

DISCOURSE AND COMMUNITY IN THE LATE 14TH CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

The title of this article attempts to fit, at least in intention, the topic of study proposed in it as a general framework to develop a methodological approach to a better knowledge of Geoffrey Chaucer. As the title: “Discourse and Community in the late 14th Century”, at first instance, seems too general, I have taken different options in order to make it more concrete thus enabling me to provide something to be discussed.

I have thus decided, as a first choice, to pay attention to a particular subject matter: love. Love is a topic beyond time and space. This means that love was an interesting subject for people living in late 14th century London as it is still a fascinating and valid subject for us, humans of our more or less united finisecular Europe.

As is well known, Geoffrey Chaucer was a prolific author. From all his numerous works I have centered my study on *Troilus & Criseyde*, a Poem written in late 14th century London. For many critics and also for me, this Poem is the best medieval literary work dealing with love. According to C. David Benson (1991:vii) it was “Chaucer's only completed masterpiece and the greatest poem on sexual love in English”.

My second optional step is, then, related to the way I shall deal with this subject matter. My didactic approach will consist of analysing several texts from a Systemic Functional perspective.

Thus, through discourse analysis, using the traditional terminology of the three Systemic Functional parameters: field, tenor & mode, I have tried to discover how the author, Chaucer, endeavours to change or to improve the mentality of his Community on matters of love.

So before proceeding to the actual analysis, I would like to, first, establish a brief commentary of the Poem in order to refresh the memory of its plot; and, second, outline the general social attitudes on love, i.e. the accepted doctrine of love that was current in the literary works of the Middle Ages now commonly called 'courtly love'.

TROILUS AND CRISEYDE

The Poem, probably written in the 1380's, contains five books, some 8.200 lines of rhyme-royal. It is a retelling of the story of Troy highlighting a central love affair between Troilus and Criseyde. According to Pearsall (1992:170-1),

The poem also demonstrates Chaucer's now complete mastery of the rhyme royal stanza, and his power of exploiting it for every variety of poetic narrative and expression.

He shows an exemplum of this command commenting on the stanza in which the poet refers to the framework of his poem: the matter of Troy, in the following manner:

Yt is wel wist how that the Grekes stronge
In armes with a thousand shippes wente
To Troiewardes, and the cite longe
Assegeden, neigh ten yer er they stente,
And in diverse wise and oon entente,
The ravysshynge to wreken of Eleyne,
By Paris don, they wroughten al hir peyne. (I, 57-63)

The majestic surge of the first four lines, with their striking enjambment, and the ending delays, inversions and enclosures of the last three almost embody in themselves the essence of the heroic story.

The Poem deals with love in flesh and bones; it is a romance, a story, a straight narration easy to follow, in which the main characters are: *the Narrator*, according to Shepherd (1970:88), "the only one figure who reacts and changes with the sequence of the events narrated", who is in permanent connection with the reader; *Troilus*, the protagonist, Trojan hero only second

after Hector, he is an extreme idealist. *Criseyde*, daughter of the traitor Calkas, in my opinion the first feminist figure in English literature; *Pandarus*, Troilus's friend and Criseyde's uncle, their real, expedient, practical go-between; *Diomedes*, the Greek warrior, Criseyde's lover at the end of the story.

Rowe (1976: 57) comments with reference to the different characters of this poem:

What has for the most part fascinated the critics of the poem's characters is their complex psychology and the realism with which Chaucer has portrayed them, as though in its characterization the poem were only the prototype of the psychological novel.

Shoaf (1989:xxvi) gives us a general comment about this work in the conclusion of the introduction of his edition of the Poem, signalling its complexity and involution¹.

The love of Troilus and Criseyde is not unique; it is presented as an illustration of Love's wonderful works. We should not forget that most of the critics will agree on the predominant didactic aspect of all the French love-visions and many medieval literary works. This didactic element, also with respect to love, appears in this Poem embedded in the nature of things, as we can see in the first book:

For evere it was, and evere it shal byfalle,
That Love is he that alle thing may bynde,
For may no man fordon the lawe of kynde. (I, 236-8).

In this same line, Bethurum (1971:225) comments:

¹ *Troilus and Criseyde* is a long, learned poem --part epic, part tragedy, part comedy, part romance-- in which Chaucer draws on all of his wide learning to examine human relationships, primarily erotic relationships, in a context dominated by the idea of worldly mutability, and against the historical backdrop of the Trojan War: fin'amors is the code or discourse that supplies the primary vocabulary of the poem; the matter of Troy is the source of the poem's major historical events; and Boethian philosophy is the intellectual structure within which Chaucer develops his main ideas and eventually arrives at his principal conclusions --and these number among them, but are by no means restricted to, a sober conviction of the short-term untrustworthiness of the world, a healthy scepticism toward idealism and pragmatism alike, and a profound belief, all the same, in the ennobling virtues of human love, its near kinship to divine love.

If Troilus and Criseyde are illustrations of love's power, their short happiness is also an illustration of the mutability that marks all earthly life. Not for nothing did Chaucer give them their universal role.

Just to end this brief and general commentary on the Poem let us remember Mehl's (1986:65) words¹, in which he emphasizes the “challenging and often surprising experience” that the reading of the Poem implies.

COURTLY LOVE

It seems unquestionable that in the Middle Ages most literary works had a foreground frame on love matters which was called “fin'amour” with the meaning of sublime love and which has, not so long ago, been called “courtly love”. For a long time it was a kind of scholarly axiom that the poets of the European Middle Ages had created a widely accepted doctrine of courtly love, an elaborate set of rules, rooted firmly in the feudal structure of society, which regulated in detail and with the authority of a religious system every aspect of behaviour in the service of love, that is, in devotion to one's chosen lady. Didactic works, like the *Roman de la Rose* or Andreas Capellanus' treatise *De Amore* (whose claim to be a serious authority or manual of courtly love has often been grossly overstated), seem to support this theory. As a matter of fact, in the first fifty lines of this Poem, Chaucer's Narrator openly assumes that love is a religion, a kind of worship. Thus, we can observe the religious terminology used by the author in the two following stanzas:

And biddeth ek for hem that ben at ese,

¹ There is no English poem before Chaucer of equal size which is comparable to *Tr & Cr* in its careful construction, its variety and wealth of stylistic devices and its intellectual stature. The poem has been associated with the classical epic, it has been described as a medieval romance, and interpreted as a predecessor of the modern novel. This variety of interpretation alone suggests that it is not strictly modelled on any particular conventional genre but attempts something new: an ambitious and rhetorically heightened but in no way exclusive presentation of a classical story which allows discussion of almost all the fundamental problems of courtly love-poetry that occupy such a prominent position in Chaucer's early poetry. The intellectual richness and variety of this work make every fresh reading a challenging and often surprising experience, and this explains, too, why the critical debate about the poem is not likely ever to be concluded.

That God hem graunte ay good perseveraunce,
And sende hem myght hire ladies so to plesse
That it to Love be worship and plesaunce.
For so hope I my sowle best avaunce,
To prey for hem that Loves servauntz be,
And write hire wo, and lyve in charite,

And for to have of hem compassioun,
As though I were hire owne brother dere.
Now herkne with a good entencioun,
For now wil I gon streght to my matere,
In which ye may the double sorwes here
Of Troilus, in lovyng of Criseyde,
And how that she forsook hym er she deyde. (I, 43 - 56)

Without any doubt, Shoaf (1989:xxii) is right when stating: “fin'amors was a kind of code, a discourse for governing and expressing relations among the sexes”. According to Bethurum (1971:228):

Courtly love was probably the purest form of sexual love the western world has known, being unmixed with social ambition, pride, desire of wealth, or even the laudable interests of family.

All the sources¹ Chaucer had at hand for his Poem pointed to the Neoplatonic idea of the ladder of love, that is, the love of man leads to the love of God. This belief is present in the thought of the 14th century community and it is our belief and our hypothesis here that Chaucer through his discourse tries to make his contemporaries think the unthinkable, i.e., that human love is of sufficient worth by itself.

On the other hand, what Chaucer thought about love is always present all through his other works. Thus, his definition of love is found in the first two stanzas of his Poem *The Parliament of Fowls*:

¹ Among the most important ones are the following: [Alain de Lille's *Anticlaudianus*, *De Planctu Naturae*; Macrobius's treatment of Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*; Boecius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*; Guillaume de Lorris & Jean de Meung's *Roman de la Rose*; Dante's *Comedy*; Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*; Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae*; Boccaccio's *Teseida*, and his direct and principal source *Il Filostrato*].

The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne,
Th'assay so hard, so sharp the conquerynge,
The dredful joye, alwey that slit so yerne:
Al this mene I by Love, that my felynge
Astonyeth with his wonderful werkyng
So sore, iwis, that whan I on hym thynke,
Nat wot I wel wher that I flete or synke.

For al be that I knowe nat Love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quiteth folk here hyre,
Yit happeth me ful ofte in bokes reede
Of his myrakles and his crewel yre.
There rede I wel he wol be lord and syre;
I dar nat seyn, his strokes been so sore,
But "God save swich a lord!" --I can na moore.

It is precisely here, in this definition, that an important element of disagreement on Chaucer's part with the courtly love tradition can be observed, right in the first line of the second stanza quoted: *For al be that I knowe nat Love in dede*. This element highlights the fact that Chaucer, in his own opinion about love, emphatically contrasts with most medieval and classical authors' opinions about love. He presents himself (or through his narrator) as being ignorant about amorous matters. Thus, in the first book of this Poem the author exclaims:

*For I, that God of Loves servantz serve,
Ne dar to Love, for myn unliklynesse,
Preyen for speed, al sholde I therfore sterve,
So fer am I from his help in derknesse.
But natheles, if this may don gladnesse
To any love, and his cause availle,
Have he my thonk, and myn be this travaille!* (I, 15-21)

Let us remember that the convention exemplified in the love visions of Machaut, Froissard and other lyrical poets mainly consists of the fact that the narrator of the events or sentiments is himself implicated in them and he is writing from experience. Thus, the tradition handed down not merely from the troubadours, but also from Ovid, who himself boasts in the *Ars Amatoria* that he is a 'magister' (II, 744) and 'doctus'(III, 18) in that art, meaning a lyric

tradition, with the poet expressing his own feelings. Chaucer, on the contrary, always tries to be outside the game --either through his ignorant narrator (a comic figure himself) or by means of the reiteration of his passive role as a translator--, identifying the reader with the lover. This aim, to try to identify the reader with the lover, is, in my opinion, the reason why Chaucer openly differs from courtly love tradition in this aspect. As will be shown in the analysis, in this Poem, Chaucer, through persuasive discourse, tries to influence his Community on matters concerning the nature of human love.

CORPUS FOR ANALYSIS

Our corpus for analysis is composed of some fifty texts, all of them taken from the five books that constitute this Poem¹. I have only given here the analysis of the most relevant texts (just only sixteen) for obvious reasons of time and space.

Text one:

Book I. Lines 267-80: [falling in love]

Withinne the temple he wente hym forth pleyinge,
This Troilus, of every wight aboute,
On this lady, and now on that, lokyng,
Wher so she were of town or of withoute;
And upon cas bifel that thorough a route
His eye percede, and so depe it wente,
Til on Criseyde it smot, and ther it stente.

And sodeynly he wax therwith astoned,
And gan hir bet biholde in thrifty wise.
“O mercy, God”, thoughte he, “wher hastow woned,
That art so feyr and goodly to devise?”
Therwith his herte gan to sprede and rise,
And softe sighed, lest men myghte hym here,
And caught ayeyn his firste pleyinge chere.

¹ All the texts quoted in this article have been taken from the edition of the Poem edited by R. A. Shoaf, 1989.

FIELD: Description of Troilus's becoming enamoured of Criseyde. In this text we find an action, an event, a change of state and processes of sensing and saying. In this description there are expressions of place [*withinne the temple*, a concrete and sacred place which conceals the interior of Troilus where the action takes place], manner [*of every wight aboute, on this...on that, of town or of withoute, and upon cas, thorough a route*: all these adverbs of manner give the impression of coincidence, hazard], and means [*his eye, his herte*, rhetorical self-questioning], as circumstances associated with what is going on. The author is here conceptualising the experience of falling in love in accordance with the courtly love tenets.

TENOR: Contrastive style between external appearance and internal change of attitude. Plain style, almost cold except in his thought which at that moment is exclamatory, absolutely and intensely involved. Declarative mood and external modality. See lines 276-7.

MODE: Here we look for the way the author has organized his message by means of the units of information with which he reaches his communicative significance. We find a circumstantial adjunct of place as a marked theme (line 267) at the beginning of the text, whose function seems to be to prepare the scene by setting up an external framework of place indicating by contrast that the act of falling in love always takes place within oneself. We shall point out the discursal themes of line 276 (exclamatory) and 278 (consequential) which connect their clauses to the previous part of the text.

The rheme of line 279 formed by a finite subordinate clause expressing a meaning of finality connects the interior state of the elliptical subject of the main clause (Troilus) with his external appearance: this topic will enhance the message in the last line in which, through the fronting of a finite verb in a paratactic clause emphasis is given to the external aspect to try to conceal the internal upheaval suffered by Troilus because of his falling in love.

We see that the presuppositions involved in the thematic structures of this text are appropriate --from the point of view of creating a coherent whole-- with the event narrated. Let us remember that falling in love was a personal action in which secrecy was an important condition.

Text two:

Book II Lines 22-8: [Variety in language and love]

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

FIELD: Commentary on the similarity between love and language pointing out that, although there is a common characteristic element in both, that is, their great variety throughout the ages, people manage to go on communicating and loving eternally.

The text establishes, with its chivalric terminology, that love has different and diverse aspects and concepts by means of the use of mental processes [*knowe, thinketh*] which have an experiential foundation through material processes in the text [*change, spake, spedde, do, wynnyn*].

TENOR: The narrator is speaking directly to the listener/ reader. The style is direct, familiar and provocative assuming a common opinion and the same background knowledge on linguistic and amorous matters.

MODE: The repetition of words such as '*ek*', & '*soundry*' try to obtain the reader's awareness and acceptance of the multiplicity of concepts about love: there is no single way of understanding love. The organisation of this text seeks an agreement to the variety of love on the part of the audience. So love is not only what books say about it but one also must take into consideration personal experience. Here the author is acting upon his community preparing them for the possibility of changing the cliché, stereotypic thoughts they have about courtly love.

Text three:

Book II. Lines 407-27: [Criseyde's claim]

With this he stynte, and caste adown the heed,

And she began to breste a-wepe anoon,
And seyde, "Allas, for wo! Why nere I deed?
For of this world the feyth is al agoon.
Allas! what sholden straunge to me doon,
When he, that for my beste frend I wende,
Ret me to love, and sholde it me defende?"

"Allas! I wolde han trusted, douteles,
That if that I, thorough my disaventure,
Hadde loved outhere hym or Achilles,
Ector, or any mannes creature,
Ye nolde han had no mercy ne mesure
On me, but alwey had me in repreve.
This false world, allas! who may it leve?"

"What! is this al the joye and al the feste?
Is this youre reed? Is this my blisful cas?
Is this the verray mede of youre byheeste?
Is al this paynted proces seyde, allas!
Right for this fyn? O lady myn, Pallas!
Thow in this dredful cas for me purveye,
For so atoned am I that I deye".

FIELD: The situation here is to present, by means of a didactic and ironic answer, Criseyde's position strongly claiming and protesting against Pandarus's 'demand d'amour' on behalf of Troilus. It seems to be a kind of feminist rebuke to Pandarus, her dear uncle, for his 'male chauvinist' conception of Courtly love.

TENOR: The speaker here is Criseyde once she has exactly found out Pandarus's revelation. She is complaining in a very ironic, realistic tone against Pandarus's intention by means of several inquisitive rhetorical questions, exclamations and the use of modals [*sholden*, *sholde*, *wolde*, *nolde*, *may*]. At the same time, we observe that her answer is not a wholly negative one, which was probably impossible in that social framework. In any case, she is free and clever enough to denounce in a very subtle way the contradictory behaviour and attitudes on love matters of her medieval society.

MODE: The organisation of this text, through her exclamations, her rhetorical questions, her invocation to Pallas for help, has the effect on the

audience of casting some doubts on the general acceptance of courtly love as such. Let us remember that 'fin ' amour' was an invention of men, conceived as a game to win a lady.

Text four:

Book II. Lines 498-504: [Criseyde's curiosity]

Tho fillen they in other tales glade,
Tyl at the laste, "O good em," quod she tho,
"For his love, which that us bothe made,
Tel me how first ye wisten of his wo.
Woot noon of it but ye?" --He seyde, "No".--
"Kan he wel speke of love?" quod she; "I preye
Tel me, for I the bet me shal purveye".

FIELD: Through a dialogue the author enhances the idea that love and speech go together hand in hand. Also, concealment seems to be an important element of courtly love.

TENOR: In this text two actants are carrying out a dialogue. In a very casual way, Criseyde asks Pandarus two questions about love which seem fundamental for their conception of love. The first one is 'how many people know about Troilus's amorous suffering'? and about his ability as a lover, that is to say if he properly knows how to speak of love. Her eager interest greatly contrasts with her previous rebuke, although she gives as an excuse a desire to better prepare herself. The term she employs 'purveye' is the same one she used for/ in her invocation to Pallas.

MODE: The expression 'Til at the laste' used as theme gives the reader the apparent impression that these questions seem to be casuistic, as by chance, but the reader is well aware that the questions are important ones, although put in a very subtle, feministic way.

In fact, in the following line after this text, the narrator comments how Pandarus himself smiles in a very special way: "*Tho Pandarus a litel gan to smyle,*" to which every reader will also smile.

Text five:

Book II. Lines 771-84: [Criseyde's thoughts about love]

That thought was this: "Allas! syn I am free,
Sholde I now love, and put in jupartie
My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee?
Allas! how dorst I thenken that folie?
May I naught wel in other folk asprie
Hire dredfull joye, hire constreinte, and hire peyne?
Ther loveth noon, that she nath why to pleyne.

"For love is yet the mooste stormy lyf,
Right of hymself, that evere was bigonne;
For evere som mystrust or nice strif
Ther is in love, som cloude is over that sonne.
Therto we wrecched wommen nothing konne,
Whan us is wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke;
Oure wrecche is this, our owen wo to drynke.

FIELD: The text is a soliloquy from Criseyde putting her thoughts about love into words. Those thoughts portray in a realistic way the common belief of that society about courtly love in which women were the loser. Waiting, worrying and weeping was a woman's lot in love, and nobody was there to succour her. This feeling, I think, would be quite general and extended among medieval women.

TENOR: The style is serious, sombre, ironic and dynamic through exclamations, an abundant / recurrent use of modality and several rhetorical questions. By means of her own reflections, Criseyde is trying to question the current ideas about courtly love.

MODE: In the last two lines there are two marked themes highlighting that for women woe was an essential characteristic of love. The expectation implied in the rhyme is if women would always agree to continue to wallow in their own misery.

Text six:

Book III. Lines 128-47: [Troilus's intention]

“What that I mene, O swete herte deere?”
Quod Troilus, “O goodly, fresshe free,
That with the stremes of youre eyen cleere
Ye wolde somtyme frendly on me see,
And thanne agreeen that I may ben he,
Withouten braunche of vice on any wise,
In trouthe alwey to don yow my servise,

“As to my lady right and chief resort,
With al my wit and al my diligence;
And I to han, right as yow list, comfort,
Under yowre yerde, egal to myn offence,
As deth, if that I breke youre deffence;
And that ye deigne me so mucche honoure,
Me to comanden aught in any houre;

“And I to ben youre verray humble trewe,
Secret, and in my paynes pacient,
And evere mo desiren fresshly newe
To serve, and ben ay ylike diligent,
An with good herte al holly youre talent
Receyven wel, how sore that me smerte, --
Lo, this mene I, myn owen swete herte.”

FIELD: Proclamation of Troilus' good intention as a lover according to the tenets of courtly love. Several aspects in the text, that constitute courtly love, should be highlighted here:

- asking her for permission to accept his service.
- his service means the exclusion of any vice.
- it also implies honesty and hard work with intelligence and diligence.
- the infidelity of it means death.
- to be at her disposal at any time.
- to be a humble, discreet, patient, exclusive, diligent, joyful servant and put up with any necessary suffering.

TENOR: There is a dialogue between Troilus and Criseyde. He is speaking to her about his good intentions. The tone is familiar serious, clear, precise and true, although quite direct, and expresses deep feelings. (See first and last lines of the text). The use of modality here is appropriate to the fact that Troilus is asking her to accept his service.

MODE: In my view, in this text there is a complete cohesive knot formed by the first and the last lines with the same not only meaning but the same communicative significance. The reader is fully aware of his good intentions, which, on the other hand, completely fit in with the exemplary, hagiographic, didactic aim of courtly love.

Text seven:

Book III. Lines 1086-1106: [Troilus's swoon]

Therwith the sorwe so his herte shette,
That from his eyen fil ther nought a tere,
And every spirit his vigour in-knette,
So they astoned or oppressed were.
The felyng of his sorwe, or of his fere,
Or of aught elles, fled was out of towne;
And down he fel al sodeynly aswowne.

This was no litel sorwe for to se;
But al was hust, and Pandare up as faste,--
"O nece, pes, or we be lost!" quod he,
"Beth naught agast!" but certeyn, at the laste,
For this or that, he into bed hym caste,
And seyde, "O thef, is this a mannes herte?"
And of he rente al to his abre sherte;

And seyde, "Nece, but ye helpe us now,
Allas, youre owen Troilus is lorn!"
"Iwis, so wolde I, and I wiste how,
Ful fayn," quod she; "Allas, that I was born!"
"Yee, nece, wol ye pullen out the thorn
That stiketh in his herte," quod Pandare,
"Sey 'al foryeve', and stynt is al this fare!"

FIELD: Narration of the situation in which the lovers go to bed for the first time. First, there is a preliminary introduction made by the narrator where the audience attends in shocked surprise to Troilus' swoon. After this surprise there follows a dialogue between Pandarus and Criseyde full of exciting action.

TENOR: There are three participants: the narrator, Pandarus and Criseyde. They talk and act about Troilus' swoon. The style is at first solemn and calm, but is followed by a rapid dialogue, abrupt, intense and surprising, not exempt from irony through rhetorical questions, exclamations and use of modals.

MODE: There is a cohesive nexus present as the audience knows that the reason for Troilus' swoon is Pandarus' lie and at the same time it serves in the last line to develop the following action. There is an excellent balance between the action and the words from an ironic point of view which makes the reader smile.

Text eight:

Book III. Lines 1205-11: [Criseyde's acquiescence]

This Troilus in armes gan hire streyne,
And seyde, "O swete, as evere mot I gon,
Now be ye kaught, now is ther but we tweyne!
Now yeldeth yow, for other bote is non!"
To that Criseyde answerde thus anon,
"Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte deere,
Ben yold, ywis, I were now nought heere!"

FIELD: The situation is that one in which both lovers are in bed together. A little dialogue between them indicates that they make love physically. Apparently, the situation portrays the real winning of the lady according to courtly love tenets, but it also implies an active role on the part of the woman which is original and important to Chaucer, in order to influence the concept of love of his audience which comprised his own community and subsequent readers.

TENOR: Although the vocabulary is chivalric, its meaning is quite realistic and feminist as it shows the power of decision assigned to women in the supreme situation of two lovers. The style is direct, familiar and far reaching, and expressed by means of exclamations.

MODE: The brisk and direct answer of Criseyde to the common, generally accepted, male chauvinist power in love matters makes a strong impression on the reader because of its force and reality. The sentence 'Ne hadde I er now' as theme of the clause is the point of departure of the situation. It means that for any real love situation the willingness of the two partners is required.

Text nine:

Book III. Two excerpts:

a) Lines 1744-50: [cosmic love]

“Love, that of erthe and se hath governaunce,
Love, that his hestes hath in hevenes hye,
Love, that with an holson alliaunce
Halt peples joyned, as hym lest hem gye,
Love, that knetteth lawe of compaignie,
And couples doth in vertu for to dwelle,
Bynd this acord, that I have told and telle.

b) Lines 1772-8: [internal love]

In alle nedes, for the townes werre,
He was, and ay, the first in armes dyght,
And certeynly, but if that bokes erre,
Save Ector most ydred of any wight;
And this ences of hardynesse and myght
Com hym of love, his ladies thank to wynne,
That altered his spirit so withinne.

FIELD: The exposition of these two texts show how cosmic love and internal love are the same. They show the power of love, which is something generally accepted by all.

TENOR: In the first text Troilus is speaking. Through this Boethian song he testifies to the grandeur and power of love which is able to govern everything and unite opposites. Through this cosmic vision, Troilus is enhancing his love for Criseyde. His tone is solemn and balanced. In the second text we hear the voice of the narrator who is witnessing the effects of love in Troilus's valiant behaviour. The narrator insists on the fact that, although the source of love is within Troilus, the effects are socially beneficial for the whole of the the Troye town at war.

MODE: Several relative clauses of 'that' serve as a cohesive tie to the two texts magnifying the effects of love which is inside Troilus. It is important to note that love effects are positive and good in themselves, from a human point of view. The idea is ever present in the message that the author wishes to pass on to his audience.

Text ten:

Book IV. Two excerpts:

a) Lines 400-6: [Pandarus's alternative]

“And over al this, as thow wel woost thiselve,
This town is ful of ladys al aboute;
And, to my doom, fairer than swiche twelve
As evere she was, shal I fynde in som route,
Yee, on or two, withouten any doute.
Forthi be glad, myn own deere brother!
If she be lost, we shal recovere an other.

b) Lines 435-48: [Troilus's answer]

But at the laste heanswerde, and seyde, “Frend,
This lechecraft, or heeled thus to be,
Were wel sittying, if that I were a fend,
To traysen hir that trewe is unto me!
I pray God lat this counseil nevere ythe;
But do me rather sterve anon-right here,
Er I thus do as thow me woldest leere!

“She that I serve, iwis, what so thow seye,
To whom myn herte enhabit is by right,
Shal han me holly hires til that I deye.
For, Pandarus, syn I have trouthe hire hight,
I wol nat ben untrewre for no wight;
But as hire man I wol ay lyve and sterve,
And nevere other creature serve.

FIELD: In these two texts there is both a contrastive idea and contrastive behaviour of two characters confronted by the same situation: Criseyde has to leave for the Greek camp. On one hand, Pandarus's alternative is to look for another one, 'on or two'. This alternative is seen to be very practical and positive as far as behaviour is concerned. On the other hand, Troilus's answer is clear-cut: he will never admit to serve any other lady, even if that signifies death. This position is a very idealistic one and corresponds to the best ideal way of love in courtly love texts.

TENOR: There is a brisk contrastive dialogue. In the first text, Pandarus tries to convince Troilus of the easy possibility of finding somebody else. In the second text, Troilus establishes and reaffirms his total fidelity only to Criseyde. The style is familiar, although clear and serious.

MODE: The communicative significance here consists of making explicit two possible solutions to the same problem of someone being in love. One is easier and more practical, the other is more coherent with one's own decision. In Troilus's speech the declarative statements maintain a serene, calm way of exposition which create the expectation that he is going to be true to Criseyde whatever cost may be involved.

Text eleven:

Book IV. Lines 1667-80: [Criseyde's words to Troilus]

“For trusteth wel, that youre estat roial,
Ne veyn delit, nor only worthinesse
Of yow in verre or torney marcial,
Ne pompe, array, nobleye, or ek richesse
Ne made me to rewre on youre destresse;
But moral vertu, grounded upon trouthe,

That was the cause I first hadde on yow routhe!

“Eke gentil herte and manhod that ye hadde,
And that ye hadde, as me thoughte, in despit
Every thyng that souned into badde,
As rudenesse and poeplissh appetit,
And that youre resoun bridledde youre delit;
This made, aboven every creature,
That I was youre, and shal while I may dure.

FIELD: Criseyde is stating the reason why she fell in love with Troilus pointing out his moral virtue as the main cause. The fact that neither royal blood, worthiness or riches were the main reasons fit perfectly with the most profound concept of courtly love.

MODE: Criseyde uses a direct but not a familiar style with a recurrent use of formal chivalric terms.

MODE: The organisation of the two stanzas of this text constitutes a coherent whole with the message that the author wants his audience to receive. Criseyde is trying to convince Troilus of her fidelity (last line) as she fell in love with him mainly because of his moral virtue (1672) and this moral virtue made him more self-controlled (1678). The author acts upon the reader in two different ways: Although he and we are aware of her betrayal he seeks the reader's involvement in accepting her good intentions. On the other hand, he points to the excellence of love whose beginning and end should lie in moral virtue beyond every circumstance or any other element.

Text twelve:

Book V. Lines 92-105: [Diomedes as donjuan]

This Diomedes, that ledde hire by the bridel,
Whan that he saugh the folke of Troie aweye,
Thoughte, “Al my labour shal nat ben on ydel,
If that I may, for somewhat shal I seye.
For at the werste it may yet shorte oure weye.
I have herd seyde ek tymes twyes twelve,
'He is a fool that wole foryete hymselfe'“.

But natheles, this thoughte he wel ynough,
That, “certeynlich I am about nought,
If that I speke of love, or make it tough;
For douteles, if she have in hire thought
Hym that I gesse, he may nat ben ybrought
So soon away; but I shal fynde a meene,
That she naught wite as yet shal what I mene”.

FIELD: Diomede's soliloquy about his own strategy to try to win Criseyde. His thought concerns the nature of courtly love. The whole text is framed in a mental process in which the determining element is a material process: [*to speke of love*] with the finality of wooing her. Although there seems to be a great similarity between speaking and loving, the main component in love seems to be in the intention.

TENOR: The expression of his own thought is clearly stated in the first singular person. His intention of winning her as a way of getting “another female scalp for his collection” in Jill Mann's words is reinforced by the use of modality as a cautious strategy, by the use of hypotactical clauses following the current of pros & cons in his thought, and by citing a popular saying.

MODE: The impression of the reader is that Diomede is convinced of having a hard and difficult task. He and we know that he has nothing to lose and a lot to win. Courtly love was a masculine game, not an easy one but a valid and worthy one. Diomede appears as a real 'donjuan', a real sportsman ready to play a challenging game.

Text thirteen:

Book V. Lines 939-45: [Diomede's declaration]

“But herte myn, syn that I am youre man, --
And ben the first of whom I seche grace,--
To serve yow as hertely as I kan,
And evere shal, whil I to lyve have space,
So, er that I departe out of this place,
Ye wol me graunte that I may to-morwe,
At bettre leyser, tellen yow my sorwe.”

FIELD: Diomedes's petition to Criseyde asking to be taken to her service. His words create a perfect atmosphere of a real situation of courtly love.

TENOR: The vocabulary used [*herte, ben the first, seche grace, hertly, serve, graunte, tellen sorwe*] completely fits the courtly love setting. Chivalric tone through use of familiar and distinguished terms, as well as modals used for a prudent approach.

MODE: The organisation of the text (only one sentence with many hypotactic clauses) tries to convince the reader, together with Criseyde, of the convenience of accepting him as her servant. In fact, the author is looking for a similar situation of courtly love between Diomedes and Criseyde as it was between Troilus and Criseyde.

Text fourteen:

Book V. Lines 974-87: [Criseyde's lie]

“But as to speke of love, ywis,” she seyde,
“I hadde a lord, to whom I wedde was,
The whos myn herte al was, til that he deyde;
And other love, as help me now Pallas,
Ther in myn herte nys, ne nevere was.
And that ye ben of noble and heigh kynrede,
I have wel herd it tellen, out of drede.

“And that doth me to han so gret a wonder,
That ye wol scornen any womman so.
Ek, God woot, love and I ben fer ysonder!
I am disposed bet, so mot I go,
Unto my deth, to pleyne and maken wo.
What I shal after don, I kan nat seye;
But trewelich, as yet me list nat pleye.

FIELD: This is a very curious situation in which the surprised reader discovers how Criseyde openly lies about her love. She mentions her husband saying that in her heart there did not exist any other love (lines 977-8).

Apparently she is in a quite disinterested mood concerning love, which induces us to think that she is provoking Diomedes.

TENOR: Criseyde is speaking, her tone is direct, descriptive and plain. The only exclamation made shows her lack of interest in love. Her vocabulary is totally in agreement with the courtly love tenets. Her intention is openly expressed (line 985) “*unto my deth, to pleyne and maken wo*”. It would seem that her clear disposition to suffer --and not to play Diomedes's game -- might be interpreted as provoking his eagerness.

MODE: The most striking feature of this text for the reader is Criseyde's omission of Troilus. Perhaps she is placing Diomedes's affair and her own marriage to her dead husband on the same level, leaving Troilus out of the game. For her, Troilus comes before Diomedes and before her husband. This could be taken as a solid, concealed clue to prepare the reader to think the unthinkable.

Text fifteen:

Book V. Lines 1044-71: [Narrator's confession and Criseyde's own confession]

I fynde ek in the stories elleswhere,
Whan thorough the body hurt was Diomedes
Of Troilus, tho wepte she many a teere,
Whan that she saugh his wyde wowndes blede;
And that she took, to kepen hym, good hede;
And for to helen hym of his sorwes smerte,
Men seyn --I not-- that she yaf hym hire herte.

But trewely, the storie telleth us,
Ther made nevere woman moore wo
Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus.
She seyde, “Allas! for now is clene ago
My name of trouthe in love, for everemo!
For I have falsed oon the gentileste
That evere was, and oon the worthieste!

“Allas! of me, unto the worldes ende,

Shal neyther be ywriten nor ysonge
No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende.
O, rolled shal I ben on many a tonge!
Thorughout the world my belle shal be ronge!
And wommen moost ol haten me of alle.
Allas, that swich a cas me sholde falle!

“Thei wol seyn, in as mucche as in me is,
I have hem don dishonour, weylaway!
Al be I nat the first that dide amys,
What helpeth that to don my blame away?
But syn I se ther is no bettre way,
And that to late is now for me to rewe,
To Diomedes algate I wol be trewe.

FIELD: Narrator's commentary about Criseyde's betrayal and her own confession. The whole frame is carried out by a verbal process of saying which could be a clear indication that, whether or not there existed a real betrayal, what matters is Fame --a different goddess and reality from love. The fact that the narrator insists on avoiding any responsibility for this discourse implies a certain degree of doubt about a real betrayal.

TENOR: Two participants are present in this text. The omniscient narrator and Criseyde. The narrator's style seems to be descriptive, objective and factual. Criseyde's words, highlighted by exclamations, transmit a kind of easily contagious sorrow, which has to do with Fame.

MODE: The organisation of this text emphasises the term '*falsed*' repeated twice (lines 1053 & 56) in the second stanza. It was evident for the listener/reader that Criseyde could not come back to Troye and this can be interpreted as 'falsed' to her promise of returning in ten days. The real question that the author is insinuating to his audience is that if Criseyde was really 'falsed' to Troilus in her heart. For that, a new conception of courtly love was necessary. The conception that bases love on fidelity, first and above all, to oneself, even if that oneself is a female. Let us remember that the promise made by a man to a woman did not have the same value and force as a promise made by a man to a man. And courtly love was in its beginning a masculine invention, a male game. So perhaps what the author was looking for was the possibility of understanding that she could be false to him (by

not returning) but that did not at all mean that she could not continue loving Troilus even in Diomedes's arms. Evidently, this represented the unthinkable in courtly love terms.

Text sixteen:

Book V. Lines 1835- 48: [Narrator's commentary]

O yonge, fresshe folkes, he or she,
In which that love up groweth with youre age,
Repeyreth hom fro worldly vanyte,
And of youre herte up casteth the visage
To thilke God that after his ymage
Yow made, and thynketh al nys but a faire
This world, that passeth soone as floures faire.

And loveth hym, the which that right for love
Upon a crois, oure soules for to beye,
First starf, and roos, and sit in hevne above;
For he nyl falsen no wight, dar I seye,
That wol his herte al holly on hym leye.
And syn he best to love is, and most meke,
What nedeth feyned loves for to seke?

FIELD: In the final harenque to his audience the narrator's commentary about the nature of love from a cosmic and human point of view makes men and women equal. So, courtly love should not be taken as a masculine invention to play around with, above all in this short, frail, material and natural world. The narrator tells us that love is the greatest thing, valid for its own worth, and should be taken as it comes and that one cannot interpret the message as a suggestion that all young people should take monastic vows.

TENOR: The speaker, the narrator, has a persuasive style, clear, plain, thought-provoking and intimate. The rhetorical question he throws open is what is the significance of '*feyned loves*'. The author, although exalting and enhancing divine love, is not in any way proscribing human love. In fact, he is casting a doubt on the logical sequence, common in courtly love, about its conception as a ladder.

MODE: The cohesive exhortatory appearance of the distribution of the text permits the audience to ask if human love really is the ladder to divine love or if human love is in itself noble enough as not to be 'feigne love'. It probably depends on the nature of the person who is in love and on his faithfulness to himself / herself.

CONCLUSION

I have analysed some sections of the Poem in terms of the register variables "Field, Tenor & Mode", showing how Chaucer uses persuasive discourse to convince his audience (and later audiences) of the relevance of love.

We see, in our analysis, how the linguistic choices change as the Poem proceeds towards its final moral, displaying how some discourses carry their functional importance throughout centuries to the various reader communities.

In any case, the results of the study carried out on the corpus of analysis suggest the following three statements, as a kind of conclusion:

- * Chaucer was the first great feminist in English literature.
- * His concept of love was based on faithfulness to oneself (including one's own circumstances) and on a respect for the uniqueness of the beloved.
- * He endeavoured to make his audience think what was virtually unthinkable for them in the Middle Ages as far as love matters were concerned.

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