral implications inherent in
the text, and to seek illumination through a close reading of
orthodox Christian treatises which were familiar to the authors
of the time. Donaldson paraphrases Robertson, stating "all
serious poetry written by Christians during the Middle Ages pro-
motes the doctrine of charity by using the same allegorical
structure that the Fathers found in the Bible".[10] It is not
necessary to agree with this extreme in order to appreciate
the value of understanding certain doctrinal references, or to
grasp the implications involved in accepting that medieval rea-
ders were quite comfortable with reading allegorically. While
Donaldson may have some valid points against Robertson's approach
to _Piers Plowman_, he offers no solid grounds for the abandon-
ment of the method itself.

Donaldson's article, "The Opposition [to Patristic Exe-
gesis in the Criticism of Medieval Literature]" is immediately
followed in Critical Approaches by R.E. Kaske's "The Defense." Kaske directly states
the reasoning behind his support of this technique:

The whole of this sprawling exegetical trad-
ition, it seems to me, can make broadly two kinds of
contribution to our understanding of medieval liter-
ature. The first...is that of explaining the medieval
interpretations underlying obvious Biblical quotations
or allusions. A second contribution derives from the
role of the entire exegetical tradition as a sort of
massive index to the traditional meanings and associ-
ations of most medieval Christian imagery.[11]

Bringing this rational approach to bear on his investigations
of Chaucer, Kaske illustrates how a reference could assume
various layers of meaning. The best example offered is the
detail from the portrait of the Summoner in The Canterbury
Tales -- "Wel loved he garleek, onynons, and eek lekes" (1.643).
This line has been explained as yet another illustration of
Chaucer's attention to realistic detail, or, as W.C. Curry
notes, a reference to notorious irritants of the Summoner's
leprosy. Kaske, however, points out that those same three
vegetables appear together in Numbers 11:5. He then pro-
ceeds to demonstrate that eaters of onion, garlic and leeks
were traditionally interpreted in Christian literature as
followers of lust and corruption, citing as authorities var-
ious medieval commentaries. Although the exegetical context
is not obvious in Chaucer, it is somewhat more evident in the
work of his contemporary John Gower. Chauncey Wood points out
that Chaucer may have derived this image in part from Gower's
Vox Clamantis, for in that work onions and leeks are pre-

ferred to manna by worldly prelates. Although it is evident
that Chaucer referred directly to Numbers for this detail
because he includes garlic in his list while it was omitted
in both Gower's work and a possible alternate source by Peter
Riga, there is little doubt that he was familiar with the use
of onions and leeks in the Vox Clamantis. The inclusion of
these items in the diet of a corrupt member of the Church such
as the Summoner appears to be a subtle reference to the exege-
tical tradition involving onions and leeks.[12] As Kaske con-
cludes, "in this instance, the biblical allusion itself would
surely be pointless without reference to the exegetical tra-
dition behind it. If one accepts this reading of what has so
far appeared to be a quite literal surface detail, the impli-
cation seems to be that Chaucer was capable of using exegeti-
cal allusion in ways hitherto little recognized, and we should
be wise to explore his work further in this direction."[13]

There appears to be further justification for accepting
this approach in the commentaries which pertain to secular rather
than ecclesiastical works. One of the most important of these
is the gloss on The Chess of Love. Its translator, Joan Morton
Jones, sums up the significance of the work thus:

> The commentary makes three major contributions
> to our knowledge of late medieval poetry. First, it
> contains a full, rich mythography, the only one subor-
> dinated to explaining a medieval poem and limited to
> natural allegory and secular interpretations. Second,

the document is the only full length medieval expli-
cation of any poem in the tradition of the Romance of
the Rose. Third, it is the only poetic theory at all
close in time, plan and attitude to the poets who wrote
in that tradition, including Guillaume de Machaut,
Eustace Deschamps, and Geoffrey Chaucer.[14]

The Chess Gloss assists the critic in several ways, improving

the 'medieval understanding' of the modern reader. The expli-

cation applied to Venus is one example. Venus was one of the

most frequently mentioned goddesses in the secular poetry of

the Middle Ages, and she had by that time accumulated a number

of iconographic symbols which were attributed to her in liter-

ature as well. Among these was the red rose. It is apparent

from the Chess Gloss that the inclusion of the rose in a des-

cription of Venus was not merely designed to add botanical

realism to the offerings customarily made to a goddess, nor

was it to indicate a lyrical sweetness such as that of Robbie

Burns' 'love'. The Author rather comments that:

> The red rose, then, serves our purpose if
> we look well into its first conditions, insofar as
> it is red, an ardent colour. For this signifies to
> us that the concupiscence and yearning for the
> desired delight in the amorous life is ardent flame
> in its first coming and enflames one with love so
> that the body thus captured after does not know which
> way to turn to ease the pain of it.[15]

The specific use of words such as 'purpose' and 'signifies'

which are found throughout the work, implies the acceptance of a

conventional system of writing which expected the reader to make analogies and to understand the unstated symbolic values of the figures used within the poem.

The Chess Gloss also advocates interpretation which takes into consideration multiple levels of meaning. It lists the names of the classical gods mentioned in the poem, and supplies various meanings which could be applied to them. Saturn, for example, is first, historically, the king of Crete, then the planet, time, prudence, and also strange and sudden death. The author also provides an explanation of the iconographic symbols associated with Saturn: the scythe signifies retrograde movement; a circling serpent indicates years of life and the circularity of the year; and the devoured children are "to signify that temporal things are corruptible".[16] This would seem to support Robertson's premise that the patristic habit of reading allegorically on several levels was as freely applied to secular works as it was to Scripture, and that moral interpretations were valid there as well. In addition, the author of the Chess Gloss specifically draws the reader's attention to the similarities between this poem and The Romance of the Rose and also The Consolation of Philosophy by Boethius.[17] While the Romance of the Rose has at times been interpreted as a document of courtly love, the Consolation has usually been accepted as a statement of Christian doctrine. Because the author of the Chess Gloss states definitely that the works are

similar, it seems reasonable to conclude that medieval readers
were accustomed to perceiving Christian precepts in secular
works.

This gloss proves useful for the interpretation of other
secular poems as well. It provides several pieces of infor-
mation which may be tentatively applied to Troilus and Criseyde
to increase our understanding of the poem. Chaucer's poem is
a Troy story, and as such it apparently aroused certain expec-
tations in medieval readers. The Chess Gloss, with reference
to another Troy story, states "That Aeneas was the son of Venus
secretly shows us that the Trojans were lustful."[18] It is
important to note that the implication is general rather than
specific -- it is not merely Aeneas who is lustful, but Trojans.
Also, the use of the word 'secretly' is significant. This, too,
supports Robertson's belief that important meanings were deli-
berately veiled by medieval poets. As he states:

> Lactantius wrote, 'it is the business of the
> poet with some gracefulness to change and transfer
> actual occurrences into other representations by oblique
> transformations,' so that he represents a 'truth veiled
> with an outward covering and show'. This statement was
> frequently repeated during the Middle Ages, and was
> used by Petrarch to support his favourite theory that
> a poet adorns the truth, which has here become a philo-
> sophical truth, with veils so that it may be hidden from
> the unworthy, but to the more ingenious and studious
> readers, the search will be more difficult and the dis-
> covery, in consequence, more pleasant.[19]

It becomes apparent, then, that there is ample cause
to find in the exegetical approach to medieval literature the
critical tool which holds the most potential for the advance-
ment of our understanding of poets such as Chaucer. This is
not to say that traditional meanings are to be imposed upon a
poem at all costs, merely that they are to be considered, and
derived from the poem whenever it appears that they benefit
our understanding of an author's meaning or intent. As R.H.
Green states:

> But if it is granted that part of the meaning
> of the image is to be sought in the common poetic lang-
> uage of tradition, it is also true that the meaning of
> the image in its poetic context is unique, and that
> the act of criticism involves the discovery of this new
> and complex transformation of human experience.[20]

However, he later qualifies this statement, saying "if the
indiscriminate use of traditional meanings leads to abuse of
the poem, so too does preoccupation with literal detail, or
with formal design and its implications."[21] Green thus advo-
cates a kind of criticism which operates not on the basis of
rigid applications of any one specific approach, but rather a
responsive, all-embracing method which includes the most useful
features culled from a variety of approaches to medieval lit-
erature. This is the approach I shall adopt in my examination
in this thesis of the imagery in Troilus and Criseyde. While
there is undoubtedly a strong bias in favour of the exegetical

method, any other schools of thought which provide assistance in promoting an understanding of Chaucer's use of imagery will be freely adopted, as will supporting evidence from similar studies in the field.

Convincing precedents for this type of study of Chaucer's imagery are readily available from Chaucerian criticism. Perhaps the most straightforward, basic work is that of Beryl Rowland in her book Blind Beasts: Chaucer's Animal World. Following the example of Caroline Spurgeon, Professor Rowland undertook an exhaustive examination of Chaucer's use of imagery as it relates directly to animals. A brief illustration taken from this book will serve to demonstrate the value of investigations of this type.

The brief allusion to the weasel in the description of Alison in 'The Miller's Tale' illustrates the full exploitation of animal imagery by Chaucer. Professor Rowland begins her investigation of the figure with an outline of the role of the weasel in medieval society, citing it as a domesticated animal which often replaced the cat as a ratter. She then proceeds to specify that Chaucer was probably referring to the ermine, a close relative of the common weasel, and one with which Chaucer would have been familiar through the practice of using its fur to trim the robes of the nobility. She bases this conclusion on the close resemblance which she sees between the description of Alison's clothing -- white broken occasionally by areas of black -- and the colour configuration of the

weasel's fur. However, the initial reference to the weasel and the clothing are not the only weasel-like attributes given to Alison. Rowland finds other similarities in the descriptions of Alison's eyes and brows, her frolicsome nature, her sweet smell, her sinuous movements, and her long, slim build.

Even more interesting than these physical parallels are the characteristics applied to Alison which are derived from the background of the weasel in literature and folk-lore. "Due, perhaps, to its reputation as an unclean animal in Leviticus 12:29 or to the fable of its unnatural methods of conceiving and giving birth, current even in Egypt according to Plutarch (De Iside, 381A), the weasel, in various languages, came to signify a bad young woman."[22] Alison embraces other characteristics as well, which are derived from traditions associated with the weasel. She presages a violent change in the weather, brings ill-luck, and metes out judgements. Thus, Chaucer takes advantage of the multiplicity of meanings attached to the animal, and uses them to expand and enhance his description of the carpenter's young wife. Once again, Chaucer's use of imagery relies upon an understanding of an image which goes beyond purely realistic associations.

Just as Beryl Rowland provides a thorough investigation of animal imagery, Chauncey Wood performs a similar service regarding Chaucer's use of astrological imagery, in Chaucer and the Country of the Stars. Interpretation of astrological references requires a knowledge not only of the terminology of

medieval astrologers, but also of the prevailing attitudes toward the 'science' as a whole as well as to specific segments thereof. Since Chaucer makes frequent references to signs of the zodiac as well as using terms which carry very precise meanings, it is essential to our understanding of the works that we arrive at sound interpretations of these astrological data. Once again, a pertinent illustration will demonstrate the usefulness of this type of study.

The best-known horoscope in The Canturbury Tales is that of the Wife of Bath, who claims:

> Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse ,
> And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardynesse,
> Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars therinne.
> Allas! allas! that evere love was synne!

(WBT, 611-614)

Professor Wood points out that the strong "emphasis on Venus and Mars is a forceful reminder of the associations of adultery surrounding any astrological linking of those planets",[23] and that the Wife herself interprets this information as an indication that she could not refrain from lechery. However, the author's earlier research stresses the element of free will in the Christian approach to astrology. Thus, while many medieval writers would accept that the planets could influence natural tendencies, they nevertheless maintained that the will could overcome these inclinations toward sin. This in turn implies that there would have been some type of judgement

passed on the Wife of Bath by the medieval audience who would criticise her for her inability to resist the tendencies implicit in her horoscope, rather than sympathize with her unfortunate nativity.

Astrological devices are used by Chaucer for other purposes than the delineation of character. They are also extremely significant for dating within the poems. The April opening of the General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales illustrates the necessity of reading the astrological information correctly in order to obtain the full benefit of Chaucer's allusions. The detail which states that the sun "Hath in the Ram his halve cours yronne" (GenProl, 8) indicates that the time is to be located at some point in Aries, and the fact that the opening line indicates that April has already arrived would seem to designate the date as April 12 or later.[24] Using this astrological information Professor Wood proceeds to point out a Biblical precedent for an April pilgrimage date -- traditionally the pilgrimage of Noah began on the seventeenth of April. This coincidence of dates emphasizes the importance of the pilgrimage motif, and the flood motif is picked up later in the Miller's Tale, complete with the astrological chicanery of Nicholas to presage the deluge. Thus, the correct interpretation of the astrological time is important in determining the mid-April date, and hence in obtaining the Biblical parallel which assists our interpretation of the Tales as a whole.

Both Blind Beasts and Chaucer and the Country of the

Stars are book-length studies devoted to the study of images

as they are used in the broad spectrum of Chaucer's poetry.

There are, however, several short studies limited to Troilus

and Criseyde, such as that I shall attempt in this thesis. The

most significant of these is the article by Stephen Barney,

"Troilus Bound".[25] The profusion of terms such as snare, trap,

net, leash, bond, etc. found in the poem led Barney to examine

in detail Chaucer's use of what he terms 'images of bondage'

in Troilus and Criseyde. His studies led him to categorize

the images of bondage into four main types: imprisonment by

Fortune, that is by the world, nature, or the stars; by love,

the influence of Cupid and Venus; by evil in the form of the

devil, hell, sin and the flesh; and by Christ, which is to say

by God and the providential scheme.[26] Once again, it is not the

mere act of organization which gives value to Barney's work;

rather it is the conclusions he derives from these divisions.

Thus images of bondage involving Fortune become significant

only when the Boethian nature of these references is shown.

Through them Troilus is seen as a Boethian figure unable to

exercise his free will, and is bound by Fortune because he allows

himself to be. The bonds of love and the hell of infatuation

are important as counter-points for bondage to Christ. These

fleshly bonds contrast sharply with the spiritual ties to Christ,

and Troilus himself finally realizes the futility of worldly

bondage when he is translated to the eighth sphere. The true

value of Barney's work thus lies in his identification and organization of a significant image pattern within the poem, and then his assessment of the significance this pattern has to the meaning of the poem.

"Troilus Bound" is by no means the only specific study of imagery in Troilus and Criseyde. Thomas Van produced a study very similar to that of Barney, which expanded the bondage motif still further, "Imprisoning and Ensnarement in Troilus and The Knight's Tale".[27] Samuel Schuman, in "The Circle of Nature: Patterns of Imagery in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde" provides an interesting investigation of the ring or circle motif in the poem.[28] In this thesis, I shall perform a similar close examination of three different image patterns found in Troilus and Criseyde. Each image presents a slightly different approach on the part of the poet. Navigational or nautical imagery, for example, is really a pattern formed by a group of separate images involving ships, weather, the sea, stars and voyages. Fire imagery, on the other hand, has comparatively few components -- fire, burning, and occasionally fever -- and forms a very distinctive, easily isolated pattern. The third component of my study, bird imagery, appears at first to be a uniform category, but on close examination breaks into two distinct patterns which have little bearing on each other. An examination of these three types of imagery, designed primarily to isolate and identify the pattern, if any, in which they occur,

and to explain the significance which the images would have held for Chaucer's audience, will form the basis of my study.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 1

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[4] W.G. Dodd, "The System of Courtly Love", in R.J. Schoeck and
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[5] Dodd, pp. 4-6. "The System of Courtly Love".

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[7] Andreas Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love, trans. J.J. Parry,
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[8] Andreas, Courtly Love, p. 187.

[9] Robertson, A Preface, pp. 391-448.

[10] E.T. Donaldson, "The Opposition" in D. Bethurum, eds., Critical
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[11] R.E. Kaske, "The Defense" in D. Bethurum, ed., Critical
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[12] C. Wood, "The Sources of Chaucer's Summoner's 'Garleek, Onyons,
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[13] Kaske, Critical Approaches, p. 52.

[14] J.M. Jones, trans., The Commentary on the Chess of Love, (hereafter referred to as the Chess Gloss) Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1968), p. iii. Microfilm copy.

[15] J.M. Jones, Chess Gloss, p. 347.

[16] J.M. Jones, Chess Gloss, pp. 98-110.

[17] J.M. Jones, Chess Gloss, p. 406.

[18] J.M. Jones, Chess Gloss, p. 690.

[19] Robertson, A Preface, p. 15.

[20] Green, Critical Approaches, p. 123.

[21] Green, Critical Approaches, p. 133.

[22] Beryl Rowland, Blind Beasts: Chaucer's Animal World (Kent State, 1971), p. 28.

[23] Chauncey Wood, Chaucer and the Country of the Stars (Princeton, 1970), p. 173.

[24] Wood, Country of the Stars, p. 162.

[25] Stephen Barney, "Troilus Bound", Speculum 47 (1972), 445-458.

[26] Barney, "Troilus Bound", p. 447.

[27] Thomas Van, "Imprisoning and Ensnarement in Troilus and The Knight's Tale", Papers in Language and Literature, 7(1971), 3-12.

[28] Samual Schuman, "The Circle of Nature: Patterns of Imagery in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde", Chaucer Review, 10 (1975), 99-111.

CHAPTER 2

NAUTICAL IMAGERY

Among the images used by Chaucer which assume special
significance in <u>Troilus and Criseyde</u> are those which pertain
to navigation and sailing -- what may generally be termed nau-
tical images. Paul Baum in his article "Chaucer's Nautical
Metaphors" notes the peculiar distribution of these references.[1]
They are most heavily concentrated in the first two books, with
a total of nine references. Books Three and Four provide only
two references, and Book Five contains a total of three. Baum
fails to mention, however, that the placement of three of these
images is also very significant. The importance of nautical
imagery is emphasized by Chaucer's placement of the three most
substantial references at key points in the poem. The first
of these is located in the 'Canticus Troili' of Book One. It
is at this point in the poem that Troilus formally presents his
state of mind, complaining about the internal conflict his sud-
den infatuation with Criseyde has aroused. This passage is
marked off from the body of the text by its designation as a
'canticus' or song, and its contents receive more focussed
attention as a result of this distinction. Troilus' complaint
"Al stereles withinne a boot am I/Amydde the see" is thus
strategically located at a point in the poem where it will
attract particular notice. Similarly, the 'Canticus Troili' of
Book Five opens with a nautical metaphor, "O sterre, of which
I lost have al the light,/...Toward my deth with wynd in steere

I saille" (V, 638-641). Finally, the opening lines of Book Two present the reader with the metaphor beginning "Owt of thise blake wawes for to saylle,/ O wynd, O wynd, the weder gynneth clere" (II, 1-2), as the narrator anticipates an improvement for Troilus' plight. This noticeable location of nautical metaphors at significant moments in Troilus and Criseyde serves to indicate the importance of this image group. In order to understand the full value of these images, however, it is necessary first to determine, if possible, the reason for Chaucer's choice of nautical images.

Although Baum's article "Chaucer's Nautical Metaphors" deals almost exclusively with the images used in Troilus and Criseyde it contributes very little to our understanding of the importance of these devices within the poem. Baum's most fundamental statement is this:

> Can there then be any other conclusion than
> that the nautical metaphors in the Troilus are merely
> literary, given to him by the authors he was trans-
> lating?[2]

This much is evident from an examination of the notes to Robinson's edition of the text; there can be no doubt that Chaucer was greatly indebted to Boccaccio, Dante and Petrarch for the ultimate sources of most of his nautical metaphors. However, the mere acknowledgement of the literary nature of Chaucer's metaphors does little to explain the reasons for their selection, nor the impact these images would have had on the medieval audience. In addition, Baum's work is marred by a distinct reluctance to allow Chaucer

any credit for either craftsmanship or ingenuity. He attributes the use of some images to "who can tell what mysterious action of the unconscious memory" and comments "Or if one believes in Chaucer as an artist, one will say he carefully substituted."[3] It is apparent from the tone of the article that Baum intended to find that Chaucer's nautical metaphors were all literary borrowings and nothing more. To have examined their function within the poem, and in the tradition of the medieval use of the nautical metaphor would have required a belief in Chaucer's poetic ability which Baum was not prepared to extend.

Sanford Meech, in Design in Chaucer's Troilus, also makes some mention of nautical references. However, Meech does not probe deeply into the role of this imagery within the poem. He establishes parallels between images used in the Troilus and Il Filostrato, the Italian source for the poem, written by Boccaccio. Meech focusses on the importance of the light-dark motif found in conjunction with many of the nautical references, and devotes particular pains to the paralleling of the 'lode-star' references to 'Maria' in Boccaccio's poem, and to Criseyde in the Troilus. However, the preoccupation with cataloguing parallel lines, and the consideration of nautical images as either meteorological phenomena or images drawn from nature, and not as a coherent group, prevented Meech from arriving at a useful assessment of their importance to the poem.

One encounters a similar problem in <u>A Preface to Chaucer</u> where Robertson provides insight into the role of several nautical metaphors, but does not study specifically the way in which they work as a group in the <u>Troilus</u>.

The most satisfactory approach to understanding the function of nautical imagery in the poem is to evaluate the symbolic meaning attached to the various components of this type of imagery by medieval writers, and thus create an understanding of the tradition within which Chaucer was working when he selected these metaphors. This is similar to the approach adopted by D.M. Burjorjee in the most useful of the articles pertaining to this subject, "The Pilgrimage of Troilus' Sailing Heart in Chaucer's <u>Troilus and Criseyde</u>".[4] By investigating the four major elements of nautical imagery -- the sea, ships, the voyage motif, and stars -- it will be possible to determine the way in which these metaphors operate within the <u>Troilus</u>.

The sea, of course, is the dominant factor in any nautical image -- it necessitates the vessel, is the medium of the voyage, and provides the featureless landscape which demands stellar navigation. The symbolic value attributed to the sea in medieval literature is made clear by a number of sources. The <u>Chess Gloss</u> provides one of the most explicit statements:

> Therefore we should know that the sea very properly signifies the pleasures and delights of the world and especially the delights of lust, for several

reasons, and especially for two similitudes. First,
as the sea is all full of diverse dangers, so the
delights of this world are mingled with so many great
dangers that no one could sufficiently number them ...
Secondly, as the sea is bitter and displeasing to
the taste so are the delights mentioned above when
they are fully known.[5]

It appears that this interpretation of the sea was derived
from its role in the creation of Venus. According to classi-
cal legend, Venus was formed from the foam which arose when
Zeus threw into the sea the genitals which he had severed from
his father Saturn. Venus was often depicted swimming in the
sea, and it naturally became an element closely associated with
her. As the author of the Chess Gloss states:

Venus is shown swimming in the sea to signify
to us that those who have their eyes on lust and con-
cupiscience wish to be always in the pleasures of the
world and plunged in delights as are swimmers in the
sea.[6]

D.W. Robertson cites further sources for this traditional link
between Venus and the sea.

The figure of the shipwrecked sailors of Venus
is from Fulgentius, who says of Venus that "they depict
her swimming in the sea, for all things suffer ship-
wreck on account of lust, whence also Porphyrius says
in an epigram, 'Nude and hungry the shipwrecked sailor
of Venus is in the seas!".[7]

The sailor of Venus also appears in <u>The Art of Courtly Love</u>, where in the fourth chapter Andreas states:

> ...if love were so fair as always to bring his sailors into the quiet port after they had been soaked by many tempests, I would bind myself to serve him forever... for the present I refuse to submit to his judgement, because he often leaves his sailors in the mighty waves.[8]

Thus, it is apparent that there was a solid body of traditional literature in which the sea was emblematic of lust and the service of Venus. In addition to this there are references, specifically from the Church fathers, in which the sea more generally symbolizes all worldly elements. The picture of the sea as representative of the temptations and distractions of this world was common place in the writings of St. Augustine, while Boethius, as Burjorjee emphasizes, refers to 'the stormy sea of fortune' in the <u>Consolation of Philosophy</u>.[9] Therefore, it appears that the use of a nautical metaphor would immediately convey to the medieval audience accustomed to reading allegorically at least a flicker of anticipation that they were about to encounter something dealing with temptation in general, or perhaps even the temptation of lust, depending upon the context in which it was used.

The ship also forms an important element of nautical imagery, and it too was familiar to the Church fathers. St. Ambrose compares the Church to a ship, saying:

> A prosperous voyage awaits those who in their
> ships embrace the cross as the mast they follow. They
> are sure and certain of salvation in the wood of the
> Lord. They do not suffer their vessel to stray without
> direction in the waters of the sea, but hurry homeward
> into the haven of salvation with their course set toward
> the fulfilment of grace.[10]

This fourth century image appears later in the writings of
Honorius of Autun. Robertson cites Honorius' interpretation
of Ulysses as the wise man lashed to the mast which is the
Cross of Christ, a concept which appeared in the works of other
Christian writers such as Gregory of Nyssa as well.[11] This
symbolic value connected with the ship can easily be incorpor-
ated into the traditional association of the sea. Those who
cling faithfully to the Church may voyage through the seas of
temptation, but those who succumb will be shipwrecked and left
to struggle in the waves of Venus. The immersion of the worldly
was, of course, prefigured by Noah's Flood, and the Ark occa-
sionally serves as an Old Testament prototype of the Church of
Christ.[12]

Intimately connected with this sea and ship imagery is
the voyage motif frequently found in medieval literature. The
voyage became a type of pilgrimage, a journey through the world
to arrive at the spiritual home of the Christian. In stressing
the importance of this motif I am anticipated by D.M. Burjorjee
who points out, "the Scriptural tradition which regarded life
as a pilgrimage by land or sea was nurtured by the fathers of

the Church and flourished vigorously in the Middle Ages."[13]
Professor Burjorjee cites writers such as Augustine, St.
Cyprian, and Boethius. Of particular interest is St. Caesarius
of Arles, who wrote that "the soul is a boat tossed about by
the storms of sin".[14] This tradition had literary as well as
Scriptural roots. The myth of Ulysses was frequently moral-
ized by Christian writers of the middle ages. Boccaccio states
in the fourteenth book of The Geneology of the Gods:

> For however much the heroic poets seem to
> be writing history -- as Vergil in his description
> of Aeneas tossed by the Storm, or Homer in his
> account of Ulysses bound to the mast to escape the
> lure of the Siren's song -- yet their hidden meaning
> is far other than appears on the surface.[15]

Robertson notes that "the third Vatican mythographer, on the
basis of an 'etymology' of the name Ulysses, makes the man
himself a pilgrim, 'For wisdom makes men pilgrims among all
terrestrial things'."[16] The object of the metaphorical jour-
ney or voyage through the world was the promised haven in heaven.
Therefore, the harbour, according to Signs and Symbols in
Christian Art, "is a symbol of eternal life, and ships making
for the harbour are likened to souls in search of Heaven".[17]
The third Vatican mythographer expresses a similar sentiment,
saying that Ulysses "moves toward his home in eternal blessed-
ness:"[18] Contemporary poets as well adopted the motif, and
Dante opens the Purgatorio with the lines:

> For better waters heading with the wind
> My ship of genius now shakes out her sail
> And leaves that ocean of despair behind;[19]

Although this is in part an echo of the classical use of the nautical metaphor for composition, it also embraces the idea of the nautical pilgrimage of the soul.[20] Thus, it appears that nautical metaphors, those dealing with sailing or the voyage motif, and ultimate destinations involving a harbour or a port would probably suggest to the reader the pilgrimage of the soul.

Guidance during the voyage was usually drawn from the stars. Ferguson, in Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, states that "the star, lighting the darkness of the heavens at night, is a symbol of divine guidance or favour."[21] The most familiar example of this from Scripture is, of course, the star which appeared at Christ's nativity and guided the Magi to Bethlehem. However, there is another tradition of star associations which is of particular importance to nautical imagery. In certain contexts, the star may be taken as a symbol of the Virgin Mary in her title 'Stella Maris', or Star of the Sea.[22] This was a very popular designation of the Virgin in the Middle Ages, and collections of Mary legends, such as the Stella Maris of John of Garland, featured her in this role. One of the legends most frequently included in these collections was 'The Pilgrim in the Sea', who found guidance from the Virgin.[23] This tradition is reflected in secular literature as well, as in Il

Filostrato, where Boccaccio refers to the 'noble lady', often
presumed to be Mary as his 'lodestar' and 'guiding light'.
It would seem, then, that star references in medieval liter-
ature often implied some type of divine guidance toward a
spiritual goal.

With this background information established concerning
the symbolic value held by these components of nautical ima-
gery during the Middle Ages, it is now possible to proceed to
the examination of the actual references found in the *Troilus*.
By focussing our attention on the three most significantly
placed metaphors, mentioned at the opening of the chapter, and
applying this information concerning the meaning of the sea,
ships, voyaging, harbours, and stars, we shall arrive at a
better understanding of Chaucer's purpose in incorporating this
type of imagery into the poem.

The first strong nautical image found in the poem appears,
as stated earlier, in the 'Canticus Troili' of Book I. At this
point Troilus, formerly a mocker of Love and its servants, has
become infatuated with the widow Criseyde. Although he strug-
gles to conceal his plight,eventually he gives voice to his
sorrows in this song. At the conclusion of the passage, he sums
up his situation thus:

> Al sterlees withinne a boot am I
> Amydde the see, bitwixen wyndes two,
> That in contrarie stonden evere mo.   (I, 416-18)

Although the image occurs within a song Chaucer attributes
to Lollius (Boccaccio), it is actually a fairly close trans-
lation of Petrarch's Sonnet 88. However, the ultimate source
of this image is, according to Robertson, the Bible, speci-
fically Proverbs 23: 33-34: "Thy eyes shall behold strange
women, and thy heart shall utter perverse things. And thou
shalt be as one sleeping in the midst of the sea, and as a
pilot fast asleep when the stern [i.e. rudder] is lost."[24]
"Amydde the see" and "in the midst of the sea" can metaphori-
cally be understood to mean 'in the midst of worldly tempta-
tion', giving the sea the symbolic value attached to it by
fathers such as Augustine, as was noted earlier. That the
temptation offered is specifically lust or concupiscence. is
evident both from the source, which refers to 'strange women'
and from Chaucer's use of the image in a song concerning 'love'.
The 'Canticus Troili' opens with the words "If no love is,
O God what fele I so?" (I, 400), and Troilus himself states
"And if that at myn owen lust I brenne,/ From whennes cometh
my waillynge and my pleynt?" (I, 407-408). The entire metaphor
implies that Troilus has lost his sense of direction, or more
precisely, his ability to steer in the right direction, through
his susceptibility to lust. The last half of the metaphor par-
ticularly stresses this meaning. Troilus claims to be "bitwixen
wyndes two,/ That in contrarie stonden evere mo" (i, 417-418).
These are precisely the sort of contrary breezes that appear in
the writing of St. Augustine. In On Christian Doctrine he states:

But he who sees the truth and flees has weak-
ened the acuteness of his mind through the habit of
carnal shadows. For men are driven back from their
country by evil habits as by contrary breezes, seeking
things farther back from and inferior to that which
they confess to be better and more worthy.[25]

Troilus, influenced by his passion for Criseyde, has become
unable to steer for his proper 'country', his eventual home
in Heaven, and drifts amid the carnal shadows of the sea of
Venus. This is the first sea and ship metaphor found in the
Troilus, and as such it sets the tone of our response to
Troilus' situation, and indicates the pattern which will be
taken by subsequent nautical imagery in the poem. Chaucer's
use of the familiar patristic image for the turmoil of the soul
in conjunction with Troilus' personal conflict would appear
designed to remind the reader that Troilus' objective should
be spiritual understanding and the haven of the Church, not
the physical attainment of Criseyde.

The second significantly placed metaphor appears in the
narrator's proem to Book Two. Burjorjee identifies this opening
as a switch from the previous 'sea of life' type of image of
the patristic writers to the classical use of nautical imagery
to express the difficulty of the problem of composition for
the poet.[26] As Robinson points out in his notes to the poem,
the lines echo Dante's opening of the Purgatorio, where he too,
referred to the problems of writing and dealing with his mater-
ial. In the opening six lines of Book Two the narrator announces:

Owt of thise blake wawes for to saylle,

O wynd, o wynd, the weder gynneth clere;

For in this see the boot hath swych travaylle,

Of my connyng, that unneth I it steere.

This see clepe I the tempestous matere

Of disespeir that Troilus was inne;

But now of hope the kalendes beginne.   (II, 1-7)

There is more importance attached to the image however, than the mere use of a classical commonplace. As Burjorjee notes, "So skillfully are the two matters -- the narrator's 'travaylle' (3) and Troilus' 'disespeir' -- integrated that, when the 'weder gynneth clere' (2), it brings hope to both Troilus and the narrator, and advances the action of the narrative."[27] What Professor Burjorjee fails to note, however, is that it is this connection between hope and despair which heightens the irony of Chaucer's echo of Dante. In Dante's poem, the soul is indeed travelling toward better understanding, and away from the worldly temptations described in the Inferno. However, it is only the imperfect vision of the narrator which sees clear sailing in Pandarus' promise to further Troilus' suit. Also important is the emphasis placed on despair, which was present in the source by Dante, as the "ocean of despair". Chaucer adapts this to: "This see clepe I the tempestous matere/ Of disespeir that Troilus was inne" (II, 6-7). Earlier Chaucer had coupled the image of the sailing heart with the idea of despair:

Love, ayeins the which whoso defendeth
Hymselven most, hym alderlest avaylleth,
With disespeyr so sorwfulli me offendeth,
That streight unto the deth myn herte sailleth.

(I, 603-606)

However, Troilus' despair is not, like the pilgrim Dante's
based on a regret for having lost the way to God; rather, it
derives from his inability to obtain Criseyde, the object
of his concupiscence. Similarly, the hope held out by Pan-
darus is not the Christian virtue Hope, but a perversion of
it. Thus, by following this false hope, at the end of the
poem Troilus is still a victim of despair, by this time pre-
sent in its most acute form, the suicidal Accidia. The ironic
humour of Chaucer's echo of Dante is apparent only if the rea-
der is aware that Troilus is despairing for all of the wrong
reasons, and that he and the narrator are unable to perceive
that their hope is false as well.

The final strategically placed metaphor makes even
clearer the distinction between Troilus' conduct in the poem
and the ideal conduct suggested by the nautical imagery. In
the 'Canticus Troili' of Book V Troilus laments the loss of
Criseyde to the Greek camp, saying:

O sterre, of which I lost have al the light,
With herte soor wel oughte I to biwaille,
That evere derk in torment, nyght by nyght,
Toward my deth with wynd in steere I saille;

> For which the tenthe nyght, if that I faille
> The gydyng of thi bemes bright an houre,
> My ship and me Caribdis wol devoure.   (V, 638-644)

Criseyde had been referred to as a guiding star twice prior to this: in Book One the narrator claims,"Nas nevere yet seyn thyng to ben preysed derre,/ Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre/ As was Criseyde" (I, 174-176); and early in Book Five Troilus asks, "Who seth yow now, my righte lode-sterre?" (V, 232). As mentioned earlier, the lode-star image was most frequently attached to the Virgin in her title of Stella Maris in the Middle Ages, and the parallel established through the use of this image between Criseyde and Mary would have been readily apparent to the medieval audience. However, it appears that this parallel is created by Chaucer in order to point out the inversion of the image as it is applied to Criseyde. The role of the actual lode-star is to guide the ship to a safe harbour; that of the Virgin as lode-star is to guide the soul to its spiritual haven in Christ. However, under Cryseyde's influence Troilus is guided in quite another direction. Initially Troilus groans, "God wold I were aryved in the port/ Of deth, to which my sorwe wol me lede!" (I, 526-527) when he fears that he will not be able to obtain Criseyde's love. Shortly thereafter he is so overcome by despair that he states,"That streight unto the deth myn herte sailleth." (I, 606). Criseyde, unlike Mary, leads him not toward eternal life but toward death. The metaphor

used at the opening of the 'Canticus Troili' makes Troilus'
plight clear with bitter irony. Although in the narrative
context the 'sterre of which he lost has al the light' is
Criseyde, it is also true that he has lost the divine guidance
of Mary's star as well. Even though Troilus is a pagan, and
hence not subject to Christian ideals, his story was told by
a Christian writer, and was subject to interpretation by a
Christian audience. In choosing to follow passion rather than
spirituality, in allowing his soul to drift on Venus' sea of
carnal delights, he forfeits the light of Stella Maris. And
when he states, "Toward my deth with wynd in steere I saille"
he gives evidence of the total resignation of his will, for he
is accepting the dictates of those contrary winds mentioned by
Augustine. Thus, Pandarus' triumphant "Stonde faste, for to
good port hastow rowed" (I, 969), uttered when Troilus seeks
his assistance in the winning of Criseyde, rings very hollow
indeed. Throughout the poem Troilus follows the wrong star
to lead him to eternal happiness, and sets his course for the
wrong port, in which he must fail to find safe haven.

It would appear then, that Chaucer's use of nautical
imagery in Troilus and Criseyde was designed to achieve a very
specific effect. It first recalls the most common medieval
interpretations of certain images such as the sea and the ship,
thereby identifying Troilus both as a type of the voyaging soul
and the sailor of Venus. The image is further developed in the
poem through the recurrent references to the port which Troilus

seeks, creating a tension between the harbour which the reader feels Troilus should be seeking, according to the most familiar use of the metaphor, and the destination toward which his conduct leads him. The point is made absolutely clear in the 'Canticus Troili' of Book Five, where the reader is faced with the irony of Troilus' limited vision -- he can see that he has lost the star, but is unaware of the true dimensions of his loss. Chaucer uses the many images involved in creating the overall pattern of nautical imagery in order to create a unified picture of folly to which excessive lust leads Troilus' soul.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 2

[1] P.F. Baum, "Chaucer's Nautical Metaphors", South Atlantic Quarterly, 49(1950), ... 67-73.

[2] Baum, "Nautical Metaphors", 72.

[3] Baum, "Nautical Metaphors", 70.

[4] D.M. Burjorjee, "The Pilgrimage of Troilus' Sailing Heart in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde", Annuale Mediaevale, 13(1972), ... 14-31.

[5] J.M. Jones, Chess Gloss, p. 344.

[6] J.M. Jones, Chess Gloss, p. 344.

[7] D.W. Robertson, A Preface, p. 400.

[8] Andreas Capellanus, Courtly Love, p. 32.

[9] Robertson, A Preface, p. 305. Also noted in Burjorjee, "Troilus' Sailing Heart", 17.

[10] Burjorjee, "Troilus' Sailing Heart", 16.

[11] Robertson, A Preface, pp. 143-144. Also in Burjorjee, "Troilus' Sailing Heart", 15.

[12] George Ferguson, Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, (New York, 1976), p. 150.

[13] Burjorjee, "Troilus' Sailing Heart", 17.

[14] Burjorjee, "Troilus' Sailing Heart", 17.

[15] Boccaccio, Geneologia Deorum Gentilium, C.G. Osgood, trans. as Boccaccio on Poetry (New York, 1956), pp. 48-49.

[16] Robertson, A Preface, p. 143.

[17] Ferguson, _Signs and Symbols_, p. 42.

[18] Robertson, _A Preface_, p. 143.

[19] Dante, _The Divine Comedy_, vol. 2, (Harmondsworth: 1977), p. 73

[20] Burjorjee, "Troilus' Sailing Heart", 28.

[21] Ferguson, _Signs and Symbols_, p. 44.

[22] Ferguson, _Signs and Symbols_, p. 44.

[23] E.F. Wilson, ed ., _The Stella Maris of John of Garland_, (Cambridge, Mass., 1946), p. 73.

[24] Robertson, _A Preface_, p. 478.

[25] Augustine, _On Christian Doctrine_, trans. D.W. Robertson. (Indianapolis, 1976), p. 13.

[26] Burjorjee, "Troilus' Sailing Heart", 23.

[27] Burjorjee, "Troilus' Sailing Heart", 23.

CHAPTER 3

BIRD IMAGERY

Bird imagery also plays a major role in the development of Chaucer's themes in <u>Troilus and Criseyde</u>. At this point, there is no detailed study of Chaucer's use of bird imagery, although Beryl Rowland, in the introduction to <u>Blind Beasts</u>, notes that a colleague, whom she does not name, has a book in production on the subject. However, Professor Rowland gives details for a few especially important references, and D.W. Robertson also provides background information concerning the symbolic value of some birds in medieval literature. Unlike nautical imagery, in which all of the component images function coherently to emphasize the single concept of the voyage of the soul, bird imagery is composed of elements divided into two major categories: images drawn from the classics, both from the familiar myths and from the traditions of dream augury, and images drawn from the symbolic meanings of birds as they were used in contemporary art and literature. There is also some use of images reflecting proverbs and English idiom, but this is of minor significance. A close examination of each of these categories will illustrate the ways in which bird imagery enhances <u>Troilus and Criseyde</u>.

By far the most frequent and extended use of birds in images occurs in references drawn from the classics. Chaucer draws on three separate myths for his images: those of Tereus

and Philomela, of Nysus' daughter, Scylla, and of Ticius'

punishment in Hell. Of these, the story of Philomela assumes the

greatest importance as it is mentioned on several occasions.

The basic elements of the myth were familiar to the medieval

audience from such works as the Latin Metamorphoses of Ovid,

as well as the vernacular Ovide Moralisé which Chaucer is

believed to have used as his source for the "Legend of Philo-

mena" in The Legend of Good Women.[1] According to the Metamor-

phoses King Tereus, in order to appease his wife Procne's wish

to see her sister, travelled from Thrace to Greece to bring

Philomela to her. However, during the return Tereus succumbed

to his desire and raped her. Then, to protect his name, he cut

out the girl's tongue and confined her to prison. Philomela

informed Procne of the deed by means of a tapestry, and together

they took vengance on Tereus by serving him a meal from the

flesh of his own son. At the close of the story, the central

figures were transmuted into birds.[2] Although the Metamorphoses

does not specify the type of bird, the Ovide Moralisé states

that Philomela was changed into a nightingale and Procne into

a swallow.[3]

The nightingale, Philomela, has a strong symbolic tra-

dition in Medieval literature, derived partly from its role in

the Philomela myth, and partly from values attributed from out-

side the classics. It is at times the epitome of the poet,

at times the bird of vengeance, calling 'oci, oci' or 'kill,

kill'. "Similarly, the bird has stood for the highest possible

kind of love, caritas, Christian love directed toward God, while at the opposite extreme it has sung the ecstacies of purely sensuous, at times quite overtly lascivious, human love, with varying gradations between these two."[4] It seems likely that Chaucer was following the tradition of the lascivious nightingale from his use of the bird in Troilus and Criseyde. J.L. Lowes makes a strong case for Chaucer's use of the Ovide Moralisé as the basis of his legend. In that work, Philomela is described thus:

> Philomena signifies Unsatisfying and Impermanent Love, that is, the Transitory Goods of this World...
> Therefore, it is clear that shortlived are the joys
> and quickly ended the delights of the one who seeks
> only to live in pleasure, pursuing merely the gratification of the disgraced and stinking flesh. For
> Pleasure invariably escapes him faster than the nightingale can fly.[5]

Gower, too, relates the tale of the nightingale in the Confessio Amantis, using it as an illustration of the evils of rape.[6] According to this author, the nightingale is a bird of both woe and joy, but the joy is merely relief that her transformation has saved her from the embarrassment she would have suffered as a result of the assault:

> Sche makth gret joie and merthe among,
> And seith, 'Ha, nou I am a brid,
> Ha, nou mi face mai ben hid:

> Thogh I have lost mi Maidenhede,
> Schal noman se my chekes rede.'[7]

With this information in mind we are now able to proceed to an investigation of Chaucer's use of the myth.

The first allusion to the myth appears at the beginning of Book Two, when Pandarus is asleep on the morning of his proposed visit to Criseyde on behalf of Troilus. This is in fact a direct recollection of the story, for the swallow is identified as Procne, and her song as a recitation of the myth:

> The swalowe Proigne, with a sorowful lay,
> Whan morwen com, gan make hire waymentynge,
> Whi she forshapen was, and ever lay
> Pandare abedde, half in a slomberynge,
> Til she so neigh hym made hire cheterynge
> How Tereus gan forth hire suster take,
> That with the noyse of hire he gan awake.   (II, 64-70)

As Beryl Rowland points out, the reference to the myth "brings thoughts of an unlawful love which was not merely adulterous, but involved the ravishing of a close relative, an 'adfinis', with whom such an association was forbidden on grounds of consanguinity, as indeed it was between uncle and niece under canon law."[8] Although Pandarus is not necessarily planning on seducing his niece himself, he is the primary factor in arranging her seduction. In addition, he parallels Tereus in that he is a relative about to betray a trust, for in the absence of Calchas, Pandarus should have been acting as the guardian

of Criseyde, rather than eagerly anticipating the 'grete emprise' of her seduction. Thus, the myth also acts as a factor in the recurrent theme of treachery and deceit noted in the poem by several critics.[9]

The next significant bird image which appears in the poem also seems to contain a reference to the Philomela myth. Although there is no allusion made to the myth within the passage, the parallel placement of the songs, both involving birds central to the myth, and both directly linked to the sleep of two closely related figures would seem to indicate that Chaucer wished to recall the story of Philomela through his use of the nightingale. Also if the connection between the nightingale and Philomela is accepted, it adds a degree of unity to Chaucer's use of the myth, for then the day which is so significant in the seduction of Criseyde is opened and closed with reference to the same myth. The passage involving the nightingale occurs just prior to Criseyde's dream of the white eagle, when she is composing herself for sleep after a day filled with pressure to accept Troilus' suit:

> A nyghtyngale, upon a cedir grene,
> Under the chambre wal ther as she ley,
> Ful loude song ayein the moone shene,
> Peraunter, in his briddes wis, a lay
> Of love, that made hire herte fressh and gay.

<div align="right">(II, 918-922)</div>

The mention of the nightingale, in such proximity to the direct allusion to the myth, would very probably have recalled the story immediately to the reader's mind. The 'lay of love' heard by Criseyde would thus have been the song of the transmuted victim of barbaric ravishment.

Even if the audience had failed to make the connection between the nightingale and the tale of rape, the song would still have carried connotations of lust derived from the reputation of the nightingale in medieval bird-lore. Because of the nocturnal nature of the bird, it became associated with insatiable lust. In fact, Chaucer uses the bird in this context in the General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales in his description of the Squire:

> So hoote he lovede that by nyghtertale
> He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.

> (Gen Prol. 98-99)

Thus, the bird images suggestive of lust and betrayal seem to surround the plans for the seduction of Criseyde, although some critics have seen fit to play down the pejorative connotations of the Philomela myth. Sanford Meech, for example, interprets the importance of Procne's song at the opening of Book Two in the following manner:

> Oblivious of this reminder of passion's poten-
> tialities for sorrow, the hapless lover betakes him-
> self to his niece's palace...The misfortunes of Pandarus

--and Proigne-- are contrapuntal to the joys of
the season....[10]

His consideration of Philomela's song, if it was indeed inten-

ded to be attributed to her, places even less stress on the

violent ravages of lust described in the myth:

> In a cedar beneath Criseyde's window, a
> nightingale sings its heart out to the bright moon,
> carrying on in wordless fashion the tribute paid to
> Love by Antigone in the garden, and lulling her to
> sleep to close the day for her as its sister Proigne
> began it for the confidant. No wonder...the lady
> comes to dream of Troilus ... as the king of birds..."[11]

Even though Meech acknowledges the link between the songs of the

swallow and the nightingale, he nevertheless interprets the song

heard by Criseyde as a lyrical invitation to love. This criti-

cal approach does not, however, seem to provide as satisfactory

an explanation of the significance of the bird imagery as that

offered by Rowland. Acceptance of Meech's interpretation re-

quires too much deliberate suppression of the mythical elements

which would have been familiar to Chaucer's readers. On the

other hand, Rowland's belief that the references to the myth are

present to remind the reader of the theme of sexual familial

betrayal seems to find ample support from the text.

The final possible reference to the Philomela myth occurs

in Book Three, at the peak of the seduction scene. Although the

evidence for regarding this as an allusion to the myth is very

scant, it seems reasonable to believe that if the medieval rea-

der was accustomed to reading allegorically and to attaching
symbolic value to images encountered in literature, then the
nightingale, once established as a type of Philomela, would
continue to carry that value throughout the poem. At one
point in the seduction, Criseyde is compared to a nightingale,
as the narrator states:

> And as the newe abaysed nyghtyngale,
> That stynteth first whan she bygynneth to synge,
> Whan that she hereth any herde tale,
> Or in the hegges any wyght stirynge,
> And after siker doth hire vois out rynge,
> Right so Criseyde, whan hire drede stente,
> Opned hire herte, and tolde hym hire entente.

> (III, 1233-1239)

The emphasis lies on the timorous nature attributed to the bird,
which reflects the characteristic fear already established as
an important facet of Criseyde's personality. She had earlier
been referred to as "the ferfulleste wight that myghte be"
(II, 450) and Pandarus implored that she "ne chaungeth for fere
so youre hewe" (II, 303). The timid nature of the nightingale
may be in part a reference to the fear of Philomela which is so
emphasized in the Metamorphoses. However, Criseyde is able to
overcome her timidity in order to respond to Troilus, and the
bird-song begins to carry a somewhat different connotation.
In Decameron, _ · · by Boccaccio, an author admired by Chaucer,
the nightingale's song becomes equated with sexual intercourse.[12]

Just as there are strong sexual implications in those opening

lines of the General Prologue "And smale foweles maken mel-

odye,/ That slepen al the nyght with open ye/ So priketh hem

nature in hir corages" (Gen Prol 9-11) -- so also are there

similar connotations in the bird-song echoed by Criseyde in

her response to Troilus. Thus, even in this context, the

nightingale retains the essential sexual elements which it

contained in the Philomela myth.

        A second myth drawn upon by Chaucer also expresses

the idea of betrayal within a family, and this is the story

of Scylla, Nysus' daughter, which is alluded to near the end

of Book Five. On the tenth day following Criseyde's departure

for the Greek camp, Troilus goes early to the walls of Troy

to await her promised return. The narrator sets the scene for

Troilus' vigil thus:

> The laurer-crowned Phebus, with his heete,
> Gan, in his course ay upward as he wente,
> To warmen of the est see the wawes weete,
> And Nysus doughter song with fressh entente,
> Whan Troilus his Pandare after sente;   (V, 1107-1111)

The 'Nysus doughter' mentioned in this passage is Scylla, who

was transmuted into a lark after she betrayed her father in

order to assist King Mynos of Crete for whom she nursed a se-

cret passion.[13] This story is also mentioned by Chaucer in

"The Legend of Ariadne" in The Legend of Good Women. The situ-

ation in the Troilus does not precisely parallel that of the

Scylla myth, for the primary object of Criseyde's betrayal
is not her father Calchas, but Troilus. However, in failing
to return she does betray the man who should have been a
paternal substitute, her uncle Pandarus. The mention of the
song of Nysus' daughter or the lark would have recalled the
motif of betrayal to the readers. This could have had two
possible effects. On one hand, it could have led the optimis-
tic reader to anticipate that Criseyde was about to betray her
father and return to Troy, but this is unlikely as she had
already capitulated to Diomede's wooing, giving him Troilus'
horse and brooch. It is more likely that the allusion to the
myth was designed to accentuate the theme of betrayal which is
just beginning to have an impact on Troilus and Pandarus.

The theme of betrayal is also pointed out by a minor
reference to another myth involving this element. Early in
Book Five, when describing his dreams to Pandarus, Troilus
mentions in passing the owl "which that hette Escaphilo"
(V, 319). In the notes to his edition of the text Robinson
identifies this as a reference to Ascalaphus. Ascalaphus,
the son of Acherontis and the nymph Orne, was a gardener of
Hades. It was he who betrayed the fact that Persephone had
eaten six pomegranate seeds during her sojourn in the Under-
world after she had been forcibly abducted by Pluto. In pun-
ishment for this crime Ceres caused him to be metamorphosed
into an owl, which Boccaccio says was a fitting punishment as
the owl is a bird of ill-omen.[14] The use of the name Ascalaphus

is particularly appropriate in the Troilus because it has other associations with the Troy story. Ascalaphus was also the name of a Greek who was one of Helen's suitors. He served as a sentry under Agamemnon, and was killed by Diephobus, Troilus brother, in the fighting before Troy.[15] Although there is no evidence that Chaucer was aware of this element of the Troy legends, it is possible that the coincidence of the names encouraged him to include the name in his identification of the owl. Regardless of the second link between Ascalaphus and Troy, the primary purpose behind the inclusion of the name appears to be to lend additional emphasis to the theme of betrayal.

The final myth involving birds mentioned by Chaucer in the poem is the account of Ticius' torments in Hades. Ticius, according to Greek myth, was a giant or Titan who was killed by Apollo and Artemis because he attempted to rape their mother Leto. As punishment for this offence he was condemned to lie bound in Hell while two vultures tore forever at his liver. This was punishment designed to fit the crime, for the ancients believed that the liver was the seat of sexual passion.[16] Pandarus refers to this punishment in Book One of the Troilus when he compares the pain Troilus feels because of his inability to obtain Criseyde with that felt by Ticius:

> I graunte wel that thow endurest wo
> As sharp as doth he Ticius in helle,
> Whos stomak foughles tiren evere moo
> That hightyn volturis, as bokes telle.   (I, 785-788)

The comparison is particularly appropriate, as both figures are suffering torments brought upon them by lust. The use of the birds in this instance appears to be solely for the purpose of following the details of the myth, which provide a powerful literary image for the pain which can result from unrestrained passion.

The mythological allusions in which birds form significant elements chosen by Chaucer display two common elements. They involve either betrayal or sexual passion, and occasionally both. In addition, some of the myths of betrayal portray an element of familial betrayal which is particularly important in Troilus and Criseyde. Thus, Chaucer selected myths that would convey to his audience the full implications of the actions of the central characters of the poem. The reader is not allowed to forget that Troilus' desire for Criseyde is based on sexual passion which is often linked with brutality, nor that Pandarus is betraying a family member by arranging for the seduction.

The second type of classical reference involving birds pertains to augury. There are two types concerning birds which appear in the Troilus: Criseyde's dream of the white eagle, and Troilus' dreams which were accompanied by the screeching of an owl. Early in Book Five Troilus complains:

> For wele I fele, by my maladie,
> And by my dremes now and yore ago,

> Al certeynly that I mot nedes dye.
> The owle ek, which that hette Escaphilo,
> Hath after me shright al thise nyghtes two.

(V, 316-320)

As Professor Rowland points out in Blind Beasts, the owl has
long been associated with the prediction of misfortune to come.
Both the Talmud and the Onocriticon of Artemedorus Daldanius
mention specifically that it is unlucky to dream of owls.
Chaucer may have had this in mind when he placed the owl heard
by Troilus in such close conjunction with the dreams mentioned,
or he may merely have been relying on the traditional associ-
ation of owls with bad luck. It is evident that Chaucer was
familiar with this tradition from his reference to the owl as
the bird "that of deth the bode bryngeth" in The Parliament of
Fowls.[17] Troilus apparently believes in both dreams and augury,
although Pandarus is quick to reject both as means of prophecy:

> Wel worthe of dremes ay thise olde wives, .
> And treweliche ek augurye of thise fowles,
> For fere of which men wenen lese here lyves,
> As revenes qualm, or shrichyng of thise owles.
> To trowen on it bothe fals and foul is.   (V, 379-383)

The tone here is much the same as that adopted by Pertelote
in the Nun's Priest's Tale, when she dismisses Chauntecleer's
dream of the fox. It is important to remember at this point
the distinctions made between different types of dreams in the
medieval period. The major authority on dream interpretation

was Macrobius, to whom Chaucer refers in the Book of the Duchess,
the Parliament of Fowls, the House of Fame and in the Canterbury
Tales.[18] Pertelote makes the error of ignoring what Macrobius
had classified as a 'visio' or prophetic vision -- a dream whose
events actually happened. In the case of Troilus' dreams,
Pandarus may very well be correct in his dismissal of their
prophetic value. The dreams described by Troilus in the begin-
ning of Book Five appear to be 'insomnia', according to the
definitions of Macrobius. In On Dreams he states that these
dreams "may be caused by mental or physical distress, or anxiety
about the future: the patient experiences in dreams vexations
similar to those that disturb him during the day ... they are
noteworthy only during their course and afterwards have no
importance or meaning."[19] Thus, Troilus' dreams which arise
from his depression concerning his loss of Criseyde apparently
serve only to emphasize his disturbed state of mind, not to pre-
dict his future.

   There is, however, one type of prophetic dream which
seems to have some bearing on Troilus and Criseyde: the
'somnium' or enigmatic dream "that conceals with strange shapes
and veils with ambiguity the true meaning of the information
being offered, and requires an interpretation for its under-
standing".[20] This definition appears to apply to Criseyde's
dream of the white eagle. This dream follows Criseyde's first
sight of Troilus, and the song to Love sung by Antigone which
she hears in the garden. Criseyde is lulled to sleep by the

nightingale's song and her thoughts of Troilus' dreams:

> How that an egle, fethered whit as bon,
> Under hire brest his longe clawes sette,
> And out hire herte he rente, and that anon,
> And dide his herte into hire brest to gon,
> Of which she nought agroos, ne nothyng smerte;
> And forth he fleigh, with herte left for herte.

<div align="right">(II, 926-931)</div>

Chaucer offers no interpretation of this dream, as he later does for Troilus' dream of the boar. Hence, critics ever since have attempted to fill the gap by explaining the symbolic significance of Criseyde's somnium. The account given by Sanford Meech is representative of the romantic approach to the Troilus. Meech argues that, having heard the nightingale's extension of Antigone's tribute to Love, it was "no wonder that with such musical suggestion the lady comes to dream of Troilus, and to dream of him symbolically as the king of birds -- of power to tear her heart from her bosom but of such devotion that he exchanges his for hers."[21] He interprets the violence of the heart-rending climax thus:

> This climax is true to both Freud and art. The dreamwork achieves wish fulfillment through combination of experiences of the waking day: the Martian hero of the afternoon is transformed into a creature winged, as is the singer of the evening. Artistically, the eagle which he becomes is a perfect symbol for Troilus -- a royal and mighty fowl

and, in its whiteness, pure as well as splendid.[22]

Meech also points out that according to the evidence of Mario Praz investigations there is a similarity between this eagle and the eagle of Dante's dream in the Purgatorio, and perhaps to the Griffin emblematic of Christ as well. Meech bases his argument primarily on the exchange of hearts, for in the source, Il Filostrato, the tearing out of Criseyde's heart was a part of Troilus' dream of the boar, in which Diomede in the shape of a boar ripped the heart from a rather willing Criseyde, but left nothing in return. Meech views Chaucer's addition of the white eagle as an attempt to indicate the pure and mutual nature of the love between Troilus and Criseyde.

Not all critics, however, take this favourable view of Troilus. Charles A. Owen, Jr., in "Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, II, 925-31"[23] explains that Chaucer would have taken the bird ironically. According to Owen, the eagle was a type of the dominant male which Criseyde craved, and which Troilus patently was not. Thus, he adopts the 'wish-fulfillment' concept also mentioned by Meech as an explanation for the dream, but sees the eagle image as an effort to emphasize Troilus' non-aggression in the love affair.

Any attempt to resolve this conflict concerning the meaning of the dream must begin with the common symbolic values attached to the eagle by Chaucer's contemporaries and sources. There is ample evidence of a tradition of interpre-

tation of the eagle 'in bono'. Boccaccio, for example,
explains the myth of Prometheus in terms of an eagle symbolic
of good. In the Geneologiae Deorum Gentilium he states that
Mercury led Prometheus to the Caucasus and bound him "as the
inspiring teacher lures one into solitary study and contem-
plation. The fetters are but self-imposed devotion to study,
and the lacerations of the eagle but the pains of high medi-
tation healed at length by the joy of discovery."[24] The use
by Dante was cited earlier, and the eagle was also used as a
symbol of good by ecclesiastical figures as well. According
to Emile Mâle, during the medieval period the eagle had at
least three common symbolic meanings for the church.

> The eagle -- an echo of the natural history of
> the Bestiaries -- who alone of created things was
> reputed to gaze straight into the light of the sun,
> is the emblem of St. John, who from the first
> transports men to the very heart of divinity...
> the eagle is a figure of the Ascension. Christ
> rose to Heaven as the eagle rises to the clouds...
> And he [the Christian] must be [an] eagle because the
> eagle flies in the heights looking straight into
> the sun, type of the Christian who with direct
> gaze contemplates the things of eternity.[25]

Thus, there is ample evidence pointing to a favourable symbolic
meaning to be attached to the eagle.

However, there is an equally strong case to be made for
the interpretation 'in malo' of the eagle. Rowland cites the
early exegetical writer Clement of Alexandria, who equated the

eagle with robbery, and also Mattias Farinator, a Viennese

Carmelite writing in 1330, who used the eagle as an emblem

on the mantle of Superbia.[26]   Robertson, too, notes this

type of interpretation, quoting Holcot, a fourteenth century

Biblical exegete who stated:

> ... regrettably outside of the church there are
> some monstrous men having two heads and contrary
> motions. For they have a body of sin joined to
> the natural body, and the head of this body, which
> is joined to it by pride, is the Devil ... The
> hands are rapacious like the foot of a lion, or
> like that of an eagle through cupidity and avarice...[27]

John Gower, a friend of Chaucer, also used the eagle in unfavourable circumstances. In his Mirour de L'omme he gives a

description of Pride, mounted on a lion and carrying an eagle.[28]

And in Christian iconography, the eagle depicted as a bird of

prey is symbolic of "the demon who ravishes souls, or the sins

of pride and worldly power."[29] Thus, there are grounds for

interpreting Criseyde's dream either as an expression of mutual

love, or as an image of Troilus' pride and cupidity. In order

to determine the most appropriate interpretation for this

dream, it is necessary to look at Chaucer's use of the eagle

in his other works.

The eagle is used by Chaucer in two other works: The

Parliament of Fowls and The Canterbury Tales. In The Parliament of Fowls, the eagle figures as a symbol of the nobility

taking part in the marriage theme of the poem. Robertson discusses this passage, and the implications of the eagle's conduct in some depth. He states:

> ... in the poem a royal eagle instead of offering
> to be the husband of the formel wishes to serve
> her as his 'soverayn lady' and not as his 'fer'
> or mate ... the other eagles claim in turn that
> each loves the formel as hotly as the first and
> so deserves to 'serve' her ... What these events
> imply is that when nobility refuses the obligation
> of marriage in favor of lust, a bad example is
> afforded the other birds, and the result is a dis-
> sention which affects the whole hierarchy of society.[30]

This appears to parallel the situation in Troilus and Criseyde, for Troilus is a noble who seeks to gratify his lust outside of marriage. Thus, it would seem that in this instance Chaucer uses the eagle as a pejorative image, rather than a symbol of virtue.

The eagle is also used in The Knight's Tale, and in this instance, as in Troilus and Criseyde, it is a white eagle. This designation of the eagle's colour has long puzzled critics because, as Robinson points out in his notes, the white eagle is unknown. The explanation of white for purity, often set forth in accounts of Criseyde's dream, is undermined by the use of the white eagle in The Knight's Tale. There it is a part of the accoutrements of Emetreus, the King of India who rides with Arcita. Chaucer writes:

> Upon his hand he bar for his deduyt
> An egle tame, as any lilye whyt.   (KnT, 2177-2178)

It is important to note that the eagle is included in a description of a regal figure generally held to be a type of Mars, riding to assist in a tournament occasioned by the lust of two other nobles, Palamon and Arcite, for Emilye. Thus, it would seem valid to conclude that, based on Chaucer's other references to the eagle, and on the tradition of the pejorative use of the eagle as a symbol by writers such as Gower, the use of the white eagle in Criseyde's dream was intended to convey the idea of the destructive nature of unrestrained lust in the nobility. However, this is still not a totally satisfactory explanation, for it fails to account for the significance of the exchange of hearts, and the puzzling point that Criseyde "nought agroos, ne nothyng smerte" (II, 930) during the exchange, despite the violence of the image. This paradox is, however, common in the poem. Although Troilus is the least aggressive of lovers, his courtship of Criseyde contains references to the Philomela myth which is essentially very violent. Similarly, the image of tearing Criseyde's heart from her breast is painful and violent in concept, even though in her state of slumber she feels no pain. Thus, although there is no violence in the relationship itself, it nevertheless is so surrounded by images of violence that they seem to become an integral part of the central characters.

Chaucer's references to the birds of mythology and
to the significance of dreams indicate his classical background.
However, he also worked with more contemporary images, and his
use of birds in a hunting context illustrates this. Chaucer
makes several references throughout the poem to hunting, both
with and for birds. In order to understand the significance
of these images we must turn to the iconographic and literary
tradition behind the use of the hunting hawk and the snare in
medieval arts and letters. Although it was a common feature of
everyday life at the medieval court, the hawk nevertheless had
acquired a very specific symbolic meaning in both art and liter-
ature by Chaucer's time. In ecclesiastical writing it had
become associated with various vices, such as injustice, envy
and avarice.[31] Alternatively, it was also used as an image of
the Christian by some writers who believed that the soul was
drawn to the blood of Christ just as a hawk is drawn to a bloody
lure.[32] Of more importance to the study of the _Troilus_, however,
is the traditional association between the hawk and the lover
made in medieval art.[33] Robertson discusses the hawk as an
important symbol used in both secular and religious contexts,
used in the illustration of Psalms as well as romances. The
bird was a readily recognizable symbol of love's hunt, and many
sources show the young lover engaged in suggestive activities
such as chin-chucking while bearing a hawk. In some instances
the lady in question is shown carrying a lure, indicating her

willingness to be a party to the hunt. The hawk of love's hunt figures in literature as well. In The Art of Courtly Love, the hawk is one of the items a young and amorous knight must acquire in order to obtain the Rules of Love from Arthur's court.[34] Thus, when Chaucer writes "This Troilus, in wise of curteysie,/ With hauk on honde, and with a huge route/ Of knyghtes, rood and did hire companye" (V, 64-66), he is creating an image of Troilus which places him squarely in the literary and artistic tradition of amorous young lovers. This same image is alluded to briefly earlier in the Book Three when the narrator explains, "In tyme of trewe, on hauking wolde he ride" (III, 1799). Although the line adds a bit of believable detail concerning the pastimes of a young nobleman, it also serves to remind the reader of Troilus' participation in love's hunt.

A second type of hunting image associated with birds which figures in the Troilus is the snare. The use of the bird-snare as an image for the entrapment of the soul by wordly appetites has a long history in literature. Robertson mentions that Odo of Cluny uses the image in the Occupatio:

> And just as bait draws flying birds to the snare,
> Wicked appetite draws those moved by its sweetness.
> Fixed in the lime, they cannot stretch their wings;
> They lack devotion to virtue and the wings to fly.[35]

Cupid sets bird-lime by the well of Narcissus in the Romance
of the Rose, just as the narrator describes Troilus' entrap-
ment by the God of Love by saying "love bigan his fetheres
so to lyme" (I, 353). The image is used in art as well, with
manuscripts, often Psalters, showing the lover caught in the
bird-snare of Cupid.[36] This is the trap which Troilus bewails
when he realizes that he is in love with Criseyde:

> He seyde, 'O fool, now artow in the snare,
> That whilom japedest at loves peyne.
> Now artow hent, now gnaw thin owen cheyne! (I, 507-509)

The bird-snare images form part of the much larger pattern of
images of bondage and entrapment which have been dealt with
thoroughly by Barney and Van in the works cited earlier. Again,
they also serve to place Troilus in the tradition of the amor-
ous youth of the type found in the Romance of the Rose.

In a more general way, hunting provides some other images
used by Chaucer. When Troilus is waiting for Criseyde to appear
in the bedroom at Pandarus' house, his confinement in the small
area is described as being shut "in mewe", referring to the
small cages in which hunting falcons are kept. The terminology
is later applied to Criseyde, who is described as being "as
fressh as faukoun comen out of muwe" (III, 1784). And when she
is consoling Troilus with her promise of escape back to Troy
from the Greek camp, she assures him that she "shal not so ben
hid in mewe" (IV, 1310), implying that she will have enough

freedom to effect a return to him. This type of image appears to be drawn directly from Chaucer's experience of hawking as a noble pastime, and the image of the mew for confinement draws its effect from the familiarity of the audience with the circumstances of hawking rather than any symbolic value attached to the bird.

Another allusion to birds drawn from the terminology of hawking appears in somewhat more suggestive circumstances. In Book Four, Pandarus makes the statement "Ech for his vertu holden is for deere,/ Both heroner and faucoun for ryvere" (IV, 412-413), using the birds to indicate that, just as the heroner is good specifically for taking herons and the falcon for striking smaller birds, so each person has some point on which they can be valued. However, the statement is not really an example of human compassion from Pandarus. Rather, he uses the image to try to persuade Troilus to forget about Criseyde and concentrate on another woman. The basically valid comment concerning birds is prefaced with the remark, "If oon kan synge, an other kan wel daunce;/ If this be goodly, she is glad and light;/ And this is fair, and that kan good aright" (IV, 409-411). Chaucer in this instance draws a particularly apt image from the sport of hawking, but uses it to provide yet another example of Pandarus' sophistry.

The final category of bird images used in the Troilus is of minor importance, but must nonetheless be mentioned in the interest of completeness. These few references include the

proverbial phrases involving birds and idiomatic descriptions.
The first bird image mentioned in the poem occurs in one such
phrase, when Troilus is described as being "as proud a pekok"
(I, 210). Even in Chaucer's time the phrase 'as proud as a
peacock' was a stock comparison, and thus would have had little
to do with the peacock's role as the bird of Juno, or as a
Christian symbol of immortality. A similar stock phrase is
found in Pandarus' attempt to persuade Criseyde to accept
Troilus' suit on the grounds that she is growing old. He tells
her, "So longe mote ye lyve, and alle proude,/ Til crowes feet
be growen under your yë" (II, 402-403). The designation of that
particular type of wrinkle as 'crow's feet' is such a common
image in English idiom that it would be ridiculous to attempt to
attach any symbolic meaning to Chaucer's use of the crow in this
instance.

A slightly more complex image, based on traditional
impossibilities is found in Book Three. When Troilus and Crise-
yde must part on the morning following the seduction at Pandarus'
house, they swear undying devotion to each other. In an extra-
vagant statement of fidelity Criseyde tells Troilus:

> ...O herte deere,
> The game, ywys, so ferforth now is gon,
> That first shal Phebus fallen fro his spere,
> And everich egle ben the dowves feere,
> And everi roche out of his place sterte,
> Er Troilus out of Criseydes herte.   (III, 1493-1498)

Robinson notes that this type of hyperbole has been found as early as the <u>Eclogues</u> of Vergil. In <u>Eclogue I</u> the character Tityrus declares his devotion to his patron in terms very similar to those used by Criseyde:

> And so I say, stags must take wing and feed in
> the upper air; the sea roll back and leave her
> fishes high and dry; nations go wandering across
> each other's lands, and Germans drink in exile
> from the Tigris, or Parthians from the Saône --
> before the memory of my patron's gracious look
> could vanish from my heart.[37]

Chaucer stresses the impossibility of Criseyde's forgetting Troilus by using birds which are traditionally incompatible, the eagle and the dove. Of course, the entire statement contains a touch of irony, for the reader is aware that Criseyde will transfer her affections, and the extravagance of the statement is empty.

On the basis of this examination of the bird imagery found in <u>Troilus and Criseyde</u>, it is possible to conclude that in the two major categories of imagery used, mythological references and contemporary allusions, Chaucer relied heavily upon the commonly understood symbolic value of the birds to convey important ideas to his audience. The mythological references emphasize the elements of lust and betrayal in the story of Troilus and Criseyde, while contemporary images follow the

iconographic and literary tradition of love's hunt in medieval
manuscripts. Whether he alluded to the myth of the unfortunate
Philomela through his use of the nightingale, or to the tra-
dition of the young lover through the hawk, Chaucer used birds
in order to shape a specific understanding of the circumstances
of the poem.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 3

[1] J.L. Lowes, "Chaucer and the Ovide Moralisé", PMLA, 23(1918), 302-325.

[2] Clark and Heilig, eds., Selections from the Metamorphoses and Heroides of Publius Ovidius Naso. (Philadelphia: 1862), pp. 223-236.

[3] Chrétien de Troyes, Philomena: Conte Raconté D'après Ovide. (Geneva: 1974), p. 93.

"Progne devint une arondele,
Et Philomena rossignos." Ll. 1452-1453.

[4] J.L. Baird and J.R. Kane, Rossignol: An Edition and Translation, (Kent, 1978), p. 1.

[5] Baird, Rossignol, p. 9.

[6] Baird, Rossignol, p. 10.

[7] Baird, Rossignol, p. 12.

[8] Rowland, Blind Beasts, p. 82.

[9] J.P. McCall, 'Troilus and Criseyde', in Beryl Rowland, ed., A Companion to Chaucer Studies. (New York: 1968), pp. 380-381.

[10] Sanford Meech, Design in Chaucer's Troilus. (Syracuse: 1959), p. 34.

[11] Meech, Design in Chaucer's Troilus, p. 43.

[12] Baird, Rossignol, pp. 38-9.

[13] J.P. McCall, "Troilus and Criseyde", 382.,

Grant, Myths of the Greeks and Romans, 391.

[14] Hammond and Saillard, eds., The Oxford Classical Dictionary (Oxford: 1970), p. 128. also Boccaccio, Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri. (Bari: 1951) vol. 1, pp. 133-134.

[15] C.B. Avery, ed.., New Century Classical Handbook. (New York: 1962), p. 176.

[16] Michael Grant, Myths of the Greeks and Romans (New York: 1962), p. 393.

[17] Rowland, Blind Beasts, p. 38.

[18] R.P. Miller, ed.., Chaucer: Sources and Backgrounds. (New York, 1977), p. 44.

[19] Miller, Sources and Backgrounds, p. 49.

[20] Miller, Sources and Backgrounds, p. 50.

[21] Meech, Design in Chaucer's Troilus, p. 43.

[22] Meech, Design in Chaucer's Troilus, p. 43.

[23] Meech, Design in Chaucer's Troilus, p. 440.

[24] C.G. Osgood, trans., Boccaccio on Poetry. (New York, 1956) p. xxx.

[25] Emile Mâle, The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century. (New York, 1972), pp. 36-37.

[26] Rowland, Blind Beasts, pp. 18-19.

[27] Robertson, A Preface, p. 155.

[28] Rowland, Blind Beasts, p. 19.

[29] Ferguson, Signs and Symbols, p. 7.

[30] Robertson, A Preface, p. 377.

[31] Rowland, Blind Beasts, pp. 18-19.

[32] Baird, Rossignol, p. 78.

[33] Robertson, A Preface, pp. 190-195.

[34] Robertson, _A Preface_, p. 446.

[35] Robertson, _A Preface_, p. 94.

[36] Robertson, _A Preface_, p. 112.

[37] [E.V. Rieu, trans.] _Virgil: The Pastoral Poems_, (Harmond-sworth, 1972), p. 25.

CHAPTER 4

FIRE IMAGERY

Compared with the composite nature of nautical imagery,
and the definite bi-partite pattern of bird imagery, the
references pertaining to fire and burning present a very
uniform design in Troilus and Criseyde. Fire imagery is pre-
sented mainly in terms of fire or flame or burning, although
some critics, such as Meech, also include references to heat,
cold, melting or freezing under this category. Fire imagery
is well-distributed throughout the poem, with nine referen-
ces in each of Books One, Two and Five; and eleven and four-
teen in Books Three and Four respectively. Some of these
images merely supply vivid descriptions of certain situations,
as in Troilus' statement of despair concerning Criseyde in
Book One: "But also cold in love towardes the/ Thi lady is,
as frost in wynter moone,/ And thow fordon, as snow in fire
is soone" (I, 523-525). Similarly, the description of the
uproar in parliament during the discussion of the exchange of
Criseyde relies upon an image dealing with fire in order to
convey a vivid impression, although it may contain a subtle
allusion to contemporary political unrest as well: "The
noyse of people up stirte thanne at ones/ As breme as blase
of straw iset on-fire" (V, 132-184). Even more frequent than
this type of apt description are those references involving
proverbial wisdom concerning fire. The narrator makes three

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statements of this sort, assuring the reader with quaint
authority that "For ay the ner the fir, the hotter is" (I,
449) and "Thorugh more wode or col, the more fir" (II, 1332).
In a similar colloquial style he notes" Pandare, which that
stood hire faste by/ Felte iren hoot, and he bygan to smyte"
(II, 1275-1276). The majority of these images are spoken by
Pandarus, however, who seems to have a proverb to suit every
occasion. When he advises Troilus to hide his love, he warns
him,"For hym men demen hoot that men seen swete" (II, 1533),
a statement which Robinson believes to be proverbial. Pan-
darus applies this wisdom to Criseyde as well, for he assures
her prior to the seduction scene,"Ne drede the nevere a deel,/
For it shal be right as thow wolt desire;/ So thryve I, this
nyght shal I make it weel,/ Or casten al the gruwel on the
fire" (III, 708-711), using a proverb included by Skeat in
Early English Proverbs. Pandarus uses proverbs not only to
express warning and reassurance, as noted above, but also to
indicate his own vexation. When Troilus, after a brief spell
at the delightful palace of Sarpedoun during which he con-
tinued to brood over Criseyde, suggests to Pandarus that they
return home to Troy, Pandarus snaps,"Be we comen hider/ To
fecchen fir, and rennen hom ayein?" (V, 484-485). However,
these descriptive and proverbial images form only a minor
part of the fire imagery found in Troilus and Criseyde. The
majority of the images used by Chaucer treat fire as an image
for the passion which dominates the story. It is essential

for our understanding of the poem to discover whether Chaucer intended this to be a pejorative or an encomiastic image. In order to do this, we must look at both the medieval tradition surrounding the use of this image, and the manner in which it is used by Chaucer in the text.

Like most symbols used in the middle ages, fire was subject to interpretation both 'in bono' and 'in malo'. It was common, for example, for the Christian to burn with charity, and fire was also connected with the martyr's death and the Pentecost. However, because of its traditional association with Venus, fire had also become a standard image for sexual desire by Chaucer's time. The Chess Gloss links the rose and the flame in this explanation of the symbols of Venus:

> The red rose, then, serves our purpose if we look
> well into its first conditions, insofar as it is
> red, an ardent colour. For this signifies to us
> that the concupiscence and yearning for the
> desired delight in the amorous life is ardent fire
> in its first coming and enflames one with love...
> And therefore the author of the poem says that
> Venus carries a fire brand in one of her hands,
> with which she burns those who draw too near...[2]

This image was accepted by the moralists of the Church as well. Robertson cites Gerard of Liège, author of a commentary on the torments of lust, who states "And just as the fire does not diminish as long as the fuel is cast upon it, so also the sin of lechery burns more fiercely the more it is exercised."[3]

The image of amorous fire was known to the medieval audience from several sources, although perhaps the most familiar description would be one taken from the Romance of the Rose, specifically the passage concerning the pains of love:

> Her beauty with great joy will fill your soul;
> But sight of her your heart will broil and fry.
> The glowing coals of love will burst ablaze.
> The more you gaze upon her whom you love,
> The hotter will the fire engage your heart.
> Sight is the grease that swells the amorous flame.
> Each lover customarily pursues
> The burning conflagration. [4]

There was, therefore, a strong traditional association of desire with fire during the period in which Chaucer wrote.

Evidence drawn from within the text itself also appears to support the conclusion that Chaucer's fire imagery was designed to emphasize the carnal nature of Troilus' relationship with Criseyde. Troilus specifically identifies the heat which he feels as desire in several passages. In Book One he states, "Therto desir so brennyngly me assaileth" (I, 607), and in the 'Canticus Troili' he complains, "And if that at myn owen lust I brenne,/ From whennes cometh my waillynge and my pleynte?" (I, 407-408). The narrator, too, indicates that Troilus suffers from passionate heat. He refers to the fire felt by Troilus as 'the fyr of love' (I, 436, 490), and comments of Troilus that "as the fir he brende/ For sharp desir

of hope and of pleasaunce" (III, 425-426). Thus the characters in the tale themselves identify the fire image with lust.

Although the identification of the fire as carnal concupiscence appears to be quite straightforward, there has been some disagreement concerning Chaucer's attitude toward this fire. In the most extensive article available concerning the specific study of fire imagery, Sanford Meech concludes that Chaucer attempted to minimize the carnality of the fire, and to associate it instead with heavenly love. Meech draws his conclusions largely from his comparison of Troilus and Criseyde with its source, Il Filostrato by Boccaccio. With regard to images involving fire, he states that although most of Chaucer's images stress desire, there is a tendency to differentiate 'pure flame' from 'lustful heat', and that Chaucer submerges images of sexual passion in order to emphasize images of 'fiery devotion' and the 'bracketing of earthly and heavenly love'.[5] Meech reaches this conclusion partly because Chaucer has proportionately fewer references to fire than Boccaccio, while adding more images of cold, and partly because Chaucer adds images which associate fire with sorrow as well as passion. The strongest evidence he offers, however, is drawn from one important statement made by Pandarus. Meech quotes from the latter part of Book One which, he claims, indicates that Chaucer made a deliberate attempt to link Troilus' burning passion for Criseyde with heavenly love. Pandarus assures Troilus that:

> ... this have I herd seyd of wyse lered,
> Was nevere man or womman yet bigete
> That was unapt to suffren loves hete,
> Celestial, or elles love of kynde;   (I, 976-979)

Meech then states, "Through this bracketing of earthly with
heavenly love he tacitly sublimates the former."[6] And in
fact, the lines quoted by Meech do seem to support that con-
clusion.   However, had Meech continued the quotation into the
next stanza he would have found somewhat contradictory evi-
dence.   Pandarus continues to speak to Troilus concerning
Criseyde, and pointedly remarks:

> And for to speke of hire in specyal,
> Hire beaute to bithynken and hire youthe,
> It sit hire naught to ben celestial
> As yet, ...   (I, 981-984)

Although as mentioned earlier, it is perfectly acceptable to
burn with the heat of charity, or celestial love, Chaucer is
careful to distinguish between this heat and that which applies
to Criseyde.   It appears that rather than linking earthly and
heavenly love in these lines, as Meech concludes, Chaucer very
clearly draws the distinction between celestial love, which does
not pertain to Criseyde, and the love of kind or carnal love
which does.

Chaucer offers further evidence within the poem to indi-
cate that this fire is not a beneficial element.   Criseyde does
not burn with the sole flame of desire, as does Troilus.   Rather

hers is a mixed flame, fueled by several sources. Fear plays
a significant part in her burning since it is one of the main
features of her personality. The narrator describes her dis-
tress in Book Four by stating, "And thus she brenneth both in
love and drede" (IV, 678). Later, when the ladies of Troy
visit her in the belief that she is burning with the antici-
pation of seeing her father again, the narrator indicates
that sorrow rather than eagerness fuels her fire:

> Swich vanyte ne kan don hire non ese,
> As she that al this mene while brende
> Of other passioun than that they wende,
> So that she felte almost hire herte dye
> For wo and wery of that compaignie.   (IV, 703-707)

After she has been sent to the Greek camp, Chaucer specifies
that she set "hire woful herte afire" (V, 720). Thus, for
Criseyde the images of burning never apply to a pleasurable
experience, and instead establish a close link between fear
and sorrow and fire.

Chaucer also carefully manipulates the images of fire
surrounding Troilus in order to convey his criticism of the
fires of lust. Although Troilus finds pleasure in his rela-
tionship with Criseyde, the fire imagery applied to him is
invariably linked with destruction, disease and death. The
flames of lust are detrimental to Troilus despite his high
estate:

In hym ne deyned spare blood roial
The fyr of love -- the wherfro God me blesse--
Ne him forbar in no degree for al
His vertu or his excellent prowesse,
But held hym as his thral lowe in destresse. (I, 435-439)

The proper social order is thus inverted by lust, as a prince
of Troy becomes a thrall. At this point Chaucer's use of
fire imagery leads to the same end as a segment of the bird
imagery, for the fire of love destroys social order in much
the same fashion as does the lustful eagle of the nobility.

Sickness and disease are also closely associated with
lust, as the heat generated thereby is disguised as another
malady:

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. (I, 488-491)

Eventually the fever which Troilus adopts to mask the symptoms
of his lust becomes the mechanism through which he is brought
together with Criseyde at Deiphebus' house, thus linking sick-
ness and the fires of lust.

Even more severe than the feigned illness with which fire
is associated is the spiritual illness occasioned by lust. The
normal urge to live is apparently threatened by the fire, as
Troilus complains, "Therto desir so brennyngly me assailleth,/
That to ben slayn it were a gretter joie/ To me than kyng of

Grece ben and Troye" (I, 607-609). Similarly, in the fourth
book of the poem Troilus links fire with death, saying "O
deth, syn with this sorwe I am a-fyre,/ Thow other do me anoon
in teeris drenche, / Or with thi colde strok myn hete quench"
(IV, 509-511). By the final book, the metaphorical fire of
lust has been combined with actual flames as Troilus, convin-
ced of his imminent death, orders:

> But of the fir and flaumbe funeral
> In which my body brennen shal to glede,
> And of the fest and pleyes palestral
> At my vigile, I prey the, tak good hede
> That that be wel; and offre Mars my steede.   (V, 302-306)

Chaucer uses the image of love as fire in such a way as to
emphasize the detrimental aspects of carnal love on society.
It threatens the stability of society, and the health, both
mental and physical, of those affected by it.

There is one point in the poem which apparently contra-
dicts this conclusion: the proem to Book Three, which is an
invocation to Venus. The narrator praises Venus in all of her
manifestations, and comments on the beneficial aspects of love:

> Algates hem that ye wol sette a-fyre,
> They dreden shame, and vices they resygne;   (III, 24-25)

By the end of this book the narrator assigns this type of
virtue to Troilus, who is so influenced by his passion for
Criseyde "That Pride, Envye, and Ire and Avarice/ He gan to
fle, and everich other vice" (III, 1805-1806). However, in

the light of certain other medieval documents concerning
virtue and concupiscence, it appears that these statements
were intended to be ironic. Chaucer's friend John Gower,
to whom the Troilus is dedicated, comments directly on this
type of situation in the headnote to Vox Clamantis (V, 2).
His statement makes his view of the relationship between the
type of love dealt with in the Troilus and Christian virtue
quite clear:

> Here he speaks of how the knight who engages in
> the use of arms when he is burning with lust for
> a woman's affection certainly does not deserve the
> honour of praise for it at all.[7]

Earlier in the same work, when discussing the estate and
obligations of knighthood, Gower remarks:

> Now tell me ... what honor shall a conqueror have
> if a woman's love can conquer him? I don't know
> what the world will reply to me about that. I
> do know he will have no praise from Christ. If
> a man wishes to enjoy honor, let him protect his
> honor, and let him perform the work that his res-
> ponsibility urges upon him. The end will bring
> nothing but inevitable folly upon the man for whom
> Venus initially leads the way to arms. It is not
> right that lead be mixed with shining gold, nor
> that Venus prescribe the deeds of a doughty knight.[8]

Troilus' deeds in war, like those of the young Squire of The
Canterbury Tales, were done 'in hope to stonden in his lady

grace'. Chaucer makes this explicit in the first book,

stating that after Troilus was stricken with love for

Criseyde, he became a great warrior "But for non hate he

to the Grekes hadde,/ Ne also for the rescous of the town,/

Ne made hym thus in armes for to madde,/ But only, lo, for

this conclusion:/ To liken hire the bet for his renoun"

(I, 477-481). By acting in this fashion Troilus becomes a

knight of the type deplored by Gower, performing deeds of

valour while burning with lust. He is therefore not to be

praised for his actions because they are motivated by impure

emotions. The invocation to Venus should therefore be inter-

preted as an ironic statement, for although the narrator may

believe in his prayer, the audience would have been aware

of the discrepancy between the ideals attributed to Venus

and the moral interpretations attached to her supposed bene-

fits.

In addition to the destructive aspects of lust, Chaucer

also uses images of fire in order to illustrate the paradox-

ical nature of love. In the concluding line of the 'Canticus

Troili' Troilus mourns "For hete of cold, for cold of hete,

I dye" (I, 420). This type of paradoxical statement concerning

love was commonplace in the middle ages. Alanus de Insulis

in De Planctu Naturae described love as a series of paradoxes,

and Jean de Meun in the Romance of the Rose, which Chaucer is

believed to have translated continued the tradition. Even

Gower adopts the convention in the Vox Clamantis saying that

love is "dark light, gentle harshness, a light lump of lead,

both flowery winter and a withered flowerless spring ...".[9]
Troilus' 'hete of cold' is thus not only a part of the general
pattern of fire imagery in the poem, it is also a part of the
traditional treatment of the discordant nature of carnal con-
cupiscence.

Loosely connected with the paradoxical aspects of
love is its inconsistent nature. Both Troilus and Criseyde
suffer from the ebb and flow of love's heat. The narrator
says of Criseyde,"Now was hire herte warm, now was it cold"
(II, 698), and "Now hoot, now cold! but thus bitwixen tweye/
She rist hire up, and wente for to pleye" (II, 811-812).
Troilus, too, is subject to the changeable nature of the fire
of love. While he awaited Criseyde's promised return from
the Greek camp "often was his herte hoot and cold" (V, 1102).
This lack of consistent behaviour is typical of the unstable
nature of love and lovers. Not only does the person suffering
from the fire of love undergo abrupt shifts from hot to cold,
he is also subject to a more gradual increase or decrease in
temperature. In Book One, Troilus seeks to alleviate his
pains by gazing at Criseyde, but only further kindles his fire:

> Forthi ful ofte, his hote fire to cesse,
> To sen hire goodly lok he gan to presse;
> For therby to ben esed wel he wende,
> And ay the ner he was, the more he brende.
> For ay the ner the fir, the hotter is -- (I, 445-449)

Not only does the sight of Criseyde increase his ardour, but

the promise of attaining her response inflames him as well:

> Whan Troilus hadde herd Pandare assented
> To ben his help in lovyng of Criseyde,
> Weex of his wo, as who seith, untormented,
> But hotter weex his love, ...   (I, 1009-1012)

Similarly, the first letter sent to him from Criseyde evokes
an increase in his passionate heat:

> But as we may alday oureselven see,
> Thorugh more wode or col, the more fir ...
> So thorugh this lettre, which that she hym sente,
> Encressen gan desir, of which he brente.   (II, 1331-1337)

Even the actual possession of Criseyde does little to assuage
his condition. Instead, the memory serves to increase his
desire, as the narrator points out:

> And fermely impressen in his mynde
> The leeste point that to hym was pleasaunce;
> And verraylich, of thilke remembraunce,
> Desir al newe hym brende, and lust to brede
> Gan more than erst, ...   (III, 1543-1547)

Troilus himself admits as much to Pandarus, saying, "Frend, as
I am a trewe knyght ... I hadde it nevere half so hote as now;/
And ay the more that desir me biteth/ To love hire best, the
more it me deliteth" (III, 1648-1652). Criseyde, too, is sub-
ject to this increase of desire through remembrance, and when
she is at the Greek camp the narrator notes, "And thus she sette

hire woful herte afire/ Thorugh remembraunce of that she gan desire" (V, 720-721). It appears that Chaucer wished to emphasize the progressively increasing nature of lust through the use of the image of the increasing fire. Just as a fire burns hotter with the addition of fuel, so do the fires of lust increase when fueled by excessive contemplation of the object of desire, or consideration of the ends of concupiscence.

There is only one mention made of the decrease of love's fire, and that comes from Pandarus when he attempts to interest Troilus in another woman after it becomes apparent that Troilus and Criseyde will be parted. He tells his friend, "Swich fir, by proces, shal of kynde colde;/ For syn it is but casuel plesaunce,/ Som cas shal putte it out of remembraunce" (IV, 418-420). Here again, the intensity of the fire is directly related to memory, for Pandarus bases his argument on the premise that as the memory of Criseyde is replaced by memories of a new woman, the fire of desire kindled by thoughts of the first love will wane. It is important to note, however, that the fire is not quenched by Pandarus' solution, merely replaced. In effect, the first fire wanes only as the second fire waxes.

The destructive aspects of this ever-increasing fire in Troilus culminate in an acute despair which leads him to seek his death in arms. This personal destruction is paralleled by the destruction of Troy itself. The reader is

reminded repeatedly in the fourth book of the fiery destruc-
tion of the city which is to come: "For dredeless, thorugh
yow shal in a stownde/ Ben Troie ybrend, and beten down to
grownde" (IV, 76-77); "And dar wel say, the tyme is faste by/
That fire and flaumbe on al the town shal sprede,/ And thus
shal Troie torne to asshen ded" (IV, 117-119; "The town of
Troie shal ben set on-fire" (IV, 126). The final reference
to fire in the poem concerns the city's fate as described
in Cassandra's prophecy: "And how the town was brent, she
tolde ek tho" (V, 1510). The fire which destroys Troy is
symbolic as well as real. The seige of Troy was occasioned
by the abduction of Helen by Paris, Agamemnon's wife having
been awarded to the Trojan as a reward for having chosen
Venus as the most beautiful of the goddesses. This tale was
interpreted symbolically in the medieval period. According
to the author of the Chess Gloss, the decision made by Paris
concerning Pallas, Juno and Venus was really a choice con-
cerning the type of life he wished to live -- the contempla-
tive, the active, or the voluptuous. By choosing Venus, Paris
chose to devote his life to the pursuit of carnal delight.[10]
It was therefore symbolically fit that Troy, governed by men
ruled by carnal desires, should be destroyed by the flames
symbolic of those passions.

It is evident from the above analysis that fire was
used consistently by Chaucer as a pejorative image. It is
invariably connected with disease, death and destruction,

indicating that the poet views these things as concomitant with lust. As Chaucer clearly points out in the text, there is nothing of 'celestial fire' in the relationship between Troilus and Criseyde, and the reader is faced with the consistent use of fire as an image for desire, and the disorder which results from it.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 4

[1] Carleton Brown, "Another Contemporary Allusion in Chaucer's Troilus", Modern Language Notes, 26(1911), 208-211.

[2] J.M. Jones, Chess Gloss, p. 347.

[3] Robertson, A Preface, p. 492.

[4] The Romance of the Rose, trans. H.W. Robbins, (New York, 1962), p. 50 , ll. 54-61.

[5] Meech, Design in Chaucer's Troilus, pp. 353-354.

[6] Meech, Design in Chaucer's Troilus, p. 354.

[7] Miller, Sources and Background, p. 195.

[8] Miller, Sources and Background, p. 194.

[9] Miller, Sources and Background, p. 195.

[10] J.M. Jones, Chess Gloss, pp. 538-542.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have investigated three slightly
different image patterns: nautical imagery which is a some-
what artificial grouping involving various component images;
bird imagery which appears at first to be a uniform category
but which in fact proves to have two distinct parts separated
by the ultimate source of the image, the classics or contem-
porary symbolism; and fire imagery, composed largely of fire
itself but including images which are naturally associated
with fire such as heat and burning. The one factor which is
common to these three groups is the necessity for an under-
standing of the symbolic value attached to these images during
the medieval period. Any study of nautical imagery is virtu-
ally useless without an understanding of the medieval fondness
for the motif of the voyage of the soul; ignorance of the
iconographic tradition of the hawk of love's hunt leads to an
incomplete appreciation of Chaucer's artistry with bird imagery.
And an investigation of the use of fire imagery which fails to
acknowledge the significance of the medieval distinction
between celestial fire and lust, and the distinction made by
Chaucer in the text, will be at best misleading. It is appar-
ent from the studies of Kaske and Robertson and Huppé that the
application of historical criticism to medieval literature has
enormous significance for Chaucerian studies, and the findings
of this thesis merely lend additional support to the already
overwhelming evidence in favour of the exegetical approach.

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