Genre Meshing in Chaucer and Shakespeare's Account of the Legend of Troilus and Cressida

Emma Hywel-Evans (BA Hons)

43859879

Macquarie University

Faculty Of Arts

Department of English

October

2016

Table of Contents

Abstract

This discussion aims to explore the links between the motivated manipulation of generic frameworks in legendary materials and how they can be utilised by authors to impart meaning. Chaucer and Shakespeare fashioned their own versions of the Trojan legend. This legend was critical to English history. Chaucer produced his popular poem *Troilus and Criseyde,* and centuries later Shakespeare wrote his play *Troilus and Cressida*. Though Chaucer and Shakespeare cover similar aspects of the legend, individually they both produced texts that were of problematical generic determination to their audiences and critics alike. Generic frameworks that are within individual texts can predispose the reader to knowledge connected with certain genre types. For instance, the medieval romance genre and tragedy genre both have certain familiar tropes and create expectations when poems or plays are classified as them. The adherence to, or defiance of, literary orthodoxies such as genre can also be an indication of how the authors thought of their own political and social circumstances. In order to further the discussion of the employment of genre or genres in the texts modern genre theory will be applied, as this theory allows for the inclusion of more than a singular genre in a single text.

Statement

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Research at Macquarie University. I certify that this thesis is entirely my own work and that I have given fully documented reference to the work of others. This thesis has not previously, in part or in whole, been submitted for assessment in any formal course of study.

Signed 

(Emma Hywel-Evans)

Introduction

The extent to which authors follow literary orthodoxies, such as adherence to generic frameworks, can be a demonstration of the author's own views of the political and social circumstance of the time. Legend refashionings have often been used to facilitate this meaning making. Examples of such cases are Chaucer's poem *Troilus and Criseyde* (1381-1386),[1] and Shakespeare's play *Troilus and Cressida* (1601-1602).[2] These texts are adaptations of the same legend, and both authors can be interpreted as using this particular legend for their own separate goals. Chaucer's poem was immensely popular and went on to inspire additional versions of the tale including Shakespeare's own

[1] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'Troilus and Criseyde*',* in *The Riverside Chaucer,* 3rd edn., ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988): 473-585. The Riverside version of this text was chosen because it is arguably the most collated version of this tale, and also the most widely available. All citations of the poem in this thesis will refer to this particular text. When this text is quoted my translation will follow the original middle English.

[2] William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida,* ed. Kenneth Muir (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). The Oxford version of this text will be used in this thesis because there were many versions of the play produced. Each version contains hundreds of changes, that would naturally change how one interpreted the text. So for simplicity, and as a recognised limitation of this thesis, one text has been chosen. All citations of the play in this discussion will refer to this particular text.

venture. Shakespeare's play, in opposition to Chaucer's work, was very poorly received. This contrast of reception is what is most interesting about these legend retellings offered by two prominent writers, not only of their respective times, but throughout English literature as a whole. The texts themselves cover the events directly before the fall of Troy, relating them to the invented love story between Troilus and Criseyde/ Cressida. What is remarkable about the difference in reception between these two works is that both writers relay virtually the same few key events of the traditional legend, but present them in entirely different ways. This legend was also used to legitimise claims to the throne throughout the span of the English monarchy. Thus making the legend historically significant.[3] For these reasons these two texts will be the focus of this discussion on the effect of motivated genre manipulation and meaning making in legendary materials.

Shakespeare and Chaucer are inherently similar in that they both create versions of the tale that are of problematical genre classification[4] in order to present their views of

[3] For more information and discussion over exactly how certain historical figures used the legend see A. E. Parsons, 'The Trojan Legend in England: Some Instances of Its Application to the Politics of the Times. I', *The Modern Language Review* 24. 3 (Jul., 1929): 253-264, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3715957, and A. E. Parsons, 'The Trojan Legend in England: Some Instance of Its Application to the Politics of the Times' *The Modern Language Review* 24. 4 (Oct., 1929): 394-408, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3715101.

[4] For discussions on the genre of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* see Monica E. McAlpine, *The Genre of Troilus and Criseyde* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1978). Also see Norm Klassen, "Tragedy and Romance in Chaucer's 'Litel Bok' of Troilus and Criseyde.", *A Concise Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405113885_chunk_g978140511388512. For a debate on the medieval romance genre in context see Gail Ashton, *Medieval English Romance In Context* (UK: Continuum International Publishing Group. 2010). For further discussion of the progression of this tale as a tragedy see, Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy* (Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 1997).

When considering *Troilus and Cressida* as a "problem play" in conjunction with Shakespeare's other perceived problem plays see Paul Yachnin, 'Shakespeare's Problem Plays and the Drama of His

the political circumstances at the time. Chaucer used Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* as the primary source for his poem. He not only translates this work, but further expands and elaborates it, producing a text that does not fit into the generic conventions of the medieval romance genre at the time. Shakespeare, though clearly using Chaucer as one of his primary sources,[5] also draws upon Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* and the newly translated *Chapman's Homer: The Iliad*.[6] Through the use of these varying sources Shakespeare also produces a play of hotly debated genre. Shakespeare's motivated treatment of genre frameworks presents his view of the political situation at the time. However, his determination to portray these views can be said to confuse the transmission of the traditional narrative of the legend itself.

To my knowledge, no scholar has yet undertaken the study of the effect of genre on these legendary refashionings, and the implications of using original legendary material as a tool to present social, and political, realities rhetorically. The definition of genre that this research project will use is John Frow's 'a universal dimension of textuality'.[7] Frow goes on to describe how 'genre is a framework for processing

---

Time: Troilus and Cressida, All's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure' in, *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, Volume IV: The Poems, Problem Comedies, Late Plays,* eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard. Blackwell Publishing, 2005, http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405136082_chunk_g97814051360825. Also see E.L. Risden, *Shakespeare and the Problem Play* (USA: McFarland& Company Inc. Publishers, 2012) for a discussion of *Troilus and Cressida* and the anti-genre.

[5] For a discussion of Shakespeare's various sources see M. C. Bradbrook, What Shakespeare Did to Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 9. 3 (Summer, 1958): 311-319, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2867331.

[6] Sections of Chapman's translation of Homer's Iliad appeared as early as 1598, shortly before Shakespeare wrote *Troilus and Cressida.* For more information, see H. C. Fay, 'George Chapman's Translation of Homer's 'iliad'', *Greece & Rome* 21. 63 (Oct., 1952): 104-111, http://www.jstor.org/stable/640882.

[7] John Frow, *Genre: The New Critical Idiom* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

information and for allowing us to move between knowledge given directly in a text and other sets of knowledge that are relevant to understanding it' (Frow, 128). Frow's statements are key concepts in understanding the focal texts of this discussion. There are many versions of the legend, each with slightly different emphasis on characters and events which affects the formation of genre in them. These variations create different generic classifications of individual texts. Thereby forming more expectations of the employment of both singular genre and genres in later works. Frow continues this idea with 'the semiotic frames in which genres are embedded implicate and specify layered ontological domains- implicit realities that genres form as a pregiven reference, together with the effects of authority and plausibility that are specific to them'.[8] Consequently, the Trojan legend demands its own generic expectations simply because the traditional narrative contains characters and events which inform and create frameworks associated with certain genres. This element complicates discussion of Chaucer's poem and Shakespeare's play because scholarship has previously been focused on labelling these texts as belonging to singular genres. Rather than focusing on specific genres that the poem and the play can be classified as, this conversation will focus on the manipulation of genre and how it furthers the meaning making in the texts.

This idea of a universal dimension to textuality is key to the discussion of the many iterations of the Trojan legend. Many versions have been written, each informed upon by previous versions, and, therefore, informing future versions. The critical context surrounding these texts has mostly been preoccupied with the debate of which particular genres these works can be pigeon-holed into. This preoccupation with determining genre

[8] John Frow, "Reproducibles, Rubrics, and Everything You Need": Genre Theory Today, *PMLA* 122. 5, Special Topic: Remapping Genre (Oct., 2007): 1626-1634, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25501811, 1632.

can be said to hamper interpretation of genre and meaning making. Singularity in genre does not permit consideration of potential, motivated, manipulation, of accepted genre frameworks. Such manipulation allows for authors to express their own, or their audience's, views on a variety of social and political topics, without having to be deliberately, and overtly, explicit in the text. The manipulation of literary orthodoxies and established generic frameworks creates an impression of scepticism. The definition of scepticism that this research will use is 'doubt or incredulity as to the truth of some assertion or supposed fact; also, disposition to doubt or incredulity in general; mistrustfulness; sceptical temper'.[9] Literary forms, and the observance of them, would have been extremely important during the renaissance[10] and in drama, especially when considering that genre, and the formation of genre, is a universal dimension of textuality. This is particularly the case for Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. His plays were often associated with particular genres in the very title of the play, thereby forming expectations of what is to come.

In order to fully investigate and interpret these works it will be necessary to establish their contexts. Therefore, the framework of this discussion will include a context chapter, in which the situational politics and cultures of both writers will be detailed. Also included will be a description of other core elements and themes that are related to the thesis topic. Proceeding this will be a chapter on Chaucer and female agency, more specifically Criseyde's, as I believe that this idea is key to determining how genre is used

[9] "scepticism | skepticism, n.", *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2016. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/172253?redirectedFrom=scepticism#eid.

[10] For a discussion on genre in the renaissance see, Alaistair Fowler's, 'The Formation of Genres in the Renaissance and After', *New Literary History* 34. 2, Theorizing Genres I (Spring, 2003): 185-200, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20057775.

to express rhetoric in Chaucer's work. Agency here is described as, 'an agent is a being with the capacity to act, and 'agency' denotes the exercise or manifestation of this capacity'.[11] This debate on agency will also feature in the chapter following, as it will focus on Shakespeare and his choice of presenting his version of the legend in the mode of drama. Shakespeare's choice to present his version of the Troy legend in the form of drama is key to the genre debate surrounding the play, and will further the discussion of genre manipulation in legendary materials. A short conclusion will consolidate the discussion, in which implications of the discussion will be established. For instance, this research aims to delve deeper into why Shakespeare's play was so inherently unpopular, and has remained so, in comparison to Chaucer's own light-hearted take on the Trojan legend. Future research opportunities brought to light by this thesis will also be discussed.

[11] Markus Schlosser, 'Agency', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2015 Edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/agency/.

Chapter One - Cultural and Critical Contexts

The focal texts of this discussion are versions of the same legend, though their authors chose to convey them in entirely different ways. Chaucer's work, though lamenting the inevitable and obviously unavoidable fates of his predestined pagans, ends with Troilus ascending into heaven. With this admission to heaven Troilus is accepted by the modern Christian god of Chaucer's age. Here Chaucer presents a positive reflection on the end to the city of Troy, reiterating that though the ancient city of Troy fell, his city of London or "Troynovant"[1] need not. Shakespeare's play begins and ends in opposition to this medieval hope and positivity. There is no real resolution to the play, no real sense of adherence to the traditional narrative of Troilus and Criseyde/Cressida. Rather, it seems an exasperated attempt to portray a city that is in a state of undetermined future. Chaucer's hope and Shakespeare's despair for the future are mirrored by their meshing of genre frameworks. Chaucer highlights the need to use more than one singular genre in his poem

[1] Russ Willey, *Brewer's Dictionary of London Phrase and Fable* (Great Britain: Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd, 2009), 525. London had long been termed "the New Troy" by both Chaucer's and Shakespeare's society, and this is a concept that will be explored later in this chapter.

by emphasising the idealism of the antiquated medieval romance genre. Shakespeare with his depiction of the legend, abandons all conformity to any singular genres, creating a play of confused meaning making.

It can be argued that the Trojan legend of Troilus and Criseyde does not easily lend itself to a single genre. There are many different aspects to it. Previous texts also create and form certain expectations in terms of genre, so much so that the legend itself can be seen to create and demand adherence to genres like medieval romance, or tragedy. Thus the confusion that has been created surrounding the generic classification of these texts is understandable. One could argue that the difference in attitudes to the legend and its connotations are due to the social, political and domestic contexts of the individual authors. For instance, during the period of time in which it is thought that Chaucer's wrote *Troilus and Criseyde*, Richard II reigned over England. Like Elizabeth I he also produced no heirs to the throne, and this naturally would have caused a state of confusion and apprehension in those of the court throughout both writer's times. This lack of certainty in the continuation of an established inherited monarchy is possibly one of the most influential factors in the writing of both texts, and something that this thesis aims to explore.

Chaucer lived through three different monarchs, and this rapid succession would have caused many political instabilities. Similarly, whilst Shakespeare was born during Elizabeth's reign and lived through it, the previous upheaval in monarchy would have still been fresh in his audience's minds. Elizabeth was also unusual in that she was a woman in power, and by refusing to marry, continued to decline to share her power. Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII, had broken away from the Catholic faith, installing

himself as head of the church of England, whilst his son Edward VI continued the protestant faith. Mary I, however, attempted to undo all that her father and brother had done and instil the Catholic faith as the dominant religion once more. Consequently, when Elizabeth succeeded to the throne, as both a woman and firmly protestant, she would have faced many difficulties and challenges to her command. Coinciding with these various instabilities was the fact that their individual forms of literature, namely poetry for Chaucer and drama for Shakespeare were gaining in popularity. During Shakespeare's lifetime there were a number of popular theatres, all competing amongst themselves for their share of the audience. In Chaucer's case the printing press was invented in 1440. Though after his death, this invention meant that his work could be more easily distributed to the nobility and those among the privileged literate. For those unable to read, Chaucer's works were distributed orally, giving not only the advantaged an escape from daily life.

Chaucer and Shakespeare were in their own separate ways, heavily involved in court life and often relied on annuities and patronages from members of the gentry and sometimes even from the monarchs themselves. Little is known about Chaucer's early life. What is known has been mostly procured from the household records of his employers. One key event in his lifetime that was recorded, however, is that Chaucer was once taken hostage by a foreign power, and the king at the time paid the ransom money.[2] We can interpret this fact to suggest that Chaucer was of some considerable importance. One of the principal differences between Chaucer and Shakespeare is that Chaucer

[2] Oliver F. Emerson, 'Chaucer's First Military Service - A Study of Edward Third's Invasion of France in 1359-60', *Romanic Review* 3 (1 Jan 1912) http://search.proquest.com/docview/1290940152/fulltextPDF/CC5159BC68784503PQ/1?accountid=12219, 352.

worked directly for the crown in several different positions throughout his lifetime. Critics such as Gerald Morgan have commented that these annuities that Chaucer earnt were 'scrupulously honoured and even augmented by three monarchs over a period of more than thirty years'.[3] Thus Chaucer's poetry was not his sole income.[4] It would be easy to interpret this fact as meaning that Chaucer could be more divisive in his work as he did not rely on it as a means to live. However, he did rely on his employment by the crown for the means to afford his living, and thus we can assume that his work would have been under scrutiny, and his place in society potentially under threat, should he create work deemed too subversive in an already politically difficult time.

Even within these limitations Chaucer has been interpreted as writing poetry which discussed the rule of Richard II.[5] Richard II, in particular, was a monarch that faced a lot of criticism. Much like *Troilus and Criseyde* Chaucer's *The Clerk's Tale* was also a reimagined tale designed to reflect the crisis in politics of Richard II's rule. Critics of the time have made the claim that the nobility and members of the court often thought that 'policy was still being made by those round the king rather than the king himself'.[6] The many upheavals and lack of belief and support that Richard II faced are too numerous to

[3] Gerald Morgan, 'The Worthiness of Chaucer's Worthy Knight', *The Chaucer Review* 44. 2 (2009): 115-158, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25642137, 121.

[4] For a more detailed summary of Chaucer's life and his own personal background see, Peter Brown, *Authors in Context: Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) and S. H. Rigby, *Chaucer in Context: Society, Allegory and Gender* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996). For a more in-depth look into Chaucer's history will specific textual references see, Lillian M. Bisson, *Chaucer and the Medieval World* (USA: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

[5] For more information, see Michael Hanrahan, '"A Straunge Successour Shold Take Youre Heritage": The Clerk's Tale and the Crisis of Ricardian Rule', *The Chaucer Review* 35. 4 (2001): 335-350, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25096139.

[6] Anthony Tuck, *Richard II and the English Nobility* (London, Edward Arnold: 1973), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.01250.0001.001, 91.

be discussed here. For further information see Anthony Tuck's *Richard II and the English Nobility*. This crisis in politics was only exacerbated by the fact that Chaucer himself lived through many historically key events. These events were: 'the black death, the Avignon papacy, the Great Schism, the hundred years war, the peasants revolt, the growth of a money economy, the rise of the Wycliffe heresy anxiety about gender roles and stereotypes, and, the shift to an increasingly literate culture'.[7] It would be detrimental to this study to underestimate how much of an affect these events would have had on Chaucer and literature of that era.

It would also be highly detrimental to this discussion to underestimate how much of an affect Richard II had on Elizabethan literature. For example, Lea Frost states that the decade before Shakespeare wrote *Troilus and Cressida* writers were obsessed with history generating a 'considerable number of texts examining the events now referred to (thanks largely to the influence of Tudor-era historians) as the Wars of the Roses'.[8] Elizabeth's time as a monarch was not as stable as it first appears, like Richard II she had also failed to produce heirs to the throne and perpetuate the Tudor dynasty. Due to Elizabeth beheading the staunch Catholic Mary Queen of Scots, therefore reinforcing that England would remain firmly protestant. This act lead to 'the papacy, which in 1570 had excommunicated Queen Elizabeth, proclaimed in 1580 that anyone assassinating the queen would be absolved of mortal sin'.[9] Thus, not only was the Queen highly unpopular with foreign powers and those of the Catholic faith, she also had to face contestation for the throne on her own soil.

---

[7] Lillian M. Bisson, *Chaucer and the Medieval World* (USA: St. Martin's Press, 1998), vii.

[8] Lea Luecking Frost, '"A Kyng That Ruled All By Lust": Richard II in Elizabethan Literature', *Literature Compass* 9.2 (2012): 183-198, http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2011.00873.x, 185.

[9] David Bevington, *Shakespeare and Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 75.

During the same period of time that critics agree Shakespeare wrote *Troilus and Cressida,* the Essex Rising of 1601 occurred. The rebellion has been described in the following manner, 'the morning of Sunday, 8th February, Essex and about one hundred gentleman followers marched out of Essex House and tried to rally the people of London to protect the earl from his private enemies'.[10] There are claims that the earl intended to dethrone Queen Elizabeth I and name himself king of England. The earl in question had been one of her previous flirtations and suitors. However, he was executed for treason, though his lieutenant was spared (Hammer, 4). What is most interesting though, is that his lieutenant, the earl of Southampton, was one of Shakespeare's patrons.

A previous text of Shakespeare's that was also thought to have been thoroughly political in its conception was *Richard II*. Though written earlier than *Troilus and Cressida,* in 1595, it became one of Shakespeare's more obviously political, yet popular, plays. Scholars have suggested that this play in particular was 'deliberately composed as a political allegory, with the purpose of warning Elizabeth I of her possible fate if she encouraged flatterers and permitted unjust taxation and monopolies'.[11] It has been proposed that Elizabeth I was actually represented by Richard II in the play. Shakespeare has been interpreted as cautioning queen Elizabeth that her actions were not conducive to a content and productive society. The drama itself played a part in the uprisings in the years shortly before Elizabeth's death. *Richard II* was controversial from the outset as it

[10] Paul E. J. Hammer, 'Shakespeare's Richard II, the Play of 7 February 1601, and the Essex Rising', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59. 1 (Spring, 2008): 1-35, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40210244, 3.

[11] William Shakespeare, *The Arden Shakespeare: King Richard II*, ed. Peter Ure (London: Methuen, 1984) vii.

also features a deposition scene that remained censored until after Elizabeth's death.[12] When it was revived later in 1601 it was 'revived as a spur to the exercise of complex historical deliberation rather than a template for usurpation'.[13] The fact that it was brought back for Shakespeare's company to act again during Elizabeth's reign meant that the play was significantly important enough for the rebels to use the play as an incitement to revolt. The ramifications of the particular censoring of this popular play are that either Elizabeth, or her advisors, felt that the content of the scene was dangerous enough to Elizabeth's regime to warrant keeping it from the theatre going crowds.

It is highly possible, given that in the few years before Elizabeth's death there was anxiety over who would ascend to the throne following her death, that *Troilus and Cressida* was another means to allow Shakespeare to express his fears and scepticism over the future of the Tudor reign. The fact that several English monarchs have used the Trojan legend to legitimise their own claims to the throne, makes Shakespeare's utilisation of the legend highly possible. However, it may not have been performed due to the fact that even though it was written during the rebellions, Shakespeare's *Richard II* had already become associated with the growing fears of the nobility. After the Essex Rising had been put down and the perpetrators executed, it may have been far too dangerous for Shakespeare to produce yet another play critical of Elizabeth I or her

---

[12] For my information on the censorship of this particular scene see Janet Clare, 'The Censorship of the Deposition Scene in Richard II', *The Review of English Studies* 41. 161 (Feb., 1990): 89-94, http://www.jstor.org/stable/516607 and Cyndia Susan Clegg, "By the Choise and Inuitation of al the Realme": Richard II and Elizabethan Press Censorship', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48. 4 (Winter, 1997): 432-448, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2871253.

[13] Jason Scott-Warren, 'Was Elizabeth I Richard II?: The Authenticity of Lambarde's 'Conversation', *Review of English Studies* 64 (264) (2013): 208-230, http://res.oxfordjournals.org/content/64/264/208, 209.

methods of ruling. Thus, the reasons for the play's lack of performance may have had nothing to do with a deficiency of popularity of either the tale or the playwright. Rather, it could have been because the nobility already had a play with which they had long established their discontent. After the rebellion ended there was, perhaps, no further motivation to perform another play that was disparaging of their monarch. There also might have been a potential danger involved in producing and performing another play critical of Elizabeth so soon after the revolt. Elizabeth's death was also only a few years after the uprising, and so when another monarch ascended the throne it was quite possible that *Troilus and* Cressida was no longer necessary. The play lends itself more to this explanation as it does not focus on the actual tale of the two title characters.

With these statements in mind, the study of why Shakespeare chose *Troilus and Criseyde* to adapt into *Troilus and Cressida* is all the more poignant. Chaucer's work was clearly meant as light-hearted entertainment, and a diversion to combat against all the negativity that his society was enduring. Richard II was king when Chaucer produced his poem, and it can be interpreted that Chaucer, though admitting his monarch is not perfect in other works, is in support of him. It is particularly noteworthy then that Shakespeare, having previously written a play in which Elizabeth I had been equated with Richard II, chose something that was originally supportive of Chaucer's monarch, and adapted it into a drama that is most definitely not supportive of anything. Shakespeare, in contrast to Chaucer, presented the ultimatum of Troilus being loyal to his kingdom, doomed to fall, or being loyal to Cressida, condemned to betray him, to show how England was at a potential crisis. Critics have noted that the city and legend of Troy 'signified a profound antagonism, a lack of lack, at the heart of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English civic

life, and London civic life in particular'.[14] Furthering this line of enquiry, Heather James claims that 'by the end of *Troilus and Cressida,* the late Elizabethan audience should mortally fear that England has indeed inherited its national identity from the Troy legend'.[15] Shakespeare's aims for the play and how it was to be received are directly opposing to Chaucer's intentions of uniting his people with comic relief and a love story. In such a way *Troilus and Cressida* can be seen as divisive, not only in terms of the lack of defined genre, but also in terms of the prevailing political and social opinions of the time. The play itself has been classified as a number of singular genres such as comedy, as it is in *The Riverside Shakespeare*[16] and in one of the folios, to anything including tragedy, revenge tragedy, history or romance.[17] Critics at one time placed more emphasis on determining *Troilus and Cressida* as a tragedy due to estimates that it was written around 1601-1602 amidst the other Shakespearean problem plays and revenge tragedies.[18]

One of the challenges of studying *Troilus and Cressida* is that there are numerous surviving manuscripts, all with small but abundant changes in the text. These small dissimilarities also affect how the generic frameworks are created in the text. One could

---

[14] George Edmondson, *The Neighboring Text: Chaucer, Boccaccio, Henryson* (USA: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 208.

[15] Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the translation of Empire* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 117.

[16] William Shakespeare, *The Riverside Shakespeare,* 2nd edn., Gen Ed. G. Blakemore Evans, J.J.M. Tobin, (USA: Houghton Muffin Company, 1997), ix.

[17] For a discussion of Shakespeare's plays in terms of genre definition see Lawrence Danson, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[18] See Brian Morris, 'The Tragic Structure of Troilus and Cressida' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 10. 4 (Autumn, 1959): 481-491, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2867094 and Henry Ansgar Kelly's *Chaucerian Tragedy* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997).

argue that because of the mode of this text, primarily that plays are meant to be performed, these variations are critical in understanding, and interpreting, the play. Due to the scope of this study only one version of the play will be considered. The version that this discussion uses can be seen to be the most comprehensive of the texts available. One other problem with using only one version of *Troilus and Cressida* is that there is some debate as to the addition of the epilogue in the play.[19] This questionable addition further affects the meaning making and interpretation of Shakespeare's work. This epilogue does not exist in some forms of the play, and it is unusual in that in it Shakespeare allows Pandarus the closing speech of the play. This discussion uses a version of the play that features the epilogue, as it is believed to be a later addition that Shakespeare made. The inclusion of the epilogue is crucial when thinking about the protagonists of this genre confused play.

Shakespeare creates a very confused play in which the title characters do not appear to be the focal characters. For example, Cressida, though a title character, appears only once in the final act, and is never heard from again. Troilus, though he does appear more often than Cressida, does not have much dialogue in the more action orientated fifth and final act of the play, furthering Shakespeare's apparent lack of interest in this character. The importance of the epilogue of the play, though not discussed in this thesis due to limitations, cannot be overestimated. Phebe Jensen claims that 'any argument about the appropriateness of the Epilogue must be preceded by a critical judgment about

[19] See Roger Apfelbaum, 'What verse for it? What instance for it?': Authority, Closure, and the Endings of "Troilus and Cressida" in Text and Performance, *Critical Survey* 9. 3 (1997): 91-109, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41561729, for an in-depth discussion between the two main folio versions of *Troilus and Cressida*, Q and F, one featuring the epilogue, the other without it, thought to be an earlier version.

whether the play is a satiric comedy, for which Pandarus is an appropriate final spokesman, or whether it is a tragedy, which should fittingly give the last word to Troilus'.[20] Through these facts and these statements, it is easy to see why *Troilus and Cressida*, though unpopular, is one of the most divisive, in terms of critical opinion, of Shakespeare's plays.

One must also look at the intertextual nature of the Trojan legend to fully understand the connotations of both works. There have been many versions of the Troy legend produced, the earliest recorded being Homer's *The Iliad*. However, the two focal characters from both Chaucer's and Shakespeare's texts were, at best, minor in Homer's work. It was not until Benoît de Sainte Maure's *Roman De Troie* (1155-1160) that the romance between Troilus and Briseis was invented. Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* (1335-1340) furthered the romance but it was Chaucer who fully developed it. Chaucer translated and expanded Bocaccio's work from medieval Italian to introduce it to a middle English speaking audience. Chaucer's work was the first to bring the story of the fall of Troy, and how the romance between Troilus and Criseyde influenced these events, to a wider English audience. The vast majority of the population at the time would have been unfamiliar with the Latin forms of the Troy legend that were already available.

Henryson, a Scottish writer, later produced his version of the Troilus and Criseyde legend, based on Chaucer's work, *The Testament of Cresseid.*[21] Unsatisfied by the way

[20] Phebe Jensen, 'The Textual Politics of Troilus and Cressida', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46. 4 (Winter, 1995): 414-423, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870980, 420.

[21] Henryson's text is problematic to date as little is known about this poet. Estimates are that this poem was written at some point during the fifteenth century. During the time in which Henryson wrote the English monarch attempted to claim sovereignty over Scotland too. Thus, Henryson's work can be seen as a response to this attempt whilst manipulating the same legend associated with England's founding

in which Chaucer presents Criseyde in the poem, Henryson intended his work to become an epilogue to *Troilus and Criseyde*. Chaucer's narrator never placed any blame upon the character of Criseyde for her actions, and paints her in a sympathetic light, even when it becomes clear she has betrayed Troilus and focused her attention on Diomedes. Henryson took exception to this sympathy and lack of blame concerning the female protagonist of the legend. In his version of events Criseyde contracts leprosy, and eventually succumbs to the disease as a punishment for defying the gods. With this change of attitude to Chaucer's heroine, Henryson's work can be said to influence later adaptations of this legend. From then onwards Criseyde, or Cresseid, and her following iterations, are painted in a much more cynical light. Continuing with this idea, it can be argued that by the time Shakespeare came to write his play he could not present Cressida otherwise. The sheer weight of the associated legendary material creates a level of intertextuality that is not easily challenged. It must be noted that in Henryson's poem, as in Shakespeare's play, Troilus does not die. Whilst Chaucer's Troilus may have been more of a tragic protagonist, Henryson's and Shakespeare's Troilus cannot be said to be so.

The narrative of the legend itself, more specifically the destruction and consequential founding of Rome, became intertwined with the idea of nationhood in Europe. The idea was the Aeneas had founded Rome and that his offspring had on gone to found other European capital cities. For example, Brutus founding London. The fact that the Troy legend became so synonymous with the founding fathers of so many major cities in Europe is possibly the most interesting aspect of this legend, and crucial to the overall research discussion. Many European countries adopted the legend, in order to

---

fathers. For a history of this period in time reflected in literature see Sergei Mainer, *The Scottish Romance Tradition C. 1375-1550- Nation, Chivalry and Knighthood* (The Netherlands: Rodopi, 2010).

give their own lineage fidelity. Critics have claimed that ‘Trojan descent is typical for peoples, who like the British, were conquered by Rome, or who, like the Franks, settled within its frontiers as the Empire collapsed’.[22]

In such a way those in power sought to appropriate an identity, both for themselves and their line, but for the people they ruled as well. The need to claim some such heritage was obviously profound after the Roman empire had fallen, taking its history with it. It has been claimed that 'scores of Europeans states and their rulers claimed Trojan precedent in efforts to achieve, consolidate, and maintain their power in relation to other states and often in relation to their own fractious constituencies'.[23] Thus, the Troy legend could have also potentially been seen as a source of contention between European nations that were often warring frequently. The fact that so many countries adopted this legend can also be interpreted as negating the impact of the association with the legend in the first place. With so many claiming ties with Troy, it must have reduced the legitimacy of those trying to secure it. Shakespeare’s own contribution to this legend definitely attests to this idea, and will be explored in a later chapter.

The Troy legend is intrinsically involved with the founding of London. For example, the capital city was for a long period of time named “Troynovant” or New Troy. During this period of time more adaptations of Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, and therefore more versions of the Troy legend, were created. The wholly negative opinion of Cressida that later writers hold, seems to have been incited by Henryson’s *Testament*

[22] Elizabeth M. Tyler, ‘Trojans in Anglo-Saxon England: Precedent without Descent’, *Review of English Studies* 64 (263) (2013): 1-20, http://res.oxfordjournals.org/content/64/263/1, 2.

[23] Sylvia Federico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages* (USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xii.

and only further intensified in later versions. The much maligned and confused character of Cressida for Shakespeare's more modern audience, is wholly different to Chaucer's witty and decisive Criseyde. Chaucer's Criseyde and Shakespeare's Cressida are difficult to reconcile, and the stark contrast between the two is made the more prominent in how the authors portray Troilus. If anything Troilus, in particular, becomes increasingly entrenched as the ultimate figure of "trueness" with each adaptation of the legend. Correspondingly, Cressida can be seen to sink further and further into her own confusion and disfavour with both her authors and the audience, as it is inevitable that she will betray the character that stands for ultimate trueness.

It can be argued that the singular genre one expects the text to be, and the subsequent genre meshing displayed by both writers in their version of the Troy legend, directly contributes to the altered presentations of Criseyde and Cressida. It is worth reiterating at this juncture, that to my knowledge, no general consensus has been reached in terms of the genre, or genres, of either of the focal texts of this thesis. Part of the reason for this lack of definition in genre is that in the majority of the criticism on these texts, there has been a tendency to categorize these texts into only one generic category. Singularity, in itself, is highly limiting, and given the nature of these works, it is detrimental to the interpretation of theme and meaning making. The highly limiting nature of genre classification can be seen clearly in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. Critics have always argued over the genre of the poem, Karl Young in 'Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde" as Romance'[24] argued over whether or not Chaucer's work was a poem or a psychological novel as critics in his time thought. The confusion over the genre

[24] Karl Young, 'Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde" as Romance', *PMLA* 53. 1 (Mar., 1938): 38-63, http://www.jstor.org/stable/458401.

classification of the poem is exaggerated when considering that the medieval romance genre is difficult in itself to place, with some critics labelling it a proto-type genre.[25]

Historically, medieval romances have been defined as 'secular fictions that recount a series of martial and / or amorous adventures'.[26] Most medieval romances involved a member of the nobility undertaking a quest in order to prove his love for the woman he desired. Whilst in both focal texts Troilus does little to actually accomplish what would be the traditional goal of the romantic protagonist, specifically: pursuing the love interest, instead he relies on Pandarus to play the pimp. Chaucer's *Troilus* features a woman with agency and practicality, which is odd considering that women in medieval romances typically had very little agency.[27] Other critics claim that '*Troilus* exceeds the generic label of *tragedye* (in the medieval sense of 'conspicuous fall from a high point of fortune) which Chaucer finally applies to it (V. 1786)'.[28]

Therefore, understanding the contexts of the poem and the play of the same legend is utterly necessary in apprehending the connotations of both texts. Chaucer, possibly

---

[25] See Yin Liu, 'Middle English Romance as Prototype Genre', *The Chaucer Review* 40. 4 (2006): 335-353, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25094331, for a discussion on this topic.

[26] Nancy Mason Bradbury, 'Popular Romance' in *A Companion to Medieval Poetry*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Blackwell Publishing, 2010. http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405159630_chunk_g978140515963017.

[27] Sheila Fisher, 'Women and men in late medieval English romance', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, 1st edn, ed. Roberta L., Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 150-164, http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521553423.

[28] Alcuin Blamires, 'Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde', in *A Companion to Medieval Poetry*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Blackwell Publishing (2010), http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405159630_chunk_g978140515963025.

under pressure from his monarch, creates a poem that ends in positivity. His focus appears to be on highlighting that the legend is a product of the past, with protagonists who suffer from the antiquated concept of pre-determinism, whereas his own nation has a much more positive future. Shakespeare in contrast, had already produced a work that was critical of Elizabeth's reign, using a controversial figure from history that his own society was obsessed with. Less than a decade later, and during the time in which a failed rebellion was held, Shakespeare adapts a poem that can be seen to be positive of the controversial time and figure he had already negatively associated with Elizabeth I. The legend of Troy was also intrinsically related to the idea and identity of England. Chaucer, by choosing to present a previously unknown side of the tale (the Troilus and Criseyde love story), can be seen to reiterate the bonds between Troy and his Troynovant. In doing so he also reaffirms that though Troy was doomed to fall, Troynovant does not necessarily need to, nothing about his society is so predestined. His protagonist ascends into Heaven because of Chaucer's forgiving Christian god, therefore there is hope for the continuation of his own country. Shakespeare, in his version, acknowledges that the city will fall, and that is purely through the actions of his characters. Rather, he leaves the ending deliberately ambiguous, stressing the precarious position his society was in. The proceeding chapters will analyse the texts and focus on how generic manipulation emphasises the ideas of positivity and negativity in Chaucer and Shakespeare's works.

Chapter Two - Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*: In Giving Agency to Criseyde, was Chaucer also Overturning Traditional Gender Conventions?

'And namely, so many a lusty knight,
So many a lady fresh and mayden bright' (II, 164-165)
There were so many young knights, and so many fresh young ladies and maidens bright.

It is this description of the youths at the pagan festival at which Troilus first encounters Criseyde that highlights the contrast between traditional English medieval romance poetry, and the poem that Chaucer presents as *Troilus and Criseyde*. Unlike traditional knights and maidens, Chaucer's doomed pagans, Troilus and Criseyde, cannot be described in the aforementioned terms. Chaucer's protagonists do not fulfil the conventions of courtly lovers in romance poetry, resulting in a poem of mixed genre. The idea that there was far more to Chaucer's Criseyde than simple youth and availability, has been explained: 'Criseyde has a dramatic depth of life which is denied to her stage counterpart'.[1] It is this depth of life that Chaucer allows Criseyde that gives rise to the crux of the debate of genre in this problematical text to this very day. In considering the matters of genre and the agency allowed Criseyde, the purpose of this chapter on Chaucer is to analyse how Chaucer uses gender, with particular reference to the character of

[1] Jill Mann, 'Shakespeare and Chaucer: "What is Criseyde Worth?"', *The Cambridge Quarterly* 18. 2 (1989): 109-128, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42966717, 109.

Criseyde. Chaucer frequently allows Criseyde to make her own decisions, such agency of the female counterpart in romance texts being rare and unusual.

Gender is crucial to the structure of medieval romance; the genre relies upon the male hero taking up the role of love's servant and pursuing the female love interest. Thus, how gender is constructed can affect the generic framework of texts belonging to this genre. This chapter will go on to explore how gender construction can be used in order to express scepticism of established orthodoxies, and, reinforce the ideas confirming national identity at the time. The Troy legend plays a large part in the founding myth of London and English identity. The critics Tison Pugh, Michael Calabrese, and, Marcia Smith Marzec, state in their book on the masculinities in *Troilus* that, 'mythologies matter: they comprise the spoken and unspoken guidelines of a society, yet they rarely communicate precisely'.[2] This concept of lack of precision is key to this research, when considering that genre and its recognition, has often been claimed as utterly essential to the most convincing interpretation of a text.[3]

There are many reasons for this assertion, but given how truly involved the subject matter of the poem is to the formation and continuation of the national identity of England,[4] it is odd that the genre of this poem is mixed. Resulting from this, are the

[2] Tison Pugh, Michael Calabrese and Marcia Smith Marzec, 'Introduction The Myths of Masculinity', in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde*, eds. Tison Pugh and Marcia Smith Marzec (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008): 1-8, 6.

[3] Robert Burlin, 'Middle English Romance: The Structure of Genre', *The Chaucer Review* 30. 1 (1995): 1-14, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25095911, 1.

[4] 'The Trojan war, was a favourite matter for medieval writers, who regularly retold the story of the war, in the manner of chroniclers, from beginning to end' in Geoffrey Chaucer, 'Troilus and Criseyde' ed. by. Stephen A. Barney, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, *3*rd edn. ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988): 471-472, 471.

confused and varied interpretations of this text. This confusion could be because of the fact that the romance genre has never been fully defined.[5] Rather what the reader interprets to be a romance text results from the presentation of certain tropes and the presence of certain frameworks. It is the presentation of Criseyde, considering that it is so disproportionate to how Troilus is portrayed, that directly affects the construction of genre in the text. Simply by giving Criseyde agency, Chaucer creates a character that is neither entirely female, nor entirely male. The definition of the romance genre can be said to rely on the protagonists and their actions. Hence, the disparity presented in *Troilus and Criseyde* between the two intended romance protagonists and the roles that they should play effectively destabilises the generic framework in this poem. Thereby, expressing scepticism on the idealism of the medieval romance genre, and the political and literary orthodoxies at the time.

Critics have noted that the *Troilus* legend must be 'the most spectacular example of a self-consciously *literary* tradition in English literary history'.[6] Andrew Johnston and Russell West-Pavlov argue that the legend itself is trapped by its many iterations and the political contexts of the times. However, one could also argue that this poem is also self-consciously trapped by the genre orthodoxies at the time, more so than other versions of it. This sense of being trapped is reiterated by Chaucer's own circumstances. Morgan

[5] For more information on the debate surrounding the classification of medieval romance as a genre see Yin Liu, 'Middle English Romance as Prototype Genre' *The Chaucer Review* 40. 4 (2006): 335-353, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25094331.

[6] Andrew James Johnston and Russell West-Pavlov, 'Introduction: Performing the Politics of Passion: Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida and the Literary Tradition of Love and History', in *Love, history and emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare: Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida*, eds. Andrew James Johnston, Russell West-Pavlov, Elisabeth Kempf, Manchester University Press (2016) 1-16, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1b349ww.5, 7.

moves to conclude that Chaucer, logically, was able to write about the deeds of knights, the monarchy, and the various intricacies of courtly intrigue, from his position as a privileged, and favoured, insider.[7] Gross furthers this argument and makes the claim that even though the intended audience for Chaucer's poems would have been his royal patrons, he does not seem concerned about the social class of the rest of the recipients of his work.[8] Consequently, Chaucer's version of the legend, which was widely distributed, would have been heard by all social classes in England. Taking this idea into account, along with the fact that Chaucer was employed by the crown, it would be reasonable to assume he would not be able to publish a poem or text that could be conceived as divisive, or disparaging of the monarchy. This fact has led to critics claiming that Chaucer's contemporaries, Gower and Lydgate, in contrast to Chaucer, spoke, 'directly to contemporary affairs and public persons'.[9] In addition to this idea is the fact that Chaucer and his contemporaries would have been 'surrounded by conflicting views, new and traditional, the fourteenth-century thinking had no idea which were going to win out'.[10] Hence the reason for the overwhelmingly positive message and lack of blame, on the narrator's part, involving his pagan protagonists. Rather, Chaucer chooses to blame their predicament on their pagan antiquity.

---

[7] Gerald Morgan, 'The Worthiness of Chaucer's Worthy Knight', *The Chaucer Review* 44. 2 (2009): 115-158, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25642137, 121.

[8] Karen Elizabeth Gross, 'Chaucer's Silent Italy', *Studies in Philology* 109. 1 (Winter, 2012): 19-44, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41511593, 37.

[9] Sylvia Federico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages* (USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 100.

[10] Jennifer R. Goodman, 'Nature as Destiny in "Troilus and Criseyde"', *Style* 31. 3, Chaucerian Poetics (Fall 1997): 413-427, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42946382, 413.

Given the confusion in fourteenth century thinking, and the calamity produced by the events leading up to it, it may seem that Chaucer was in a difficult situation politically. It must be remembered though, that his work was very well received,[11] and went on to influence countless other writers. Chaucer was also known for his progression in the field of literature: for instance, he was the first writer in English to represent dialect variation as a literary feature.[12] Chaucer's penchant for progression provides evidence for the understanding that he was willing to move against certain writing conventions, in order to include dialect variation from different areas of England. The determination to embrace more audiences than just the royal court is significant when considering that, 'social hierarchies were arranged in terms not of wealth but of social esteem based on the status ascribed to the functions of each estate'.[13] The functions of these estates were gradually becoming more fluid than in previous times, which would have further added to the confusion of the age, as people became unsure of societal propriety.

With this in mind, critics have also said that 'Chaucer transformed nearly every medieval literary genre. His use of courtly romance and love poetry is especially complex, (…) using it ironically or comically, turning it to untraditional ends'.[14] This idea can be continued with the fact that Chaucer used his writing to more subtly express commentary on the changing nature of the society at the time. The monarchy's claim of

[11] Chaucer has been described as the father of English poetry, 'not because he was a good poet, though he was, (…) Chaucer was made the father of English poetry because he was servile, doing useful work serving dominant social interests, materially and ideologically' David Carlson, *Chaucer's Jobs* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 1.

[12] Simon Horobin, *Chaucer's Language* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 26.

[13] S. H. Rigby, *Chaucer in Context: Society, Allegory and Gender* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 26.

[14] Varda Fish, 'The Origin and Original Object of "Troilus and Criseyde"', *The Chaucer Review* 18. 4 (Spring, 1984): 304-315, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25093891, 304.

the Trojan legend and heritage also changed throughout time, and in Chaucer's time it was far stronger than before. The reasons for this change in attitude are numerous. The critic Elizabeth Tyler notes that, 'unlike many European ruling houses, the Anglo-Saxon royal dynasties did not claim Trojan origins; rather they traced their descent back to euhemerized pagan Germanic gods'.[15]

Using this legend for a new purpose, and using an aging and unrealistic genre, was, perhaps, a method of further dissociating with the pagan past, and moving forward into Chaucer's modern Christian society and system of inherited monarchy. In order to challenge the literary and cultural orthodoxies of his time one could argue that Chaucer deliberately presents flawed characters in opposition to the genre's absolutism and idealism. Garrison claimed that this problematical poem asked 'its court audience to recognise the highly significant and often dangerous connections between the social world and the aristocratic masculine subject's internal state'.[16] Traditionally many medieval romances focused on the Celtic legends that were primarily concerned with the concepts of valour and the service of love.[17] Barron argues that, 'as the romance mode reincorporated itself in medieval terms, the idealism at its core gradually expanded and ramified, the balance between idea and reality changing from decade to decade' (Barron, 25). Barron's statement is reflected in how Chaucer chooses to apply the romance genre framework to the Troy legend, and how his particular application of it presents the failings of the genre. As Weisl, comments, 'Criseyde has defied the genre's expectations

[15] Elizabeth M. Tyler, 'Trojans in Anglo-Saxon England: Precedent without Descent' *Review of English Studies* 64 (263) (2013): 1-20, http://res.oxfordjournals.org/content/64/263/1, 1.

[16] Jennifer Garrison, 'Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and the Danger of Masculine Interiority', *The Chaucer Review* 49.3 (2015): 320-343, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v049/49.3.garrison.html, 327.

[17] W.R. J. Barron, *English Medieval Romance* (England: Longman Group UK Limited, 1987), 8.

by failing to remain faithful to Troilus, the poem cannot remain faithful to romance's narrative conventions'.[18] This statement is at the core of the debate surrounding labelling the legend, and its adaptations, with singular genres. The traditional narrative of the legend encompasses too many tropes to be classed as one genre.

Whilst Criseyde's agency can certainly be said to contribute to the text and its ambiguous genre, there are other aspects of Chaucer's pagan heroine that can be said to destabilise the generic formation of this text. This statement leads this research into the most interesting aspect of the poem: the narrator's ambivalence to Criseyde's past.[19] In the first book of the poem Criseyde is initially described as: 'bothe a widewe was she and allone' (I, 97) she was both a widow and alone. This statement is significant because it establishes her marital status first, and, in doing so, limits Criseyde to all the confines of a widow in romance literature. The widow status provokes one of two opposed impressions: either that the character in question was extremely virtuous, more so than was traditionally considered a virgin, or that they reminded the reader of the 'misogynistic stereotypes of the sexually rapacious and conniving widow'.[20] This contradiction has been furthered with the idea that in this particular genre, 'women are

[18] Angela Jane Weisl, *Conquering the Reign of Femeny* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 3. In her work, Angela argues that it is the agency given to Criseyde that is the problem with the formation of genre in Chaucer's text.

[19] Critics such as Jennifer Campbell have progressed this further in order to claim that, 'the narrator's discomfort with the authority and adequacy of his sources often arises over questions of Criseyde's moral integrity and intentions, revealing the complicated relationship between gender and textual authority being explored by Chaucer in this poem', Jennifer Campbell, 'Figuring Criseyde's Entente: Authority, Narrative, and Chaucer's Use of History', *The Chaucer Review* 27. 4 (1993): 342-358, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25095814, 343.

[20] Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl, 'Introduction: Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity', in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages,* eds. Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999) 1-21, 8.

often represented in an idealised way as beautiful and virtuous (…) readers are encouraged to anticipate the success of the hero's quest for an idealised woman'.[21] Chaucer's poem encourages this notion, one fully expects Troilus to pursue Criseyde. Both the assumed genre of this text and the title are indicative of the presumption that Troilus will spend the narrative pursuing Criseyde.

The presentation of Criseyde as a virtuous widow is furthered with the narrator's passing remark of, 'she children hadde or noon, I rede it naught, there I late it goon' (I. 132-133) whether she had children or not, I have not read, so will leave it. In presenting Criseyde as a widow Chaucer is trying to imply that she is the virtuous widow stereotype often found in romances. The critic Priscilla Martin agrees with this and states that Criseyde 'does not share the fault and foibles attributed to women by clerks and satirists. She is not vain, flirtatious, garrulous or indiscreet'.[22] For instance, when Pandarus first encounters Criseyde in the poem, she is sat with 'two othere ladys (…) withinne a paved parlour, and ther herden a mayden reden hem the geste of the siege of Thebes' (II, 81-81) two other ladies, in a paved parlour, the three of them were listening to a maiden reading to them the story of the siege of Thebes. This behaviour is perfectly innocent on the behalf of Criseyde. With this statement Chaucer is implying that, when not alone, Criseyde keeps the company of other women. Chaucer infers that Criseyde is of the helpful and wise widow stereotype commonly found in romance literature. Criseyde's innocence and virtuous way of life is later further supported by her unbelieving remark of:

> "I! God Forbide!" quod she. "Be ye mad?
> Is that a widewes lif, so God yow save?

[21] Rebecca Hayward, 'Between the Living and the Dead: Widows as Heroines of Medieval Romances', in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages,* eds. Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999): 221-243, 222.

[22] Priscilla Martin, *Chaucer's Women* (Great Britain: University of Iowa Press, 1990), 162.

> By God, ye maken me right soore adrad!
> Ye ben so wylde, it semeth as ye rave.
> It satte me wel bet ay in a cave
> To bidde and rede on a holy seyntes lyves;
> Lat maydens gon to daunce, and Yonge wyves." (II, 113-119).
> Oh! God forbid! Said she. Are you mad? Is that a widows life, god save you? By god, you make me right sorely afraid. You are so wild, it seems as though you rave. It would befit me better to sit in a cave and pray and read about holy saints lives; Let maiden and young wives go to dance.

Here Criseyde's response demonstrates that she is well aware of how a virtuous widow should act. It is Pandarus that is trying to force her into actions she does not wish to perform.

However, the presentation of Criseyde changes throughout the text; a striking doubleness develops in her characterisation. Criseyde's doubleness becomes apparent during the consummation scene. Despite her earlier refusals to act in a manner outside the confines of the virtuous widow stereotype, Criseyde actively makes her own decisions involving Troilus. For example, 'whan hire drede stente, Opned hire herte and tolde hym hire entente' (III, 1238-1239) when her dread stopped, she opened her heart and told him her intent. Here, without Pandarus to drive Troilus' actions Criseyde must initiate sexual relations. With these actions Criseyde becomes the other description of the widow, she is displaying not virtuousness, but lust. However, the narrator of this scene does not treat Criseyde's actions as such. Instead, the audience is told 'that nyght, bitwixn dreade and sikernesse, felten in love the grete worthynesse. O blisful nyght, of hem so long isought' (III, 1315-1217) that night between dread and sickness, they felt all the great worthiness of love. Oh blissful night, that both of them long sought. Chaucer implies the consummation is natural, and nothing more than the earthly love the two have for each other. The simple acceptance of their actions contrasts sharply with the idea that the consummation scene would have been viewed as morally corrupt, especially on the behalf of Criseyde, as it is outside of wedlock.

To further emphasise this ambiguity and duality, a comparison should be drawn between Criseyde and heroines, or other female figures, in some of Chaucer's other romances. For instance, in *The Knight's Tale,* the prize for the knight winning the contest is, 'I yeve Emeya to wyve'[23] I give you Emily, as a wife. Here, Emily is used as a prize for winning a contest. Emily has no agency; instead she is the physical representation of the knight's accomplishment. Continuing on this theme of the women of romances having little agency is the young maid at the start of *The Wife of Bath's Tale*. The knight in her tale rapes the aforementioned woman,[24] yet, she has neither voice, agency, or recognition as the victim. She is merely a plot device through which the knight can be sent off on a quest as a punishment for his transgressions, and further exaggerating the impression that romances are traditionally the man's tale. This is where Chaucer's *Troilus* is different, in that Criseyde is given a voice, and to a certain extent, agency. I argue that by allowing Criseyde agency and logical thought she assumes part of the role that Troilus should be occupying. However, this can be said to present Criseyde as devoid of gender, as she is forced to sometimes occupy the traditionally male role, making her femininity, and therefore her role as a romance protagonist, less apparent throughout the later stages of the poem.

Criseyde, due to Troilus being an ineffectual male romance protagonist or hero, often has to embody the roles the he is supposed to dominate. When the time comes for

[23] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Knight's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn, ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988): 37-66, 1860.

[24] 'of which mayde anon, maugree hir heed, by verray force, he rafte hire maydenhed' Against the woman's will, and with a lot of force, he took her maidenhead, in Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath's Tale', *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn. ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988): 116-122, 887-888.

Criseyde to be swapped for Antenor, Criseyde comes to the conclusion of acquiescing to the assembly of Troy and their demands, because she feels it is her duty. For example, Criseyde proclaims 'I am a womman, as ful wel ye woot, And as I am avysed sodeynly' (IV, 1261-1262) I am a woman, as you well know, and I'm resolved suddenly. After she lists her many logical reasons for agreeing to be traded for Antenor, Troilus, potentially intimidated by her resolute attitude, responds by doubting her plan. He reasons that they instead the two of them should elope 'And go we anon; for as myn entene, This is the beste, of that ye wole assente"' (IV, 1525-1526) And we will go, for that is what I intend, It is for the best, if you'd only agree. Troilus, by intimating that it is Criseyde's choice after all, gives her yet more agency, and places himself in the more traditional submissive position occupied by the female romance protagonist. It must be remembered that Criseyde, with her decision to do her duty to Troy, is fulfilling her role as a romance protagonist. What is more, she plans to persuade her father to let her go back to Troy, again fulfilling another aspect of being loyal to the respective love interest. Criseyde's decision making is in direct contrast to Troilus, who has been described as being, 'too self-absorbed, that is, he is primarily concerned with himself',[25] and has been expanded to conclude that, 'Troilus does not understand her practicality. She is more a person of action' (Warren, 7). Troilus attempts to persuade Criseyde with 'for I have kyn and frendes elleswhere that, though we comen in oure bare shertes, us sholde neyther lakken gold ne gere' (IV, 1521-1523) I have family and friends elsewhere, that even if we arrive in our barest shirts we will never lack gold or possessions. Troilus' proposition that the two of them will be better off if they simply leave and ignore the problems they face can be seen as ignorant, and highly impractical of a male romance protagonist.

[25] Victoria Warren, (Mis) Reading the "Text" of Criseyde: Context and Identity in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, *The Chaucer Review* 36.1 (2001): 1-15, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25096149, 2.

In contrast to Troilus' displayed impracticality, modern critics tend to perceive Criseyde as an extremely practical character, and therefore perceptions of her can be highly negative. For instance, Bankert notes, 'it will require almost two books and a formidable interior struggle for Criseyde to come near to the commitment Troilus makes in an instant'.[26] Whilst Troilus' immediate commitment is usual for romance heroes, it does seem extremely impractical, and due to the continual foreshadowing in this poem, highlights the romance genre's fervent idealism. However, other critics have come to the conclusion that 'Criseyde's agency, rather than her lack of agency, is lamented by Chaucer'.[27] This is something to consider, as Chaucer grants agency to Criseyde, it only makes Troilus' own inaction all the more obvious.

Troilus' inability to do anything that profits himself, or Criseyde, is startlingly obvious throughout *Troilus and Criseyde*. Troilus falls in love with Criseyde on first sight, yet will slink off:

> Out of the temple al esilich he wente,
> Repentynge hym that he hadde evere ijaped
> Of Loves folk, lest fully the descente
> Of scorn fille on himself (I.317-320)
> Out of the temple slowly he went, repenting that he had ever joked about loves folk, lest all their scorn descend upon him.

Troilus' decision to hide away in his room benefits no one, and he soon starts to suffer the effects of ill health from both neglecting himself, and being in the emotional torment as demanded by the conventions of the romance genre. It is Pandarus that eventually

---

[26] Dabney Anderson Bankert, 'Secularizing the World: Conversion models in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde', *The Chaucer Review* 37. 3 (2003): 196-218, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v037/37.3bankert.html, 202.

[27] Jelena Marelj, 'The Philosophical Entente of Particulars: Criseyde as Nominalist in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde', *The Chaucer Review* 47.2 (2012): 206-221, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/486994, 208.

learns the reason for Troilus' distress and, having done so, declares to Troilus that Criseyde, 'by my wil she sholde al be thyn to-morwe' (I. 861) by my will, she will be yours tomorrow. This boldness of statement has led to critics claiming that, 'Pandarus represents the active, aggressive seducer while Troilus enacts the role of the passive, vulnerable seduced'.[28] Again this allocation of roles subverts the traditional romance conventions. Criseyde should conventionally be the passive and vulnerable party in the poem.

Furthering this idea, critics have tied a sense of shame to women who are passive. For example, 'a woman's honourable behaviour is determined by her possession of a sense of shame, whereas the expectations of masculinity can present a woman's shamefastness as something to be overcome, if necessary, through manly aggression'.[29] Following these ideas, it is logical to conclude that Criseyde, as a widow, and as the pursued party, should have ordinarily possessed and be perceived as showing a strong sense of shame. In the second book of the poem Criseyde does reflect these ideas, and speaks of shame when Pandarus demands that she act in a manner not befitting her state of widowhood. However, this position soon changes when Troilus becomes involved in Book III. Criseyde's change in attitude has led Anne McTaggart to state that, 'at every juncture in the poem, Criseyde's choices and actions are represented as either safeguarding or threatening her honor'.[30]

---

[28] John M. Bowers, '"Beautiful as Troilus": Richard II, Chaucer's Troilus, and Figures of (Un)Masculinity', in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde,* eds. Tison Pugh and Marcia Smith Marzec (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008): 9- 27, 21.

[29] Mary C. Flannery, 'A Bloody Shame: Chaucer's Honourable Women', *Review of English Studies* 62 (255) (2011): 337-357, http://res.oxfordjournals.org/content/62/255/337, 342.

[30] Anne McTaggart, 'Shamed Guiltless: Criseyde, Dido, and Chaucerian Ethics', *The Chaucer Review* 46.4 (2012): 371-402, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v046/46.4.mctaggart.html, 384.

In the first book Criseyde seeks help from Hector, knowing that the city wishes nothing but ill for her own personal wellbeing. She begs for help humbly, and this humbleness and modesty is reflected again in the shock she expresses when Pandarus demands that she act in a most unwidow like manner. Criseyde here, is consistently attempting to reinforce the fact that she is a virtuous widow, and has a defenceless place in society. Yet in book three of the poem Criseyde will start to become assertive. This assertiveness continues through to book four where Criseyde chooses to act as she sees fit over the proffered advice from Troilus. Weisl continues the discussion of Criseyde's agency by suggesting that, 'perhaps more useful, however, is recognising Criseyde as offering up an alternative, female masculinity'.[31] However, I would argue that this viewpoint places more emphasis on Criseyde's agency than the text warrants. Criseyde, regardless, will have to concede to fate.

Chaucer creates an inconsistent sense of agency in his poem, and due to the genre, and the implications of widows having agency, unintentionally presents Criseyde in a negative light. It is assumed that 'man was the norm against which woman was defined as inferior or deformed was certainly the assumption underlying the scientific thought about women which the Middle Ages inherited from the ancient world' (Rigby, 120). Continuing with this concept, it would be logical to assert that women were defined in medieval genres through precisely what they were not. In so doing, a contrast is consistently made between the male and the female, so much so that 'critics of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* tend to regard the eponymous female character as either the tale's

[31] Angela Jane Weisl, '"A Mannes Game": Criseyde's Masculinity in *Troilus and Criseyde',* in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde*, eds. Tison Pugh and Marcia Smith Marzec (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008): 115-131, 117.

victim or, conversely its villain'.[32] This conflicting thought is something that the character of Criseyde can never escape from, or overcome. If she is to be the victim, then she is female and lacks agency. If she is its villain, then she has agency, though this can be said to rob her of her gender, or status as a virtuous woman and romance protagonist.

Further supporting this idea is her choice to betray Troilus, regardless of the fact of whether or not she is doing her duty as a loyal citizen, by allowing herself to be traded for Antenor and falling for Diomede. This dissimilarity between Troilus acting a more passive role and Criseyde displaying a more aggressive (and therefore more traditionally masculine) role is important to the overall interpretation of the poem. Critics have stated that 'Hector's claim of sovereignty, in contradistinction to the metaphorical feminine sovereignty in love, cannot be detached from an ideal of masculinity'[33]. These statements have been furthered with the fact that Chaucer frequently references Hector in order to contrast his character 'with those of the courtly lover Troilus to reveal the devastating effects of courtly love on an otherwise noble and heroic knight'.[34]

[32] Mary Behrman. "Heroic Criseyde." *The Chaucer Review* 38.4 (2004): 314-336, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v038/38.4behrman.html, 314.

[33] Robert S. Sturges, 'The State of Exception and Sovereign Masculinity in *Troilus and Criseyde',* in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde,* eds. Tison Pugh and Marcia Smith Marzec (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008): 28-42, 36.

[34] Marcia Smith Marzec, 'What Makes a Man? Troilus, Hector, and the Masculinities of Courtly Love', in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde,* eds. Tison Pugh and Marcia Smith Marzec (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008): 58-72, 59.

However, it must be remembered that just as Troilus cannot be considered a courtly hero,[35] nor Criseyde a courtly heroine, 'Hector is, notably not, a *courtly* hero, a distinction at the very heart of Chaucer's intent' (Marzec, 61-62). Yet Chaucer often references Hector alongside Troilus, in order to highlight the differences between them. For example, when Pandarus first attempts to persuade Criseyde of Troilus' love for her without explicitly expressing it, Criseyde instead asks 'hym how Ector ferde' (II, 153-154) How is Hector? Criseyde knows there has been a recent battle, and her asking after Hector, instead of Troilus, is particularly noteworthy. This idea can be supported with details from the start of the poem, for instance, when Criseyde's father Calkas the, 'gret Devyn' (I, 66) abandons Troy and turns traitor. Criseyde's first thought is to seek protection from Hector, 'his mercy bad, hirselven excusynge' (I, 112) pray for his mercy and to excuse her. Here, Hector becomes the masculine authority, everything that Troilus simply is not. This contrast creates the impression that Troilus, though given the semblance of a male romance protagonist, simply cannot live up to the role. However, due to the fact that Criseyde actively seeks out help from Hector, rather than the intended protagonists of the poem, Marelj suggests 'Criseyde's intentions are based solely on self-interest, and her agency is restricted to practical, immediate concerns' (Marelj, 217). Arguably, the self-interest and practicality that Criseyde displays is more suited to male romance protagonists.

Yet it also must be remembered that for all of the agency that critics claim Criseyde has, she is still inferior in rank, and as a childless widow, expendable. When the

[35] For a discussion of Troilus' qualities as a romance hero, and his role in the poem over all, see Alfred David, 'The Hero of *Troilus*', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 37.4 (1962): 556-581, http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.2307/2850241.

narrator discusses Calkas' fleeing to the Greeks he claims that the population of Troy want him to suffer. The narrator described how 'and al his kyn at-ones, Ben worthi for to Brennen, fel and bones' (I, 90-91) And all of his family at once, Were worthy only to burn, skin and bones. It is easy to see here how Criseyde can seem desperate, and one could argue that the help she seeks from Hector, that some interpret as self-serving, can also be read as simple survival. Neil Cartlidge claims that in all the many versions of this legend 'it is only Chaucer who then chooses to focus on Criseyde's friendlessness'.[36] Cartlidge states this presentation is partly due to Chaucer wanting to incite sympathy for the young Trojan woman. Other critics claim that because of the absent male figures in Criseyde's life she was left 'at the mercy of men who traffic in women and whose desires often compete with one another'.[37] This is precisely the problem that Criseyde faces. When she begs Hector for help, the narrator states that one of the deciding factors for Hector in providing her protection is, 'that she was sorwfully bigon, And that she was so fair a creature' (I, 114-115) He saw that she was in such a sorrowful/woeful situation, and that she was such a beautiful person. Here it can be stated that Criseyde is consistently valued for her physical appearance. Her worth calculated on how she looks and conducts herself.

This impression will be furthered when Troilus first sees her and falls instantaneously, and irreversibly, in love. With this characterisation and plot motivation in mind, Criseyde cannot be the alternative masculinity that Weisl suggests. Rather she is, at the same time, too much, and not enough, the woman and widow of romance

[36] Neil Cartlidge, 'Criseyde's Absent Friends', *The Chaucer Review* 44.3 (2010): 227-245, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/368054, 228.

[37] Andreea Boboc, 'Criseyde's Descriptions and the Ethics of Feminine Experience', *The Chaucer Review* 47.1 (2012): 63-83, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v047/47.1.boboc.html, 65.

literature. Criseyde's inconsistency highlights a change in the presentation of protagonists in romance literature. Criseyde is flawed, and because of this, is more human. Traditionally, romance protagonists were extremely idealistic and the epitome of the specific stereotypes or conventions they were meant to express. Criseyde's complexities contrast sharply to the more one dimensional female protagonists conventionally found in romance literature.

It must be acknowledged that because of the duality in the way in which Criseyde is described and how she acts Chaucer has already implied that she is this "other": as being not quite pure enough to warrant Troilus' pursuit. In the second book Pandarus brings to attention Troilus' feelings for Criseyde. It is at this point that Chaucer emphasises the absolutism of genre, and the stress that is created from this impracticality. Her uncle presents the case of Troilus' feelings by declaring:

> The noble Troilus, so loveth the,
> That, but ye helpe, it wol his bane be,
> Lo, Here is al! What sholde I moore seye?
> Doth what you lest to make hym lyve or deye.
> The noble Troilus so loves you, That if you don't help you will be his bane, That's the lot of it, what more should I say? Do what you want, to make him live or die (II, 319-322).

Here it would be realistic to assume that Criseyde has no other real option but to address Troilus and the issue that has afflicted him. However, Chaucer has his Pandarus further exaggerate the severity of the situation by exclaiming:

> But if ye late hym deyen, I wol sterve-
> Have here my trouthe, nece, I nyl nat lyen-
> Al sholde I with this knyf my throte kerve
> But if you let him die, I will die/ starve- Have my pledge niece, I will not lie- Even if I had to cut my throat with this knife (II, 323-325.)

Pandarus' attempt to play matchmaker, or perhaps more accurately, the pimp, seems overtly exaggerated. Here, there is a distinct awkwardness in appearing to give Criseyde

the agency to do as she will. Both the narrator and the audience are aware, in this circumstance, she has none. Just as Troilus has been condemned by the pagan gods, so too is Criseyde by the intertextuality involved in the legend overall. Because of this inevitability, Carolyn Dinshaw argues that 'Criseyde becomes a sign of instability, compared to and subsumed by heavenly stability, and the poem's totality is asserted and assured'.[38] In appearing to give Criseyde her own agency, Chaucer simultaneously robs Criseyde of both being the female in this romance poem, and also of any potential sympathy of her plight. It is Troilus, who remains consistently inactive, who refuses to take up the role of a romance protagonist. He will continue to remain "true" in contrast with the inconsistent and decisive Criseyde.

Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* has been named, 'a poem about love poetry' (Fish, 314), and one could argue that this is most definitely the case in this poem. Chaucer, by presenting his characters as flawed, and falling short of generic expectancies, continues to challenge the practicalities of the extreme idealism of the medieval romance genre. This contestation is perhaps, best seen in the contrast between the characterisation, enacted agency and gender roles of Troilus and Criseyde. Troilus is an extremely flawed romance hero; he dwells on, and indulges, his predilection for grief and hopelessness. It is Pandarus who, somewhat aggressively, attempts to seduce Criseyde for him. If Pandarus had not intervened, then Criseyde would never know of Troilus' feelings for her. Yet, regardless of the legend's pagan past Troilus is allowed forgiveness and to ascend into heaven, because Chaucer's Christian god is a forgiving one. With Troilus' ascension to heaven, a heaven not featured in medieval romances because of their pagan

[38] Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (USA: The University of Wisconsin Press. 1989), 37.

associations, Chaucer is presenting the need to move forwards in terms of genre and generic frameworks.

This call for change is most clearly seen in how Chaucer chooses to present gender in his poem. In medieval romances gender is extremely binary, which helps contribute to the absoluteness, and idealism, of this genre. However, as it has been shown here, neither of his two title characters are what was expected of romance protagonists. Troilus is not the fearless and heroic warrior who will both defend his love interest and uphold the good of the city at the same time. Criseyde is, albeit somewhat ambiguously, not the pure, virginal, maid that one expects as a romance protagonist and prize for the triumphant hero. Instead it is Troilus' brother who is the valiant hero of Troy, and the only one to speak out at the assembly against using Criseyde as a bargaining tool. In much the same way, Helen is the typical medieval romance damsel in distress, given very little agency, and voice. What is more, however, is that the legend, by its very own narrative constraints, means that Troilus and Criseyde can no longer successfully fulfil their roles as romance protagonists.

Simply by presenting his protagonists as trying to embody the traditional medieval romance protagonist, Chaucer highlights the failings and redundancies of this genre. His Troilus and Criseyde cannot help but fail. In doing so, they render themselves unequal to the tasks, and demands, of a medieval romance poem. With Chaucer's work cementing Troilus' and Criseyde's fate, he also subjects the numerous retellings to the same fate. The problematical genre of this poem can only be repeated and further exaggerated, which will be seen in Shakespeare's own adaptation of the legend. However, Chaucer's choice to not follow the traditional orthodoxies of genre means that his poem

is also another attempt to further disassociate his contemporary culture with the past and past obsessions, in order to show how far his country has progressed, and how much further they can continue to evolve. These findings are significant because they highlight how substantial and popular genres of the time can be manipulated to highlight a change, and a turning point, in society. Furthering this idea Chaucer, by presenting his protagonists as realistic, emphasises the outdated past, and contrasts it with a more hopeful future. This particular manipulation of the legend will eventually become a theme that intertwines itself with the story of Troy, Troilus and Criseyde.

Criseyde's numerous inconsistencies, highlighting the failings of chivalrous behaviour and the reliance on the male protagonist to enact the plot of the narrative, are paired deliberately with the Troy legend. It is worth mentioning that Chaucer would have written his version of events not long after the Order of the Garter was formed.[39] This order was known for being idealistic and highly chivalrous, which is in direct contrast to how the nobility viewed Chaucer's monarch at the time, Richard II. The desire to change how romances were being written, is reflected in how Chaucer chose to present his characters of the Troilus and Criseyde legend. His imperfect and flawed presentations of these focal figures of the legend could have been a response to the idealistic and chivalric tendencies of his era. Yet, Chaucer, as discussed in the previous chapter, would also have been limited to what his monarch approved of him producing. As Chaucer's domestic situation very much relied upon the goodwill of his king, it is only logical that he would have been wary of presenting Troynovant in a negative light. Therefore, the positive end

[39] For a detailed discussion on shame and chivalry and this order see Stephanie Trigg, '"Shamed Be…": Historicizing Shame In Medieval And Early Modern Courtly Ritual', *Exemplaria* 19.1 (2007): 67-89. Taylor & Francis Ltd, DOI 10.1179/175330707X203228.

to the poem, and the humour and light-heartedness that pokes gentle fun at the idealism of the courtly romance genre, is Chaucer's take on reinforcing the future of London, and, in turn, the monarchy. Chaucer's Criseyde who has agency to a certain extent, and is less idealistic than Troilus, will reoccur changed and evolved in Shakespeare's confused and inconsistent portrayal of Cressida. In much the same way as Chaucer used Criseyde, Cressida's confusion and the play's negative response to her will serve as a reflection of the context of Shakespeare's times.

Chapter Three - Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*: What Role does Mode Play in the Transmission of Legendary Materials?

To tell you, fair beholder, that our play
Leaps o'er the vaunt and firstlings of those broils,
Beginning in the middle; starting thence away
To what may be digested in a play (Prologue, 26-29)

Shakespeare took Chaucer's highly popular and influential poem and transformed it into a remarkably unpopular play. So unpopular was this play that critics have stated it 'did not really find an audience before the twentieth century'.[1] To this day scholars remain undecided as to whether *Troilus and Cressida* was ever performed during Shakespeare's lifetime.[2] Chaucer's poem was of mixed genre, and Shakespeare's play also contains an element of genre meshing which makes the classification of it extremely difficult. The ambiguity surrounding this text and its possible performance is significant because Shakespeare was an enormously important and influential actor and playwright at the time of its initial production. The lack of any record of its performance is noteworthy. Jonson, one of Shakespeare's contemporaries, 'apostrophized him as "Soule of the Age"-

[1] Verena Olejniczak Lobsien, 'Stewed phrase' and the impassioned imagination in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida', *Love, history and emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare*: *Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida,* eds. Andrew James Johnston, Russel West-Pavlov, Elisabeth Kempf, (Manchester University Press: 2016): 125-140, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1b349ww.13, 125.

[2] For an analysis and discussion of the for and against regarding this argument see Jarold W. Ramsey, 'The Provenance of Troilus and Cressida' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 21. 3 (Summer, 1970): 223-240, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2868700.

(…) "not of an age, but for all time"- not one time, but all times, including ours'.[3] Considering that Jonson was also a rival of Shakespeare's this statement would have been high praise indeed. His declaration also furthers the notion that Shakespeare reflected the social and political context of the time in the plays he wrote.

In this chapter I argue that it is the inconsistent presentation of characters like Cressida, the antithesis of Chaucer's Criseyde, combined with the potential inadequacies of a never performed drama as a mode of legend transmission, that directly contributes to the lack of a definitive genre in the play. At the time there was a movement promoting the return to the more classical forms of genres of the past.[4] The Troy legend in question was also being used by Elizabeth I as a means of further legitimizing her claim to the throne. Therefore, the lack of conformity to any generic constraint in the text can be seen to emphasise and reflect Shakespeare's own attitude of scepticism towards the monarchy of the time. Shakespeare uses, just as Chaucer did, a legend canonical to the English identity to respond to the political situation at the time. Shakespeare's drive to express scepticism of the monarchy using this particular legend can be said to be detrimental to the expression of the traditional narrative it contains. To my knowledge, this is an area that has yet to be fully investigated, and this chapter aims to explore the links between these ideas and implications of using legendary materials.

[3] Michael L. Hays, *Shakespearean Tragedy as Chivalric Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 2.

[4] See Alastair Fowler, 'The Formation of Genres in the Renaissance and After' *New Literary History* 34. 2, Theorizing Genres I (Spring, 2003): 185-200, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20057775 for a discussion on how genres during the renaissance returned to more classical forms.

The subtitle of this chapter 'what may be digested in a play' presents the problematic nature of *Troilus and Cressida*. One could argue that part of the problem with this text is the simple fact that if (if one assumes that this was indeed the case) it was never performed during Shakespeare's lifetime, then no one will ever know Shakespeare's true intentions for the play or its production. It is well known that most of Shakespeare's plays were created to be performed. In the performance of such plays more nuances of expression can be fully actualised. The play's lack of performance means that the play itself is more affected by intertextuality between instances of the legend than previous versions of the legend. Indeed, the Oxford edition of this play, which this thesis primarily uses, emphatically acknowledges that '*Troilus and Cressida* has a number of unsolved, if not insoluble problems' (*Troilus and Cressida*, 1). These insolvable problems are the product of a lack of full expression in the play. The reader and intended audience are reliant on prior knowledge of other adaptations and knowledge of generic frameworks, and the connotations these provide, in order to comprehend the play's subtext.

The problems critics have with this play are exaggerated by the knowledge that both Shakespeare and his audience would have been very familiar with the Trojan legend.[5] The legend itself was experiencing somewhat of a revival at the time of Shakespeare's writing. London was described as 'New Troy (Troynovant), based on the

[5] For a more in depth look into the various sources that Shakespeare is thought to have used see Emily Ross, '"Words, vows, gifts, tears and love's full sacrifice": An Assessment of the status of Troilus and Cressida's relationship according to customary Elizabethan marriage procedure', *Shakespeare* 4.4 (2008): 397-421, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450910802501113. Ross also mentions briefly that there are mentions of other plays concerning Troilus and Cressida being present at the time of Shakespeare's writing, however, records of these plays have been lost.

idea that the city was founded by a refugee from Troy, Brutus'.[6] Both Chaucer and Shakespeare's work concern the events that foreshadow the fall of Troy. Neither writer covers the fall of this legendary city directly. In the play Shakespeare leaves the ending without a sense of resolution, through which a sense of uncertainty is expressed. The end of the play reflects the fact that at the time of Shakespeare's writing, members of the nobility were very aware that Elizabeth I, who was of ill health, had not named an heir to the throne. Naturally, this would have caused a substantial amount of concern amongst those of the ruling classes. Consequently, Shakespeare's choice to dramatise this legend, when there was a certain level of scepticism present amongst the nobility of the court, and when it was such a familiar tale, is noteworthy and deserving of exploration.

The political context of the play, discussed in a previous chapter, creates the impression that Shakespeare would have been in a precarious position. The critic Andrew Hadfield argues that 'the theatre existed as a particular location or public space where political debates, commentary and allusion could be made by those who were excluded from the ordinary processes of political life'.[7] Danson progresses this argument with the fact that in the 'late years of Queen Elizabeth's reign, with no heir-apparent clearly in sight, the nation itself could seem as threatened with disintegration as did the aging body of the queen'.[8] Therefore, Shakespeare's use of this legend, the very same legend Elizabeth I used to give further credence to her legitimacy as a monarch by exaggerating

---

[6] *The Shakespeare Encyclopaedia: The Complete Guide to the Man and His Works,* Chief Consultant/ Ed. A. D. Cousins (US: Firefly Books LTD, 2009), 181. It must be remembered that Brutus was a relative of Aeneas, a survivor of the fall of Troy. According to legend, without the fall of Troy, theoretically, London, or the "New Troy" would never have been founded.

[7] Andrew Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Renaissance Politics* (UK: Arden Shakespeare, 2004), 20.

[8] Lawrence Danson, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres* (United States: Oxford University Press Inc ,2000), 36.

her affiliation and family history with it, put him in the midst of a politically volatile situation, as was discussed in Chapter One.

However, if one assumes that Shakespeare's retelling was not a motivated effort intended to be critical of his monarch, then it becomes unusual that it was never performed. The legend's popularity and the fame of the playwright should work in the play's favour. Yet there are no records of it having ever been performed. One can either attribute this lack of production to the societal and political problems that were apparent, or to the lack of generic indicators in the play causing confusion in interpretation. *Troilus and Cressida* was written during the same period as some of Shakespeare's most popular plays including: '*Henry IV, Richard III, Pericles, Hamlet, Richard II* and *Romeo and Juliet*'.[9] It is even surprising then, for this play to have remained unperformed, as Shakespeare was motivated to produce plays to make a profit. There seems little point in devoting time to a work that will not become useful. It seems reasonable to conclude that Shakespeare intended the play to be commercially successful just as his *Richard II* was. Records show that the fault was certainly not in the potential audience Shakespeare could have received. Estimations are that 'in the mid-1590s there were about 15,000 spectators per week at the public theatres; thus, as many as 10 percent of the local population went to the theatre regularly'.[10] One is left to assume that these numbers only increased over

[9] Gary Taylor, 'Shakespeare plays on Renaissance Stages' in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*, 1st ed, eds. Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-20, *Cambridge Companions Online*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521792959.001, 18. *Pericles* was the only play in this list written outside this time period. For further information on the popularity of Shakespeare's plays see the rest of Taylor's article. It must be remembered that Richard II was about civil war, and can also be seen as a reflection of the times, it is possible Shakespeare could not afford to produce too many political subversive plays.

[10] William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. Johnathon Crewe (UK: Penguin Books, 2000), x.

time as the competition for shares of the audience between playwrights increased. Therefore, the most reasonable conclusion one can draw from these facts is that the play, though utilising a very popular legend, was a potential danger to both Shakespeare and his theatre. It is entirely possible that Shakespeare could not afford to produce too many politically subversive plays and this is why *Troilus and Cressida* was not brought to production.

Troilus and Cressida has been classed by modern critics as a comedy,[11] though not an unproblematic one: '*Troilus and Cressida* is the most problematic of the problem comedies, the most removed from the ameliorative comic structures that lend *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* a provisional integrity'.[12] This observation has been further emphasised: 'representing life within a frame, Shakespeare's comedies reveal more than was thought to exist. The readers discover more about themselves, both increasing their wit and leading to their enjoyment of plays'.[13] One could argue that the messages conveyed in this play are convoluted and confused due to the inconsistent character portrayals Shakespeare employs. These character portrayals are a factor that will be discussed later in the chapter. Other critics have tried to label this play a tragedy, though critics have stated that there have been 'surprisingly few overt attempts to evaluate *Troilus and Criseyde* as a tragedy in the way in which Shakespearean plays are evaluated, no doubt largely because dramatic form is usually considered a pre-requisite to genuine

[11] *The Riverside Shakespeare,* 2nd edn. Gen Ed. G. Blakemore Evans and J.J.M. Tobin, (USA: Houghton Muffin Company, 1997), ix.

[12] David McCandless, *Gender and Performance in Shakespeare's Problem Comedies* (US: Indiana University Press, 1997), 123.

[13] Roger Apfelbaum, *Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: Textual Problems and Performance Solutions* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 33.

tragedy'.[14] The play does not lend itself to the label of tragedy because of its somewhat erratic structure. Likewise, because of the content, the play has also been considered as a history, with some critics claiming that 'such fiction questions not merely the status of individual historical events as 'factual' but the entire course of history as a 'fact' which has only retrospectively gained that aura of objective neutrality'.[15] Shakespeare may have been hinting at this questioning of fact in his play as he is not neutral in his presentation of characters. The presentation of his characters also differs somewhat from his sources, and this is something that will be discussed later in the chapter.

The ambiguous genre classification of this play is formed from Shakespeare's awkward meshing of generic elements from comedy, history, tragedy and romance. Shakespeare also adds another element of confusion of meaning making in his play with its almost binary structure. Shakespeare, unusually chose to include the more historical aspects of the Trojan legend, and devotes roughly half of the play to telling the Greeks' story. Indeed, considering that the play is named after the characters Troilus and Cressida, and for a play that contains twenty-four scenes, Cressida appears in only six of these. Of these six scenes only three of them will contain Troilus together with her on stage. The final scene in which the two of them are together is actually one where Cressida is not aware Troilus is watching her and assessing her loyalty. In terms of simple numbers one can see that the play does not focus on Troilus and Cressida, nor their narrative. Further emphasising this unusual stress on both the history of the fall of Troy and the relationship

[14] Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 142.

[15] Andrew James Johnston and Russell West-Pavlov, 'Introduction: Performing the Politics of Passion: Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida and the Literary Tradition of Love and History' in *Love, history and emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare: Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida*, eds. Andrew James Johnston, Russell West-Pavlov, Elisabeth Kempf, Manchester University Press (2016): 1-16, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1b349ww.5, p, 2.

between Troilus and Cressida, are the inconsistences in the character presentations. Shakespeare's presentations of his characters have prompted comments of although 'Shakespeare deliberately weakened the structural effectiveness of *Troilus and Cressida*, he was not alone in his experimentation with the plot during 1598-1603'.[16] Such experimentation has also prompted the suggestion that by draining the characters of their historical world of meaning they also destroy the genre of it.[17] These views have been expressed because Shakespeare's characters and the structure of the narrative itself effectively destabilise the plot of what would have been an extremely well known tale. Thus, what the audience expects is not what is given, and what is given is confused and convoluted. One could argue that Shakespeare was much more concerned with using the legend to express scepticism of it, rather than transmitting the narrative of the tale.

Arguably, what Chaucer sought to foreground with his foreshadowing of his predestined pagans, Shakespeare merely implies is simple fate. As a consequence, there can be said to be very little emotional build up and investment in the characters of Troilus and Criseyde. Other scholars have criticised the play, claiming it 'gathers no dramatic energy from the war or romance plots, for audiences can hardly suspend knowledge that the Trojans lost the war and that Cressida betrayed Troilus'.[18] Throughout this chapter I will argue that there is an evident inevitability that these characters face during the course of the play that is made only more obvious by the inclusion of the second plot line involving the Greek soldiers. David Wallace supports this notion by claiming 'fourteenth-

[16] Robert Kimbrough, 'The Troilus Log: Shakespeare and "Box-Office"' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 15. 3 (Summer, 1964): 201-209, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2868326, 206.

[17] Katherine Stockholder, 'Power and Pleasure in Troilus and Cressida, or Rhetoric and Structure of the Anti-Tragic' *College English* 30. 7 (Apr., 1969): 539-554, http://www.jstor.org/stable/374003, 541.

[18] Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the translation of Empire* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 96.

century authors – such as Dante, Langland and Chaucer – find the existential dilemmas of illustrious pagans compelling, and fascinating – but Shakespeare (so it seems) does not'.[19] Many critics have lamented Shakespeare's apparent disinterest in the narrative of Troilus and Cressida itself, thereby furthering their criticism of the play with: 'it may engage the mind with its puzzles, but, except for a few memorable passages – like Ulysses' on time – it does not involve our imaginations in the way Shakespeare, of all writers, knew how'.[20] One could argue that Troilus' and Cressida's fate was so well known that relaying their tale was not of a distinct interest to Shakespeare, and this idea is most definitely reflected in the play's dramatic structure. Other critics have stated that 'consequently we should hesitate to interpret the meanings of Shakespeare's words too rigorously because they may have been chosen for quite different reasons'.[21] Whilst these are elements of the play to be kept in mind, this study will continue to focus on how genre can be used in legend to express scepticism of political situations.

Ultimately it has been argued that *Troilus and Cressida* 'is an engagement with traditional literary patterns of tragic love'.[22] However, whilst I would argue that to some extent this is true, the structure of the play, and the events it takes from the Troilus and Criseyde/Cressida legend means that there is very little tragedy, or romance, involved in

[19] David Wallace, 'Changing emotions in Troilus: The Crucial Year', *Love, history and emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare*: *Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida* eds. Andrew James Johnston, Russel West-Pavlov, Elisabeth Kempf, Manchester University Press. (2016): 157-171, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1b349ww.15, 159.

[20] Gayle Greene, 'Language and Value in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*' *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 21. 2, Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama (Spring, 1981): 271-285, http://www.jstor.org/stable/450149, 274.

[21] N.F. Blake, *Shakespeare's Language: An Introduction* (UK: The Macmillian Press LTD, 1983), 84.

[22] David McInnis, 'Repetition and Revision in Shakespeare's Tragic Love Plays', *Parergon* 25.2 (2008): 35-56, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/pgn/summary/v025/25.2.mcinnis.html, 33.

this traditionally tragic love story. In order to present this idea one must analyse the play, and I believe the prologue of the play adequately expresses the notion of Shakespeare's conflicting motivations for writing this play. Just as critics claim the various versions of the Troilus and Criseyde legend are all very self-aware, Shakespeare's play can also be deemed metafictive. For example, the prologue admits that the action of the play begins 'in the middle' (Prologue, 28). This middleness to the play's beginning argues for the idea that the audience already knows the events that have preceded the play and what will happen. The prologue reinforces this idea of a pre-existing awareness earlier in the section with, 'the ravished Helen, Menelaus' queen, with wanton Paris sleeps- and that's the quarrel' (Prologue, 9-10). From the very start of this play, the reader, or intended audience, is led to believe that the play will focus on the relationship between Paris and Helen. Their love affair is the real cause of the Trojan war, and therefore the drama of the play. Further exaggerating this diversion of interest is the fact that the prologue does not mention the title characters, Troilus and Cressida, at all. Shakespeare's lack of acknowledgement of his primary characters from the outset exacerbates the sense that this play does not entirely concern them, or their part in the fall of Troy.

Though Shakespeare deliberately does not mention his title characters in the prologue Troilus is first encountered in the very first scene of the first act, with Shakespeare portraying him as lamenting the fact that he is enamoured with Cressida. For example, he is insistent that 'each Trojan that is master of his heart, let him to field- Troilus, alas, hath non' (1.1, 4-5). A little later he claims he is 'weaker than a woman's tear' (1.1, 9), all for the love he feels for Cressida. Yet when Pandarus speaks of this to him, the latter insists he will not 'meddle nor make no farther' (1.1, 14) in the relationship that is apparently failing to blossom between Troilus and Cressida. Again, the fact that

this play has begun in the middle of a narrative involving love, courtship, and betrayal, is made more obvious. Chaucer's work featured Troilus first seeing Criseyde and falling instantaneously in love. Shakespeare's work, however, avoids the inevitability that Chaucer's pagans faced. Shakespeare, with his play starting *in media res*, recognises the fact that they are, at the very least, already aware of each other. Thus the romance and betrayal plot between Cressida and Troilus, that should theoretically develop according to the traditional narrative, is already subdued. Rather, the betrayal aspect of the plot now seems more overtly exaggerated. Consequently, these aspects of the play highlight the disproportionality between the structure of Shakespeare's play and the structure of the familiar narrative Shakespeare's audience would have expected.

Critics such as Ann Thompson have suggested that Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has more in common with Chaucer's poem than *Troilus and Cressida* does. She claims that: 'Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* succeeded Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* as the single most important and influential love-tragedy in English poetry, the archetype to which situations in both life and literature were referred'.[23] David McInnis has furthered these claims with the suggestion that Shakespeare's *Troilus* is not so heavily invested in the themes of love as one might expect it to be, purely because he had already written *Romeo and Juliet* (McInnis, 35-36). However, this argument begs the question of why indeed Shakespeare chose to rewrite this legend and entitle it *Troilus and Cressida*. Half of the play is devoted to telling the tale of the Greek soldiers, and, just as the audience knew Cressida will betray Troilus, they also knew that the Greeks would win and Troy would fall. The perceived inevitability of expected roles and events of the

[23] Ann Thompson, 'Troilus and Criseyde' and 'Romeo and Juliet', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 6 (1976): 26-37, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3506385, 26.

traditional narrative is undermined by Shakespeare's inconsistencies in the presentation of them.

Troilus, for example, is never consistently the expected romance protagonist.[24] Once it is revealed that Cressida must be swapped for Antenor Troilus' reaction is to tell Cressida that she must remain true. He furthers this with the statement that he will 'corrupt the Grecian sentinels to give thee nightly visitation. But yet, be true' (4.4, 71-73). Troilus' offered solution is neither practical nor useful. Instead, he promises to continue to see her, disregarding the potential danger to both himself and Cressida. At no point does he decide that he should protect her. Instead he acquiesces to the decision that she must go. Like his Chaucerian counterpart, Shakespeare's Troilus is entirely unrealistic in terms of his expectations of how events will play out. While he asserts these decisions he insists that there is every chance Cressida will be tempted by the Greeks, claiming that 'sometimes we are devils to ourselves' (4.4, 93). Shakespeare's Troilus continues in this vein declaring that regardless of what happens he will remain true to Cressida simply because it's his 'vice, my fault' (4.4, 100).

Troilus' actions here do not seem to fulfil the role of a male romance protagonist, just as Cressida is never presented as the expected pure, virginal, romance protagonist.[25]

---

[24] For discussions on Troilus as a romance protagonist see Stephen J. Lynch, 'The Idealism of Shakespeare's Troilus' in *South Atlantic Review* 51. 1 (Jan., 1986): 19-29, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3199552 and Willard Farnham, 'Troilus in Shapes of Infinite Desire' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 15. 2 (Spring, 1964): 257-264, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2867897. It must be stated that there is not much scholarship about Troilus as a romance protagonist, this is, perhaps, indicative of the fact that this play lacks a definitive genre, so consequently, the ability to interpret the character becomes somewhat limited.

[25] Sharon M. Harris, 'Feminism And Shakespeare's Cressida: 'If I Be False...'', *Women's Studies* 18.1 (1990): 65- 82, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00497878.1990.9978820, 65.

During Shakespeare's time, female characters in drama were often 'idealized and demonized, and behaviour that elicits praise and success in some contexts is condemned and punished in others'.[26] I would argue that Shakespeare follows this literary tradition in that he can often be seen to present his female characters in much the same way. For example, when Cressida first meets the rest of the Greek cast they immediately start demanding to kiss her. Nestor comments on the fact that she is greeted with a kiss from the general, whilst Ulysses lowers the tone by suggesting ''twere better she were kissed in general' (4.5, 21). Ulysses implying that her only function is to serve as a source of male satisfaction. Throughout this exchange in the scene Cressida has little choice in kissing the men. It must be remembered that this character, as a hostage, would have little power in this precarious situation. This fact has prompted scholars to comment 'to call a woman a whore, as Othello calls Desdemona, or Leontes Hermione, not only casts aspersions on her morals, but takes away her position in society'.[27] These statements reinforce the idea that throughout the play Shakespeare presents Cressida as only having the illusion of agency. Her many witticisms, whilst appearing to give her choice and say over her role in the events of the play, are only her given opinion. Shakespeare's Cressida cannot act outside the bounds of the restrictions of the legend. The title of the play implies that regardless of how she seems to protest throughout the early scenes, Cressida, as a character, will still be subject to the constrictions of the legend. Whilst Chaucer's Criseyde is given a voice and the power to make decisions involving her future, Cressida is left only with the results of the decisions made previously. These circumstances have led critics to conclude that Shakespeare, 'by disassembling a tradition that usually feigns

[26] Phyllis Rackin, *Shakespeare and Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 95.

[27] Juliet Dusinberre, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women,* 3rd edn. (Great Britain, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 52.

ignorance of its multiplicity and inconsistency, *Troilus and Cressida* demonstrates the need to commodify the legendary characters and events in order for them to yield socially usable meaning'.[28] This socially usable meaning harkens back to the political environment that Shakespeare would have been involved in.

Throughout *Troilus and Cressida*, we find characters offering us and each other 'valuations of their friends and their foes and of their superiors and their inferiors, as well as of their peers and of themselves'.[29] The desire to give value to each other possibly reflects Shakespeare's own thoughts about his society at the time, and the need to value the Trojan legend. One of the primary ways in which this valuation can be seen is through the presentation of the maligned Cressida.[30] Shakespeare's presentation of the plays characters, and most significantly in this case Cressida, has been defined as "neurotic".[31] One of the reasons for this assessment is that 'she herself has a canonical pedigree reaching back to the twelfth century and including treatments by Boccaccio, Chaucer, Caxton, and others'.[32] Shakespeare recognised this tradition and his audience's familiarity with the character and this recognition can be seen in the duality and confusion that Cressida embodies when she is present in the play. For instance, even in Chaucer's

---

[28] Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the translation of Empire,* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 97.

[29] C. C. Barfoot, 'Troilus and Cressida: "Praise us as we are tasted"', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39. 1 (Spring, 1988): 45-57, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870586, 45.

[30] It is Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* where Chaucer's Criseyde is first presented in a negative light. In the poem Henryson has Cresseid contract leprosy as punishment for her actions. This culture of blaming Cresseid for Troilus' death can be seen to continue in Shakespeare's work.

[31] Linda Charnes, '"So Unsecret to Ourselves": Notorious Identity and the Material Subject in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida Author*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40. 4 (Winter, 1989): 413-440, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870609, 414.

[32] Paul Yachnin, '"The Perfection of Ten': Populuxe Art and Artisanal Value in "Troilus and Cressida"', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56. 3 (Autumn, 2005): 306-327, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3844082, 306.

poem Criseyde's first thought when talking of the soldiers defending Troy, is of Hector. Hence, why in Shakespeare's play when Pandarus is trying to persuade Cressida of Troilus' love for her, she compares the two stating: 'he is not Hector' (1.2, 66). This line is repeated a little further in the dialogue (1.2, 72), alluding to the audience's pre-existing knowledge of not only their romantic involvement but also the previous versions of the legend. Through this pre-existing knowledge, the audience is not invited to believe Cressida's feelings, when she does admit them, are genuine, and this is something that will be discussed a little later in the chapter.

The comparison between the perceived true romance protagonist Hector, who is the only one to defend Criseyde in Chaucer's poem and die a tragic hero's death, and Troilus, is exaggerated when Pandarus starts comparing Cressida to Helen. Pandarus aims to make Cressida jealous with 'I swear to you, I think Helen loves him better than Paris' (1.2, 102-103). This contrast between Helen, the real cause of the drama, reiterates the prologue, with the idea being that it is actually her story, not Troilus', nor Cressida's. Again though, this idea of Helen being the focal point of the drama cannot be the case because Helen does not appear sufficiently enough within the play to be the subject of it. Shakespeare, furthers this confusion of character roles, including humour into his play. It must be noted that comedy and humour were also devices included in Chaucer's work, however, not to the extent to which Shakespeare employs it. The critic, Foakes, stated some time ago that 'if Troilus becomes comic in his posing, the extravagance of his passion, Cressida is comic in her jesting; we laugh at him and with her'.[33]

[33] R. A. Foakes, 'Troilus and Cressida Reconsidered' *University of Toronto Quarterly* 32.2 (January, 1963): 142-154, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/utq/summary/v032/32.2.foakes.html, 143.

Cressida's comedy is most aptly seen when she is conversing with Pandarus in scene two of act one. This scene is one of the few scenes she appears in. Pandarus begins to describe how Troilus is favoured by Helen and how the latter remarked on his growing facial hair. Shakespeare creates the impression with these statements that Pandarus is attempting to persuade Cressida of the inherently male traits he perceives Troilus as having. Cressida responds to Pandarus's flattery of Troilus with: 'indeed, a tapsters arithmetic may soon bring his particulars therein to a total' (1.2, 108-109). Cressida is often presented by Shakespeare as snide in the face of Pandarus's avid endorsements of Troilus. For example, when Pandarus describes Troilus' 'cloven chin' (1.2, 114) Cressida responds to Pandarus as if it were literal truth enquiring 'how came it cloven?' (1.2, 115); implying that Troilus must have been wounded. Pandarus seems overzealous in his praise of Troilus, so much so that the scene rapidly devolves into hyperbolism. For example, when the soldiers return to Troy after a battle Pandarus continues his fixation on selling Troilus, with the instruction to Cressida to 'mark Troilus above the rest' (1.2, 175). This phrase, or phrases similar to it, are then repeated several times, almost exclusively after every one of the named soldiers ride past. Eventually, Troilus passes by and Pandarus documents this event with 'tis Troilus! There's a man, niece! Hem! Brave Troilus, the prince of chivalry!' (1.2, 215-217). Pandarus continues with a rapturous description of 'look you how his sword is bloodied and his helm more hacked than Hector's, and how he looks, and how he goes! O admirable youth' (1.2, 220-222).

It must be considered that Troilus' helm being more hacked apart than Hector's may not necessarily be a positive comment to make upon Troilus' performance in the battle. Again, Pandarus is completely exaggerating Troilus' abilities and physical appearance, extolling the virtues of his character to Shakespeare's Cressida, who remains

negatively disposed to Pandarus's declarations of Troilus. Perhaps, this is where Shakespeare relies on the intertextuality that exists between the many versions of the tale. The tale traditionally contains elements of romance between the two characters, yet Shakespeare deliberately omits the first stage of their courtship. Despite this omission, the intended audience is left expecting the consummation and betrayal scene. Shakespeare can already be seen to be enabling these events, particularly Cressida's betrayal, with Cressida's early negative disposition towards Troilus. Whilst Shakespeare's Troilus badgers Pandarus to help him with his situation with Cressida, Shakespeare's Cressida speaks very little, and avoids being drawn into a serious discussion about Troilus. It is the contrast between Pandarus' complete devotion to praising Troilus overtly, and Cressida's complete disinterestedness that makes Pandarus' enthusiastic descriptions of Troilus and repeated insistence that she marks him, seem hyperbolic.

As well as this scene seeming hyperbolic, Shakespeare creates the idea that Pandarus' exuberance was attracting unwanted attention with Cressida's line 'peace, for shame, peace!' (1.2, 218). Whilst Cressida's desire to keep the potential romance with Troilus a secret would normally be indicative of romance protagonists, it must be noted that throughout this part of the scene, Cressida shows at best, complete indifference to Troilus. She shows far more interest in the other soldiers, repeatedly enquiring after them instead. Cressida's displayed apathy becomes comical when combined with Pandarus; hyperbolic display. It also highlights the perception that her reaction to Pandarus' rapturous endorsements of Troilus are the result of Pandarus' previous attempts to woo her for Troilus before the action of the play began. The scene placed at this point of the play, and with Cressida already so negatively disposed to Troilus, more than foreshadows

what will be her inevitable betrayal. Pandarus makes a bumbling attempt to flatter Troilus, describing Troilus' complexion as 'brown' (1.2, 89). This description, however, would not have been flattering in Shakespeare's day. When Pandarus realises this, he attempts to distract Cressida from his error and begins a new tact by comparing Troilus to Helen's lover Paris.

Again, with the mention of Paris Shakespeare reminds the intended audience of the true cause of the drama. Cressida however, continues Pandarus' ill-judged remark with the observation that Troilus must have a 'copper nose' (1.2, 101) for all the praise levied on him from Pandarus and Helen. Cressida's commentary is further evidence for the impression that Shakespeare's Cressida is not remotely interested in Troilus or any of his individual exploits. On the other hand, however, given how Shakespeare and his audience would have been aware of the play's sources and other versions of the legend from that era, and are thus aware of how Cressida should feel about Troilus, her comments seem undeserved. Cressida's snideness, in response to Pandarus' description of Troilus, also present her as being somewhat wanton. These associations are due to how women were portrayed in literature. Even in Shakespeare's day women were either pure virginal beings, or wanton sinful creatures. Chaucer's Criseyde is an argument against the binary presentations of women in literature as she is presented as much more realistic. The audience is given frequent insight into her thoughts and the development of her reasoning. Shakespeare's Cressida is allowed no such courtesy, rather any comprehension the audience has of her character is gained from the few lines Shakespeare allowed her.

Cressida's proclivity to display wit or wantoness has led to the suggestion 'anyone who chose to write on Cressida could not easily rehabilitate the leprous whore into which Chaucer's charming heroine had been transformed' (*Troilus and Cressida,* 13). Indeed, Shakespeare manipulated Criseyde's charm into what was the Elizabethan perception of her. Cressida becomes the betraying woman, epitome of infidelity. Yet, Shakespeare makes her so even before she has committed these acts, simply in the way she is portrayed. Troilus is the only one in the play who has anything positive to say about Cressida. Pandarus, for example, in the very first scene exclaims 'she's a fool to stay behind her father. Let her to the Greeks, and so I'll tell her the next time I see her' (1.1, 78-80). Pandarus here, foreshadowing what the audience already knows. This is particularly noteworthy because Chaucer's Pandarus, though primarily working for Troilus, is more gentle towards his relative than Shakespeare's Pandarus, who is already scathing of her and the action of the play has not yet taken place.

The idea that Cressida is already presented at being false is further supported in the scene where Cressida confusedly admits her feelings for Troilus. She becomes more befuddled when Troilus kisses her. In the dialogue before the kiss she says 'Stop my mouth' (3.2, 126) and responds to Troilus' kiss with ''twas not my purpose thus to beg a kiss' (3.2, 130). Indeed, throughout this play Cressida is subjected to advances and physicality that she neither asks for, nor does she seem to appreciate. A little later in this scene she admits that she has 'a kind of self resides with you, but an unkind self that itself will leave to be another's fool. I would be gone. Where is my wit? I know not what I speak' (3.2, 138-141). Cressida the character seems confused as to why she is saying such things being as they are not in keeping with anything else that she has said in the rest of the play. Cressida's confusion is one of the more constant themes in this play.

Earlier in the play, after talking with Pandarus and having to listen to his profuse commendations of Troilus, Cressida says the following lines in one of her extremely rare monologues:

> Words, vows, gifts, tears, and love's full sacrifice.
> He offers in another's enterprise;
> But more in Troilus thousandfold I see
> Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be.
> Yet hold I off: women are angels, wooing:
> Things won are done- joy's soul lies in the doing (1.2, 268-273).

Cressida hints at the possible ending of the play with the words 'love's full sacrifice' as Chaucer's Troilus dies at the end. Yet no such event will indeed occur at the ending of Shakespeare's play. Cressida also mentions how she sees more in Troilus than the glass of Pandarus' praise can show. However, that statement can be read in a number of different ways. It is not necessarily positive; Cressida says neither that she likes nor dislikes what she sees in Troilus. Shakespeare may be deliberately making Cressida seem vague and ambiguous. Because of this it can also be claimed that Shakespeare is relying on the intertextuality with the other instances of the legend to provide the missing significance of this speech. What is clear about this speech is the fact that Cressida is lamenting her role as the pursued female. She knows that 'things won are done': once Troilus has consummated his love for her their relationship will be over. Indeed, Shakespeare seems to wait for the moment of the consummation to occur, then continue with the plot of the narrative. The event itself can be interpreted as much more of a tool in the structure of the narrative: a plot device, rather than one of the more emotional heights of the source poem. In Chaucer's poem both the protagonists will have become emotionally invested and committed to each other making Criseyde's inevitable betrayal all the more poignant theoretically. In Shakespeare's play, the consummation is marked by a Cressida filled with regret. She entreats Troilus to 'prithee, tarry. You men will never

tarry. O foolish Cressid! I might have still held off' (4.2, 15-17). Again, Cressida repeats her fear that Troilus will not linger longer with her, yet at this stage of the play her character's fears are entirely unfounded. Thus, it is entirely possible to read Shakespeare's play with an air of cynicism. Shakespeare presents Cressida as reflecting her intended audience's intertextual knowledge with the fear that she exhibits in response to the events of the play.

Shakespeare completes his highly cynical Cressida with her remark of 'well, uncle, what folly I commit, I dedicate to you' (3.2, 96). Just as Chaucer's Criseyde was alone, it has been noted that Shakespeare's 'lecherous Pandarus is Cressida's one link with the outside world, but there is no implication that she is particularly unfortunate in this, for the courtesan is almost the only type of woman we see in this play'.[34] The marked difference between Chaucer's Criseyde and Shakespeare's Cressida is further reinforced by the absolute confusion Cressida can often be said to display. There is a severe contrast in how Shakespeare presents Cressida with her past counterpart. She is often presented as defensive, relying on her wit to safeguard herself from the actions of other characters in the play. For example, Cressida at one point in the play justifies her actions by claiming that she is forever 'upon my back, to defend my belly; upon my wit, to defend my wiles; upon my secrecy, to defend mine honesty; my mask, to defend my beauty;' (1.2, 247-249) at 'a thousand watches' (1.2, 250-251). Chaucer's Criseyde was also very much concerned with how people would see her, and Shakespeare manipulates this concern into an extremely defensive Cressida. This caution and wariness that Cressida displays could be a product of the intertextual nature of the legend. There is an expectation

[34] David M. Jago, 'The Uniqueness of Troilus and Cressida', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 29. 1 (Winter, 1978): 20-27, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2869165, 24.

involved in the retelling of this legend that Shakespeare could not escape. Following on from these ideas scholars have noted that 'readers habitually identify with the position of one or the other of these characters; expressions of sympathy for one character are almost always overshadowed by condemnation of the other'.[35]

This habitual identification with the characters can be said to be true of this legend and all iterations of it. Troilus will always remain idealistic, impractical and long suffering because of his love for Criseyde/Cressida. The only certainty about Shakespeare's Cressida, aside from her confusion, is that she will always be condemned to the fate of betraying him, just as Chaucer stated in his poem that she would. Cressida will always embody the untrue woman, and this is reiterated in the third act of the play. Troilus asks Cressida, 'what too curious dreg espies my sweet lady in the fountain of our love?' (3.2, 61-61) to which she replies 'more dregs than water, if my fears have eyes' (3.2, 63). Chaucer's Criseyde was a widow, therefore her knowledge about the world and the logical misgivings she had about Chaucer's Troilus can easily be attributed to that experience. Shakespeare's Cressida has no such history. As such, Cressida's comment of 'men prize the thing ungained more than it is' (1.2, 275), seems far too knowledgeable and sceptical for an unmarried romance protagonist of a renaissance drama set in the pagan past. With these lines Shakespeare presents a Cressida already jaded by the world, who already fears the worst about the prospective relationship without having first the prior experience that would justify her reluctance.

[35]James O'Rourke, '"Rule in Unity" and Otherwise: Love and Sex in "*Troilus and Cressida*"', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 43. 2 (Summer, 1992): 139-158, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870878, 139.

Just as Chaucer's Criseyde had no real option to deny her fate, Shakespeare's Cressida regrets and resents her own lack of authorship and agency. Juliet Dusinberre states that 'women's freedom in late Elizabethan drama is always wrested from the chains of the masculine idea of woman, whether silent, passive or silly, where men's freedom is their birthright' (Dusinberre, 218). This statement can be seen to be entirely true when applied to Cressida. Shakespeare's Cressida must also conform to the expectations formed from the previous iterations of the legend. Shakespeare's portrayal of her confirms this idea when she describes how 'boldness comes to me now and brings me heart: prince Troilus, I have loved you night and day for many weary months' (3.2, 106-108). Yet she will go on to follow this with:

> Hard to seem won; but I was won, my lord,
> With the first glance that ever- pardon me;
> If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.
> I love you now; but not, till now, so much
> But I might master it. In faith, I lie! (…)
> Why have I blabbed? Who shall be true to us,
> When we are so unsecret to ourselves? (3.2 110-118)

With these lines Shakespeare presents a distraught Cressida, aware of, as the audience surely is, the role she is to play. Her decision that 'I love you now' but not before that point, when in the part of the play preceding this scene she remains completely uninterested in Troilus, highlights Shakespeare's sudden change in portrayal, reflecting a need to conform to the established narrative shape of the legend. The final line of the above quotation concludes this thinking. Cressida asks why she is 'so unsecret' to herself. Her comment foreshadows the events that will be the product of this particular scene. In acting in the manner she has done in the scenes previous to this one, she has been technically untrue to her own character- she has been acting in a way that already anticipates her abandoning of Troilus.

Shakespeare's play of the very famous legend suffers from the limitations of it being a drama that was unperformed. Drama often relies on the actors to add more textual knowledge than the bare bones the script can deliver by itself. Because of this absence of performance, it is impossible to interpret any of the characters in this play consistently, so much so that Cressida can be read as already knowing the entirety of her role in the play before she has even enacted the events that will bring it about. This apparent self-knowledge arises from the fact that at this point in history the legend was so well known that the ending of the play would have been a foregone conclusion. However, this play is also an awkward meshing of genre which naturally affects how one interprets the play. Plays of ambiguous genre were certainly not unusual for Shakespeare. However, the play's matter was canonical to the English national identity. There was also a movement to return to more classical forms of genre, the undetermined generic nature of *Troilus and Cressida* becomes much more startling.

The uncertain nature of the text furthers the idea that this play is difficult to interpret. Shakespeare's characters lack consistency, most notably the title characters, who appear very little in a play that bears their names. For example, Troilus cannot be read as a chivalrous romance protagonist when in the very first scene he laments how 'stubborn-chaste' (1.1, 95) Cressida appears to be. He also fails to fulfil the role of a tragic protagonist, as he still lives at the end of the play. Instead, his brother Hector fulfils this particular generic constraint, whilst still occupying a minor part in the play. Cressida, before act three, shows very little interest in Troilus. Indeed, the dialogue hints in the first scene of the play that Pandarus has already attempted to play the pimp before the play's action began, therefore her tired attitude towards both Pandarus and Troilus seems legitimate. Yet, if this is the case, her distress at having to leave Troilus, and the section

of the dialogue where she admits she loves him, seem inherently fake. It appears that her character in particular could not escape the intertextual nature of the legend she is involved in. The more familiar one is with the legend and the previous versions of it, the more easily Shakespeare's play creates confusion in the reader. Cressida is not Chaucer's Criseyde, through this fact Shakespeare's play can be seen to lack a definite genre, and thus, authenticity. The fact that it was never performed, possibly due to political circumstances, limits the character's expression and the audience's interpretation of meaning making to the dialogue of the text.

These political circumstances that were mentioned in an earlier chapter have previously, to my knowledge, been ignored by scholars. However, one could argue that this play is a product of these extenuating circumstances. The Troilus and Criseyde/Cressida legend, along with the legend of the fall of Troy, were inherently fundamental to the formation of English national identity. Shakespeare wrote this play at a particularly challenging time for his country. His monarch, Elizabeth I, in order to maintain power had chosen to remain unmarried and in doing so caused the line of the Tudors to fail. At this point in history the people would have been accustomed to an inherited monarchy and the relative surety it could produce. Shakespeare had already written a play that the nobility and his audience had come to associate with their displeasure of Elizabeth's method of ruling. This play was then revived later when certain members of the nobility, that Shakespeare was linked with, openly rebelled, and were then executed for their treason. It is entirely possible that Shakespeare meant for his *Troilus and Cressida* to be another statement against his monarch. His disregard for generic conformity is obvious in this play, and hinders all interpretation. Though his play is named after the characters Troilus and Cressida, both their individual narrative, and the

characters themselves feature very little in the play itself. Instead the audience is confronted with a dual narrative of meshed genre, that admits it starts in the middle of things, and ends unsatisfactorily as well. *Troilus and Cressida* remained unperformed, certainly during the playwright's lifetime, and this is inherently curious. It was an incredibly popular tale, and Shakespeare himself an incredibly prominent playwright. One is left to conclude that due to the political danger Shakespeare would have been in, and that the play is so disparaging of literary orthodoxies (and therefore of the legend itself), that Shakespeare could not afford to produce another play that was critical of his monarch during the last few years of Elizabeth I reign.

Conclusion

Shakespeare and Chaucer used the legend of Troilus and Criseyde/Cressida for their own rhetorical and political means. These prominent writers wrote at times when the monarchy was particularly unstable, creating societies that had uncertain futures. Many shifts in power had occurred in the dominant religions of these eras, and these changes often coincided with a new reigning monarch, furthering this sense of instability. In *Troilus and Criseyde* Chaucer endeavoured to show how his modern society was much more preferable to the pagan antiquity of the past. He advances this reflection with the implication that his modern society, "the New Troy", was greater than the original Troy, because of its more modern, Christian god. This is perhaps why the fall that Troy suffers in the original legend is not a particular focus of the poem. The opposite can be said about Shakespeare's work. Though the event of Troy's destruction is not portrayed, there is an overwhelming sense of doom as the play develops. The inevitability of the fall of Troy is only exacerbated by the avoidance of it. The military aspect of the legend is so prominent in Shakespeare's play that the avoidance of the fall of Troy becomes even more conspicuous.

Throughout *Troilus and Criseyde* one of the more persistent ideas is the fact that Chaucer's own society, the New Troy, would never face such a cruel and determined fate as his pagans. It must be remembered that during the middle English period, paganism, though associated with the medieval romance genre, was thought of as dangerous. By presenting his pagans in such a way, Chaucer is also recognising the religious and social orthodoxies of the time. Chaucer's motivated manipulation of other literary orthodoxies such as genre, and its associated generic framework, creates a text of distinctly ambiguous genre. The title *Troilus and Criseyde* implies that the text will primarily consist of a medieval romance, and thus expectations of a medieval romance arise from this. But this particular genre, by the time of Chaucer's writing, was already falling into disfavour. Modern critics have gone so far as to claim that the medieval romance genre is hard to define, or even class, as a genre. Thus, it is possible that Chaucer was associating his unfortunate pagans and their inevitable fate with the out of favour medieval English romance genre. Chaucer's genre meshing could have been a way to present how the medieval romance genre was outdated, whilst still presenting a new aspect of the Trojan legend to his English audience.

The historical context of this poem is also highly important; Chaucer's monarch, and his reputation, was often in dispute. Chaucer's main occupation involved working directly for the crown. His poetry was received by a mass audience, as a consequence it would have had to have been, at the very least, positive of the head of the state and aspects of his rule. The association of the ancient city of Troy and London being the New Troy meant that Chaucer would have had to have been wary of presenting the fall of Troy in his poem. Instead, he chose to end the poem at the death of one of his main characters, Troilus. Pagan Troilus ascends into Christian heaven, ending the poem on an

overwhelmingly positive note. Thus the nature of his text, sceptical of the current literary orthodoxies, presents them as antiquated in order to make his own society seem more progressive and positive. Chaucer's poem can also be considered light-hearted. One of the methods he uses to blur genre boundaries in his text is through the inclusion of humour. Thus, his poem can be seen as somewhat of a light relief in response to the ambiguous and uncertain political situations England faced at the time.

In contrast to Chaucer's positivity in terms of the future of his society in *Troilus and Criseyde*, Shakespeare's play can be seen to be far more concerned with the expression of scepticism at the situation of his society, rather than conveying the actual tale itself. A simple look at the number of times that Cressida and Troilus appear in the play demonstrates this lack of enthusiasm for his focal characters. Throughout the play, presenting the legend of the lovers and their narrative seems to be a secondary motivation for Shakespeare. The highly popular playwright seemed to want to produce a politically-driven play, even at the cost of presenting a coherent and recognisable version of the traditional narrative.[1] In terms of events from the narrative, it does not include the initial beginnings of the courtship between Troilus and Cressida. Instead, Shakespeare focuses purely on the events directly leading up to the swapping of Cressida for Antenor, and therefore, her resultant betrayal of Troilus. Shakespeare's concentration on portraying solely these events creates a disparity between the many versions of the legend and the play Shakespeare wrote. There is also very little exposition contained within the play

[1] A further research opportunity that could be explored is the fact that throughout the play Shakespeare refers to solely Roman gods, rather than the Gods that Troilus and Cressida would have had. This is an important distinction that should be recognised, Shakespeare was well educated and would know the difference between the Roman and Greek gods that are mentioned. His primary source material refers to the correct gods and associated furies. This lack of accuracy on Shakespeare's part could be further indicative of his lack of enthusiasm with a legend so fundamental to the English identity.

itself. Rather, Shakespeare seems to be relying upon the intertextual nature of the legend with its other extremely familiar variations, to impart the narrative of the play itself. This idea is furthered with the fact that the play consists of many generic features of tragedy, comedy, romance, and history. Yet it is not enough of specifically any one of these genres, which affects the determination of meaning making in the play. Genre, and its associated conventions, at the time of Shakespeare's writing, were becoming much more formalised. So this play, given that it contains a popular legend, fundamental to the English national identity and to the legitimacy of the current monarch, is highly significant in Shakespeare's portfolio of plays. The significance of it further increases when adding into the equation that (by all accounts) it was never performed.

Chaucer's poem, and the various iterations of the Troilus and Criseyde legend that spawned from it, were incredibly popular. Shakespeare's play was, as this discussion assumes, never performed. This lack of performance could be due to a number of separate factors. However, the play itself is highly sceptical of women. It also does not cover all the events of the traditional, and thoroughly familiar narrative, exaggerating the idea that Shakespeare is both sceptical of the legend and its value. The manipulation of generic frameworks that Shakespeare implies also suggests a certain scepticism in the established literary orthodoxies of the day. This scepticism is important when further taking into account the time in which it was written. It has been well established by many scholars that Shakespeare's *Richard II*, though written earlier, had become associated with the discontent of the nobility over their various criticisms of Elizabeth I's reign, so much so that it became revived later, coinciding with the rebellions that threatened her reign. These uprisings occurred during the same period of time that it is thought that Shakespeare wrote *Troilus and Cressida*. The perpetrators were put to death and

Shakespeare, though linked with them, was not punished for his association with them. The fact that *Troilus and Cressida* was so subversive could be entirely why it was never performed. It could be that Shakespeare was genuinely worried, and left without support once the leader of the rebellion was executed. Therefore, the play went unperformed.

This fear that Shakespeare may have had can be seen to be reflected in the lack of any finality or sense of resolution in his play. Though the legend was extremely well known, Shakespeare chooses to be deliberately ambiguous and oblique as to the actual fate of Troilus and Cressida, and indeed of the city itself. Though they enact key parts of the traditional narrative, the ending of the legend is avoided in the play. His unwillingness to commit to the fate of Troy can be interpreted as a reflection of the state of affairs in England at the time. His aging monarch had left no heirs, and most deliberately so. The only certainty that Shakespeare, and his society faced, was that she would die, and potentially leave the country unprotected and ungoverned. Fear and weariness is palpable in the text, and is most definitely reflected in Cressida and how wary she is of her own narrative. It is almost as if Cressida, as a character, knows the outcome of the plotline, and knows that no good can come of her actions.[2]

It is interesting that both authors choose the same tale to tell, and with similar means of motivated genre manipulations, but produced entirely different effects. Chaucer sought, through entertainment of all classes, to unite his audience and confirm their faith in their society. The end of his poem, through its hybrid genre, is overwhelmingly

[2]A further research opportunity that I would like to explore is the presentation of the monarchy in Shakespeare's plays, particularly his least popular ones. Shakespeare reflects the state of Elizabethan politics in his plays and this is a discussion that has largely been ignored in the scholarship surrounding Shakespeare and his work.

positive. At the same time, he also highlights the failings of the exceedingly popular but outdated medieval romance genre, and presents how in a more complicated time its usefulness is waning. Though Chaucer tells the tale of the events leading up to the fall of Troy, he reaffirms that the "New Troy" of his modern Christian God could never suffer the same fate because they are not ruled by a cruel and antiquated paganism. In opposition to the positivity produced by the generic meshing in Chaucer is Shakespeare's effort.

Through Shakespeare's complete disregard for any generic conformity in his play he produces a drama that is incredibly sceptical and apprehensive of the unknown future he faces. Shakespeare's use of hybridity of genre in *Troilus and Cressida* makes a mockery of all that is popular in theatre at the time, dissembling the faith that people had in the familiar legend that was so intertwined with the founding legend of Europe. Arguably, what Chaucer sought to consolidate with his work, by presenting the out of favour genre as precisely that with his method of genre hybridity, Shakespeare sought to weaken using the very same method. It is interesting that Shakespeare chose this method of genre hybridity when plays were becoming increasingly popular. Dramas were becoming increasingly recognisable in terms of the different genres they were termed as. Consequently, playwrights used their audience's recognitions of generic frameworks and associations to impart further meaning on their plays without having to include it within the texts. Thus, the desire to associate plays with specific genres meant that the titles of the earlier folio versions of *Troilus and Cressida*, and other Shakespearean works, included what genre the plays belongs to. This utilisation of generic forms, combined with the intertextual nature of the various and many versions of the legend, creates a sense of dissonance for the audience of *Troilus and Cressida*. This notion is enhanced when considering that neither of Shakespeare's main characters find resolution in the play.

Through these similar methods, but with vastly different results, both authors use and manipulate generic frameworks, in a motivated attempt to convey their own rhetorical and political needs, regardless of the reception either work may have had.

These findings bring new light to Shakespeare's unpopular *Troilus and Cressida*. To this day it is labelled the 'problem play' and is performed very little. The scholarship that exists on this text has mostly focused on the genre classification and the treatment of the relationship of Troilus and Cressida. Yet, when including the historical context of Shakespeare's writing, it becomes possible to see the treatment of such a canonical legend to England and its reigning monarchy, as a commentary and statement of fears about its current circumstances. In opposition to Shakespeare's use of the legend is the poem that was his primary source text. Chaucer chose an unfamiliar aspect of a famous legend to present to his audience. His poem was incredibly popular, and, with the pre-determined fall of Troy, presented an antiquated genre as a folly of the past. However, Chaucer's Troilus ascends to heaven, thereby reinforcing his own troubled society and reaffirming its future. Chaucer's utilisation of different generic frameworks presents the idealism and limits of the medieval romance genre and demonstrates the need to move away from this particular generic structure. Shakespeare took this source, and the many others that were available, and reinforced the need to adhere to generic frameworks with his additional genre meshing. Drama relies upon performance to fully express all the nuances of meaning, it also benefits from the association of genres. This is because when a play is, for example, labelled a tragedy, then one expects certain events, certain types of characters that are related to this particular genre. Pre-existing knowledge can then be added to enhance their interpretation of the meaning of the play. However, as this particular play contains too many generic indicators from many different individual

genres this foreknowledge the audience has can be seen to hamper interpretation of the play. This issue that *Troilus and Cressida* has is only exacerbated by the familiarity the reader has with previous versions of the legend that would also predispose the audience to certain expectations that they would have of the play. When taking these factors into account Shakespeare's genre defying play expresses scepticism of the need to value the legend so highly and conveys despair over the unknown future his society faced.

In such a way it can be seen how truly significant generic classifications are to texts and to the understanding of them. Without the meaning that genre associations can impart texts become ambiguous and vague. Understanding of the use of generic frameworks benefits literary works because it supplies knowledge that does not have to be explicit in the text. Whilst the legend that this discussion is concerned with was familiar to audiences, authors have chosen to portray aspects of it in different ways, and different genres have arisen from these divergent portrayals. These author's variations can then provide other meanings and offer other interpretations of their own, as Chaucer and Shakespeare demonstrate in their own creations. Thus the level of adherence to literary orthodoxies such as generic frameworks, key to the understanding of texts, can be used reflect societal and political circumstances and concerns.

Bibliography

Apfelbaum, Roger. *Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: Textual Problems and Performance Solutions.* Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004. Print.

Apfelbaum, Roger. ‘"What verse for it? What instance for it?": Authority, Closure, and the Endings of "Troilus and Cressida" in Text and Performance’. *Critical Survey* 9. 3 (1997): 91-109. Berghahn Books. Web. 28 January 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41561729.

Ashton, Gail. *Medieval English Romance In Context.* UK: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010. Print.

Asp, Carolyn. ‘Transcendence Denied: The Failure of Role Assumption in Troilus and Cressida’. *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 18. 2, Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama (Spring, 1978): 257-274. Rice University. Web. 25 January 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/450361.

Bankert, Dabney Anderson. ‘Secularizing the World: Conversion models in Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde’*. *The Chaucer Review* 37. 3 (2003): 196-218. Penn State University Press. Web. 23 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v037/37.3bankert.html.

Barfoot, C. C. ‘Troilus and Cressida: "Praise us as we are tasted"’. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39. 1 (Spring, 1988): 45-57. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 16 February 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870586.

Barron, W.R. J. *English Medieval Romance.* England: Longman Group UK Limited, 1987. Print.

Beal, Rebecca S. ‘What Chaucer Did to an Orazion in the Filostrato: Calkas’s Speech as Deliberative Oratory’. *The Chaucer Review* 44.4 (2010): 440-460. Penn State University Press. Web. 18 Feburary 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v044/44.4.beal.html

Bednarz, James P. *Shakespeare and the Poet's War*. United States of America: Columbia University Press, 1983. Print.

Behrman, Mary. ‘Heroic Criseyde’. *The Chaucer Review* 38.4 (2004): 314-336. Penn State University Press. Web. 20 February 2016. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v038/38.4behrman.html.

Bernhardt, W. W. ‘Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and Dryden's Truth Found too Late’. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 20. 2 (Spring, 1969): 129-14. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 29 January 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2868998.

Bevington, David. *Shakespeare and Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Print.

Blake, N.F. *Shakespeare's Language: An Introduction*. UK: The Macmillian Press LTD, 1983. Print.

Blamires, Alcuin. ‘Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde’ in A *Companion to Medieval Poetry*, ed. Corinne Saunders. Blackwell Publishing, 2010. Web. 24 February 2016 http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405159630_chunk_g978140515963025.

Bloomfield, Josephine. ‘Chaucer and the Polis: Piety and Desire in the "Troilus and Criseyde"’. *Modern Philology* 94. 3 (Feb, 1997): 291-304. The University of Chicago Press. Web. 23 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/438576.

Blyth, Charles. 'Virgilian Tragedy and "Troilus"' *The Chaucer Review* 24. 3 (Winter, 1990): 211-218. Penn State University Press. Web. 23 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25094121.

Bisson, Lillian M. *Chaucer and the Medieval World*. USA: St. Martin's Press, 1998. Print.

Boboc, Andreea. 'Criseyde's Descriptions and the Ethics of Feminine Experience'. *The Chaucer Review* 47.1 (2012): 63-83. Penn State University Press. Web. 18 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v047/47.1.boboc.html.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Il Filostrato*. Italian text ed. Vicenzo Pernicone; trans., Robert P. apRoberts and Anna Bruni Seldis. New York: Garland Pub, 1986. Print.

Bowers, John M. '"Beautiful as Troilus": Richard II, Chaucer's Troilus, and Figures of (Un)Masculinity', in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde*, eds. Tison Pugh, Marzec Marcia Smith. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008): 9- 27. Print.

Bradbrook, M. C. 'What Shakespeare Did to Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 9. 3 (Summer, 1958): 311-319. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 23 March 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2867331.

Bradbury, Nancy Mason. 'Popular Romance' in *A Companion to Medieval Poetry*, ed. Corinne Saunders. Blackwell Publishing, 2010. Web. 24 February 2016 http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405159630_chunk_g978140515963017.

Bradshaw, Graham. *Shakespeare's Scepticism*. Great Britain: The Harvest Press Limited, 1987. Print.

Brown, Peter. *Authors in Context: Geoffrey Chaucer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Print.

Burlin, Robert, 'Middle English Romance: The Structure of Genre'. *The Chaucer Review* 30. 1 (1995): 1-14. Penn State University Press. Web. 6 March 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25095911.

Campbell, Jennifer. 'Figuring Criseyde's Entente: Authority, Narrative, and Chaucer's Use of History'. *The Chaucer Review* 27. 4 (1993): 342-358. Penn State University Press. Web. 4 May 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25095814.

Carlson, Cindy L. and Weisl, Angela Jane. Eds. *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). Print.

Carlson, Cindy L. and Weisl, Angela Jane. 'Introduction: Constructions of Widowhood and virginity' in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages,* ed. Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999: 1-21. Print.

Carlson, David. *Chaucer's Jobs*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. Print.

Cartlidge, Neil. 'Criseyde's Absent Friends'. *The Chaucer Review* 44.3 (2010): 227-245. Penn State University Press. Web. 18 February 2016. http://muse.jhu.edu/article/368054.

Charnes, Linda. '"So Unsecret to Ourselves": Notorious Identity and the Material Subject in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida Author'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40. 4 (Winter, 1989): 413-440. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 22 February 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870609.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. 'The Knight's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn. ed. Larry D. Benson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. 37-66. Print.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Riverside Chaucer*. 3rd edn. ed. Larry D. Benson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. Print.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. 'The Wife of Bath's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer,* 3rd edn. ed. Larry D. Benson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. 116-122. Print.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. 'Troilus and Criseyde*',* in *The Riverside Chaucer,* 3rd edn. ed. Larry D. Benson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. 473-585. Print.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. 'Troilus and Criseyde' ed. Stephen A. Barney, in *The Riverside Chaucer, 3*rd edn. ed. Larry D. Benson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. 471-472. Print.

Clare, Janet. 'The Censorship of the Deposition Scene in Richard II'. *The Review of English Studies* 41. 161 (Feb., 1990): 89-94. Oxford University Press. Web. 23 May 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/516607.

Clegg, Cyndia Susan. '"By the Choise and Inuitation of al the Realme": Richard II and Elizabethan Press Censorship'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48. 4 (Winter, 1997): 432-448. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 23 May 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2871253.

Cook, Alexandra.'"O swete harm so queynte"': Loving Pagan Antiquity in Troilus and Criseyde and the Knight's Tale'. *English Studies* 91:1 (February 2010): 26-41. Taylor Francis Online. Web. 18 February 2016 http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00138380903355064.

Cooper, Helen. 'Introduction', in C*haucer and Religion*, ed. Helen Philips. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010. Print.

Cousins, A. D. Chief Consultant/ ed. *The Shakespeare Encyclopaedia: The Complete Guide to the Man and His Works*. US: Firefly Books LTD, 2009. Print.

Danson, Lawrence. *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres*. United States: Oxford University Press Inc, 2000. Print.

David, Alfred. 'The Hero of *Troilus*'. *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 37.4 (1962): 556-581. The University of Chicago Press. Web. 24 June 2016. http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.2307/2850241.

Dinshaw, Carolyn. *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*. USA: The University of Wisconsin Press. 1989. Print.

Dunai, Amber. '"Ane Doolie Sessiun" and "Ane Cairfull Dyte": Cresseid and the Narrator in Henryson's Testament of Cresseid'. *The Chaucer Review* 50 3&4 (2015): 420-441. Penn State University Press. Web. 30 January 2016. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v050/50.3-4.dunai.html.

Dusinberre, Juliet. *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women.* 3rd ed. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Print.

Edmondson, George. *The Neighboring Text: Chaucer, Boccaccio, Henryson*. USA: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011. Print.

Emerson, Oliver F. 'Chaucer's First Military Service - A Study of Edward Third's Invasion of France in 1359-60'. *Romanic Review*, 3 (1 Jan 1912): 321-361. ProQuest. Web. 10 September 2016 http://search.proquest.com/docview/1290940152/fulltextPDF/CC5159BC68784503PQ/1?accountid=12219.

Erne, Lukas. 'Shakespeare and the Publication of his Plays'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53.1 (Spring 2002): 1-20. John Hopkins University Press. Web. 28 January 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/shq/summary/v053/53.1erne.html.

Farnham, Willard, 'Troilus in Shapes of Infinite Desire'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 15. 2 (Spring, 1964): 257-264. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 25 January 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2867897.

Fay, H. C. 'George Chapman's Translation of Homer's 'iliad''. *Greece & Rome* 21. 63 (Oct., 1952): 104-111. Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Classical Association. Web. 10 September 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/640882.

Federico, Sylvia. *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages.* USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. Print.

Fish, Varda. 'The Origin and Original Object of "Troilus and Criseyde"'. *The Chaucer Review* 18. 4 (Spring, 1984): 304-315. Penn State University Press. Web. 23 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25093891.

Fisher, Sheila. 'Women and men in late medieval English romance' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, 1st ed. ed. Roberta L. Krueger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006: 150-164. Web. 12 March 2016 http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521553423.

Flannery, Mary C. 'A Bloody Shame: Chaucer's Honourable Women'. *Review of English Studies* 62 (255) (2011): 337-357. Oxford University Press, first published online October 4, 2010. Web. 12 March 2016. http://res.oxfordjournals.org/content/62/255/337.

Foakes, R. A. *Shakespeare& Violence.* UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Print.

Foakes, R. A., 'Troilus and Cressida Reconsidered'. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 32.2 (January, 1963): 142-154. University of Toronto Press. Web. 7 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/utq/summary/v032/32.2.foakes.html.

Fowler, Alastair. 'The Formation of Genres in the Renaissance and After'. *New Literary History* 34. 2, Theorizing Genres I (Spring, 2003): 185-200. The John Hopkin's University Press. Web. 12 May 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/20057775.

Freadman, Anne. 'The Traps and Trappings of Genre Theory'. *Applied Linguistics* 33.5 (2012): 544-563. Oxford University Press. Web. 11 May 2016 http://applij.oxfordjournals.org/content/33/5/544.

Frost, Lea Luecking. '"A Kyng That Ruled All By Lust": Richard II in Elizabethan Literature'. *Literature Compass* 9.2 (2012): 183-198. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Web. 19 August 2016 http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2011.00873.x

Frow, John. *Genre: The New Critical Idiom.* London and New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Frow, John, '"Reproducibles, Rubrics, and Everything You Need": Genre Theory Today'. *PMLA* 122. 5, Special Topic: Remapping Genre (Oct., 2007): 1626-1634. Modern Language Association. Web. 30 January 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25501811.

Fumo, Jamie C. 'Hating Cirseyde: Last Words on a Heroine from Chaucer to Henryson'. *The Chaucer Review* 46. 1&2 (2011): 20-38. Penn State University Press. Web. 18 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v046/46.1-2.fumo.html.

Garrison, Jennifer. 'Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and the Danger of Masculine Interiority'. *The Chaucer Review* 49.3 (2015): 320-343. Penn State University Press. Web. 18 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v049/49.3.garrison.html.

Gaston, Kara. '"Save oure tonges difference": Translation, Literary Histories, and Troilus and Criseyde'. *The Chaucer Review* 48. 3 (2014): 258-283. Penn State University Press. Web. 18 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v048/48.3.gaston.html.

Gaunt, Simon. 'Romance and other genres' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, 1st edn., ed. Roberta L. Krueger. Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 2006. 45- 59. Web. 12 March 2016 http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521553423.004.

Goodman, Jennifer R. 'Nature as Destiny in "Troilus and Criseyde"'. *Style* 31. 3, Chaucerian Poetics (Fall 1997): 413-427. Penn State University Press. Web. 23 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/42946382.

Greene, Gayle. 'Language and Value in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*'. *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 21. 2, Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama (Spring, 1981): 271-285. Rice University. Web. 1 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/450149.

Gross, Karen Elizabeth. 'Chaucer's Silent Italy'. *Studies in Philology* 109. 1 (Winter, 2012): 19-44. University of North Carolina Press. Web. 20 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/41511593.

Hadfield, Andrew. *Shakespeare and Renaissance Politics*. UK: Arden Shakespeare, 2004. Print.

Hammer, Paul E. J. 'Shakespeare's Richard II, the Play of 7 February 1601, and the Essex Rising'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59. 1 (Spring, 2008): 1-35. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 9 February http://www.jstor.org/stable/40210244.

Hanrahan, Michael. '"A Straunge Successour Shold Take Youre Heritage": The Clerk's Tale and the Crisis of Ricardian Rule'. *The Chaucer Review* 35. 4 (2001): 335-350. Penn State University Press. Web. 27 July 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25096139.

Harris, Sharon M., 'Feminism And Shakespeare's Cressida: 'If I Be False...'', *Women's Studies* 18.1 (1990): 65- 82. Literary Reference Center, Routledge. Web 20 February 2016 http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00497878.1990.9978820.

.

Hays, Michael L. *Shakespearean Tragedy as Chivalric Romance.* Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003. Print

Hayward, Rebecca. 'Between the Living and the Dead: Widows as Heroines of Medieval Romances', in *Constrictions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages*, eds. Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999: 221-243. Print.

Henryson, Robert. *The Testament of Cresseid/ [by Robert Henrysone]*. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum; New York; De Capo Press, 1969. Print.

Hillman, David. 'The Worst Case of Knowing the Other?" Stanley Cavell and *Troilus and Cressida*'. *Philosophy and Literature* 32.1 (April, 2008): 74-86. John Hopkin's University Press. Web. 7 February 2016. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/phl/summary/v032/32.1.hillman.html.

Hodges, Laura F. 'Sartorial Signs in Troilus and Criseyde. *The Chaucer Review* 35. 3 (2001): 223-259. Penn State University Press. Web. 2 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v035/35.3hodges.html.

Horobin, Simon. *Chaucer's Language.* UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.

Hum, Sue. 'Knowledge, Belief, and Lack of Agency: The Dreams of Geoffrey, Troilus, Criseyde, and Chauntecleer'. *Style* 31.3, Chaucerian Poetics (Fall 1997): 500-522. Penn State University Press. Web. 4 May 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/42946386.

Ingham, Patricia Clare. 'Chaucer's Haunted Aesthetics: Mimesis and Trauma in Troilus and Criseyde'. *College English* 72. 3 (January 2010): 226-247. National Council of Teachers of English. Web. 18 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25653026.

Jago, David M. 'The Uniqueness of Troilus and Cressida'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 29.1 (Winter, 1978): 20-27. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George

Washington University. Web. 10 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2869165.

James, Heather. *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the translation of Empire.* UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Print.

Jensen, Phebe. 'The Textual Politics of Troilus and Cressida'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46. 4 (Winter, 1995): 414-423. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 2 February 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870980.

Johnston, Andrew James West- Pavlov, Russell. Kempf, Elisabeth. Eds. *Love, History and Emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare: Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida.* Manchester University Press (2016). Web. 19 May 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1b349ww.

Johnston, Andrew James, West-Pavlov and Russell, 'Introduction: Performing the Politics of Passion: Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida and the Literary Tradition of Love and History', in *Love, history and emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare: Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida,* eds. Andrew James Johnston, Russel West-Pavlov and Elizabeth Kempf. Manchester University Press (2016): 1-16. Web. 19 May 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1b349ww.5.

Kaula, David. '"Mad Idolatry" in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida'. *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 15. 1 (Spring 1973): 25-38. University of Texas Press. Web. 2 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/40754242.

Kelly, Henry Ansgar. *Chaucerian Tragedy.* Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 1997. Print.

Kimbrough, Robert. 'The Origins of Troilus and Cressida: Stage, Quarto, and Folio'. *PMLA* 77. 3 (Jun., 1962): 194-199. Modern Language Association. Web. 30 January 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/460478.

Kimbrough, Robert. 'The Troilus Log: Shakespeare and "Box-Office"'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 15. 3 (Summer, 1964): 201-209. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 30 January 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2868326.

Kinney, Arthur F. 'Essex and Shakespeare versus Hayward'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44. 4 (Winter, 1993): 464-466. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 8 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2871001.

Kinney, Arthur F. 'Introduction: The Dramatic World of the Renaissance' in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. Arthur F Kinney. Blackwell Publishing, (2004). Web. 3 March 2016 http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405121798_chunk_g97814051217982.

Klassen, Norm. 'Tragedy and Romance in Chaucer's 'Litel Bok' of Troilus and Criseyde' in *A Concise Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Corinne Saunders. Blackwell Publishing (2005). Web. 22 February 2016 http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405113885_chunk_g978140511388512.

Koster, Josephine A. 'Privitee, Habitus, and Proximity: Conduct and Domestic Space in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde'. *Essays in Medieval Studies* 24 (2007): 79-91. West Virginia University Press. Web. 23 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/ems/summary/v024/24.koster.html.

Lees-Jeffries, Hester. 'What's Hecuba to him? Absence, silence and Lame in Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida', in *Love, history and emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare: Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida*, eds. Andrew James Johnston, Russel West-Pavlov and Elizabeth Kempf. Manchester University Press (2016): 61-75. Web. 19 May 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1b349ww.9.

Liu, Yin. 'Middle English Romance as Prototype Genre'. *The Chaucer Review* 40. 4 (2006): 335-353. Penn State University Press. Web. 1 March 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25094331.

Lobsein, Verena Olejniczak. '"Stewed phrase" and the Impassioned Imagination in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida',* in *Love, history and emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare: Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida,* eds. Andrew James Johnston, Russel West-Pavlov and Elizabeth Kempf. Manchester University Press (2016): 125-140. Web. 19 May 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1b349ww.13.

Lynch, Stephen J. 'The Idealism of Shakespeare's Troilus'. *South Atlantic Review* 51. 1 (Jan., 1986): 19-29. Web. 3 March 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/3199552.

Main, William W. 'Character Amalgams in Shakespeare's "Troilus" and "Cressida"'. *Studies in Philology* 58. 2, Part 1 (Apr., 1961): 170-178. South Atlantic Modern Language Association. Web. 30 January 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/4173344.

Mainer, Sergei. *The Scottish Romance Tradition C. 1375-1550- Nation, Chivalry and Knighthood.* The Netherlands: Rodopi, 2010. Print.

Mann, Jill. 'Shakespeare and Chaucer: 'What is Criseyde Worth?''. *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 18. 2 (1989): 109-128. Oxford University Press. Web. 20 May 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/42966717.

Mann, Jill. 'Troilus' Swoon'. *The Chaucer Review* 14. 4, Directions in Medieval Literary Criticism (Spring, 1980): 319-335. Penn State University Press. Web. 23 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25093516.

Marelj, Jelena. 'The Philosophical Entente of Particulars: Criseyde as Nominalist in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde'. *The Chaucer Review* 47.2 (2012): 206-221. Penn State University Press. Web. 18 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/article/486994.

Martin, Carl Grey. '"Bitraised Thorough False Folk": Criseyde, the siege and the Threat of Treason'. *The Chaucer Review* 37.3 (2003): 219-233. Penn State University Press. Web. 1 March 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/article/41393.

Martin, Priscilla. *Chaucer's Women*. Great Britain: University of Iowa Press, 1990. Print.

Marzec, Marcia Smith. 'What Makes a Man? Troilus, Hector, and the Masculinities of Courtly Love', in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde,* eds. Tison Pugh and Marzec Marcia Smith. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008): 58-72. Print.

McAlpine, Monica E. *The Genre of Troilus and Criseyde.* Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1978. Print.

McCall, John P. 'Troilus and Criseyde'. Ed. Beryl Rowland. *Companion to Chaucer Studies.* USA: Oxford University Press, 1979. Print.

McCandless, David. *Gender and Performance in Shakespeare's Problem Comedies.* US: Indiana University Press, 1997. Print.

McCarthy, Jeanne H. 'Elizabeth I's "picture in little": Boy Company Representations of a Queen's Authority'. *Studies in Philology* 100.4 (Fall 2003): 425-462. University of North Carolina Press. Web. 6 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/sip/summary/v100/100.4mccarthy.html.

McInnis, David. 'Repetition and Revision in Shakespeare's Tragic Love Plays'. *Parergon* 25.2 (2008): 35-56. Australian and New Zealand Association of Medieval and Early Modern Studies (Inc). Web. 7 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/pgn/summary/v025/25.2.mcinnis.html.

McTaggart, Anne. 'Shamed Guiltless: Criseyde, Dido, and Chaucerian Ethics'. *The Chaucer Review* 46.4 (2012): 371-402. Penn State University Press. Web. 18

February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v046/46.4.mctaggart.html.

Mieszkowski, Gretchen, 'Revisiting Troilus's Faint', in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde*, eds. Tison Pugh and Marzec Marcia Smith. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008): 43-57. Print.

Minnis, A.J. *Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity.* Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982. Print.

Moore, Marilyn Reppa. 'Who's Solipsistic Now? The Character of Chaucer's Troilus'. *The Chaucer Review* 33. 1 (1998): 43-59. Penn State University Press. Web. 23 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25096035.

Morgan, Gerald. 'The Worthiness of Chaucer's Worthy Knight'. *The Chaucer Review* 44. 2 (2009): 115-158. Penn State University Press. Web. 20 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25642137.

Morris, Brian. 'The Tragic Structure of Troilus and Cressida'. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 10. 4 (Autumn, 1959): 481-491. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 4 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2867094.

Murton, Megan. 'Praying with Boethius in Troilus and Criseyde'. *The Chaucer Review* 49. 3 (2015): 294- 319. Penn State University Press. Web. 18 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v049/49.3.murton.html.

Nolan, Barbara. *Chaucer and the Tradition of the Roman Antique.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Print.

O'Rourke, James. '"Rule in Unity" and Otherwise: Love and Sex in "*Troilus and Cressida*"'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 43. 2 (Summer, 1992): 139-158. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 5 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870878.

‘scepticism | skepticism, n.’. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2016. Web. 24 October 2016 http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/172253?redirectedFrom=scepticism#eid

Parsons, A. E. ‘The Trojan Legend in England: Some Instance of Its Application to the Politics of the Times’. *The Modern Language Review* 24. 4 (Oct., 1929): 394-408. Modern Humanities Research Association. Web. 14 September 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/3715101.

Parsons, A. E. ‘The Trojan Legend in England: Some Instances of Its Application to the Politics of the Times. I’. *The Modern Language Review* 24. 3 (Jul., 1929): 253-264. Modern Humanities Research Association. Web. 14 September 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/3715957.

Pugh, Tison. ‘Christian Revelation and the Cruel Game of Courtly Love in Troilus and Criseyde’. *The Chaucer Review* 39. 4 (2005): 379-401. Penn State University Press. Web. 1 March 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v039/39.4pugh.html.

Pugh, Tison. Smith, Marcia Marzec. Eds. *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008. Print.

Pugh, Tison, Calabrese, Michael, and Marzec, Marcia Smith. ‘Introduction: The Myths of Masculinity’, in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde*, eds. Tison Pugh and Marcia Smith Marzec. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008: 1-8. Print.

Rackin, Phyllis. *Shakespeare and Women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.

Ramsey, Jarold W. ‘The Provenance of Troilus and Cressida’. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 21. 3 (Summer, 1970): 223-240. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 30 January 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2868700.

Risden, E.L. *Shakespeare and the Problem Play.* USA: McFarland& Company, Inc., Publishers, 2012. Print.

Rigby, S. H. *Chaucer in Context: Society, Allegory and Gender*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996. Print.

Ross, Emily. '"Words, vows, gifts, tears and love's full sacrifice": An Assessment of the status of Troilus and Cressida's relationship according to customary Elizabethan marriage procedure'. *Shakespeare* 4.4 (2008): 397-421. Routledge. Web. 5 February 2016 http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450910802501113.

Sacharoff, Mark. 'Tragic vs. Satiric: Hector's Conduct in II, ii of Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida"'. *Studies in Philology* 67. 4 (Oct., 1970): 517-531. University of North Carolina Press. Web. 6 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/4173700.

Saunders, Corinne. 'Affective Reading: Chaucer, Women and Romance'. *The Chaucer Review* 51. 2 (2016): 11-30. Penn State University Press. Web. 1 March 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cr/summary/v051/51.1.saunders.html.

Schlosser, Markus. 'Agency'. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Fall 2015 Edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta. Web. 24 March 2016 http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/agency/.

Schwartz, Elias. 'Tonal Equivocation and the Meaning of "Troilus and Cressida"'. *Studies in Philology* 69. 3 (Jul., 1972): 304-319. University of North Carolina Press. Web. 5 February 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/4173768.

Scott-Warren, Jason. 'Was Elizabeth I Richard II?: The Authenticity of Lambarde's "Conversation"'**.** *Review of English Studies* 64 (264) (2013): 208-230. Oxford University Press, first published online July 14, 2012. Web. 23 July http://res.oxfordjournals.org/content/64/264/208.

Shakespeare, William. *The Arden Shakespeare: King Richard II*. Ed. Peter Ure. London: Methuen, 1984. Print.

Shakespeare, William. *The Riverside Shakespeare,* 2nd edn. Gen ed. G Blakemore Evans and J.J.M. Tobin (USA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997. Print

Shakespeare, William. *Troilus and Cressida.* 1st edn 1958, this edition 2000, ed. Johnathon Crewe. UK: Penguin Books, 2000. Print.

Shakespeare, William. *Troilus and Cressida,* ed. Kenneth Muir. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. Print.

Shalvi, Alice. '"Honor" in Troilus and Cressida'. *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 5. 2 Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama (Spring, 1965): 283-302. Rice University. Web. 2 March 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/449397.

Slights, Camille. 'The Parallel Structure of Troilus and Cressida'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 25. 1 (Winter, 1974): 42-51. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 2 March 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2868882.

Stockholder, Katherine. 'Power and Pleasure in Troilus and Cressida, or Rhetoric and Structure of the Anti-Tragic'. *College English* 30. 7 (Apr., 1969): 539-554. National Council of Teachers of English. Web. 3 March 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/374003.

Sturges, Robert S. 'The State of Exception and Sovereign Masculinity', in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde,* eds. Tison Pugh and Marcia Smith Marzec. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008: 28-42. Print.

Taylor, Gary. 'Shakespeare plays on Renaissance Stages', *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage,* 1st edn., eds. Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002: pp. 1-20. Web. 24 April 2016. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521792959.001

Thompson, Ann. ‘‘Troilus and Criseyde’ and ‘Romeo and Juliet’’. *The Yearbook of English Studies*. 6 (1976): 26-37. Web. 1 March 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/3506385.

Tiffany, Grace. ‘Not Saying No: Female Self-Erasure in Troilus and Cressida’. *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 35. 1 Decapitation, Erasure, Gaming, and Orientalism in English Literature (SPRING 1993): 44-56. Modern Humanities Research Association. Web. 1 March 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/40754999.

Trigg, Stephanie. ‘“Shamed Be…”: Historicizing Shame In Medieval And Early Modern Courtly Ritual’. *Exemplaria* 19.1 (2007): 67-89. Taylor & Francis Ltd. DOI 10.1179/175330707X203228. Web. August 10 2016

Tuck, Anthony. *Richard II and the English Nobility*. London: Edward Arnold, 1973. MPublishing, University of Michigan Library. Web. 10 September 2016 http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.01250.0001.001.

Tyler, Elizabeth M. ‘Trojans in Anglo-Saxon England: Precedent without Descent’. *Review of English Studies* 64 (263) (2013): 1-20. Oxford University Press, first published online July 27 2012. Web. 8 February 2016 http://res.oxfordjournals.org/content/64/263/1.

Wallace, David. ‘Changing emotions in Troilus: The Crucial Year’, in *Love, history and emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare: Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida*, eds. Andrew James Johnston, Russel West-Pavlov and Elizabeth Kempf. Manchester University Press (2016): 157-171. Web. 19 May 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1b349ww.15.

Warren, Victoria. ‘(Mis) Reading the “Text” of Criseyde: Context and Identity in Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde’*. *The Chaucer Review* 36.1 (2001): 1-15. Penn

State University Press. Web. 29 January 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25096149.

Weisl, Angela Jane. '"A Mannes Game": Criseyde's Masculinity in Troilus and Criseyde', in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde,* eds. Tison Pugh and Marcia Smith Marzec. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008: 115-131. Print.

Weisl, Angela Jane. *Conquering the Reign of Femeny.* Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995. Print.

White, Paul Whitfield. 'The Admiral's Men, Shakespeare, and the Lost Arthurian Plays of Elizabethan England'. *Arthuriana* 24.4 (Winter, 2014): 33-47. Scriptorium Press. Web. 6 February 2016 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/art/summary/v024/24.4.white.html.

Willey, Russ. *Brewer's Dictionary of London Phrase and Fable.* Great Britain: Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd, 2009. Print.

Wingfield, Emily. *The Trojan Legend in Medieval Scottish Literature.* Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014. Print.

Yachnin, Paul. '"The Perfection of Ten": Populuxe Art and Artisanal Value in "Troilus and Cressida"'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56. 3 (Autumn, 2005): 306-327. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Web. 30 January 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/3844082.

Yachnin, Paul. 'Shakespeare's Problem Plays and the Drama of His Time: Troilus and Cressida, All's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure', in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, Volume IV: The Poems, Problem Comedies, Late Plays,* eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard. Blackwell Publishing, 2005. Web. 3 March 2016 http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405136082_chunk_g97814051360825.

Young. ‘Chaucer's “Troilus and Criseyde” as Romance’. *PMLA* 53. 1 (Mar., 1938): 38-63. Modern Language Association. Web. 24 August 2016 http://www.jstor.org/stable/458401.