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THE EAGLE, THE BOAR AND THE SELF Dreams, Daydreams, and Violence in *Troilus and Criseyde*

Surprisingly enough, in *Troilus and Criseyde*,¹ a poem whose plot is set during the Trojan war, violence is not found where it might be expected—on the battlefield. The great figures of the Trojan war, particularly the Greeks—Agamemnon, Ajax, Ulysses, Patroclus—play very little part in the plot, when they are not absent from the poem. By comparison, the list of dramatis personae in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*² looks crowded, as is Benoît de Sainte-Maure's passage devoted to the portraits of all the heroes and heroines of his *Roman de Troie* [lines 5093-5582].³ Always giving the established tradition a wide berth, Chaucer baffles his readers who anticipate hearing of major characters that fail to turn up for the occasion. Similarly, the scenes of battle are few, to say the least. Chaucer's treatment of his eponymous hero is no exception to the rule that reduces the war to a backdrop. Although Troilus is unambiguously declared to be "withouten any peere" [V, 1803], his feats of arms are hardly ever depicted. For instance, the most we get in Book II is Troilus's return on horseback from a skirmish outside the gates of Troy. Even his death is dispatched in a single stanza that does not pay tribute to his reputation as a warrior: "Despitously hym slough the fierse Achille" [V, 1806]. In but a single line, the epitome of gallantry slips out of his own story.

This comes as all the more of a surprise as tradition provided Chaucer with a thoroughly different treatment of the matter of Troy. In *Le Roman de Troie*, even though the author does not fail to mention that the conflict was brought about by Paris's love for Helen, the action is primarily organized around the narrative of twenty-three battles, so that the warriors' prowess takes pride of place. Likewise, though his poem is interspersed with love episodes, including that of *Troilus and Briseida*, Benoît's rhetoric emphasizes the

1. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, edited by Stephen A. Barney, in *The Riverside Chaucer*; Larry D. Benson, general editor (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

2. William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, edited by Kenneth Palmer (London: Routledge, The Arden Shakespeare, 1989).

3. Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Le Roman de Troie*, edited and translated by Emmanuèle Baumgartner and François Viellard (Paris: Livre de poche, Lettres gothiques, 1998).

violence of combat rather than the violence of love. Both the structure and the tone of his poem are reminiscent of a French *chanson de geste* and make the work appear as a chronicle of the Trojan war while Chaucer's story of Troilus and Criseyde might well occur in any historical period, provided there is a war.

It is interesting to note that, in both his prologue and his epilogue, Benoît de Sainte-Maure mentions Homer, Dares and Dictys, the most recognized historians of the Trojan war. In fact, *Le Roman de Troie* purports to be the translation into the vernacular of a faithful report in Greek of the conflict by the Trojan Dares. Chaucer was well aware of this tradition and, like Benoît, mentions these three authorities, but to quite another purpose:

But how this town com to destruccion
Ne falleth naught to purpos me to telle,
For it were a long digression
Fro my matere, and yow to long to dwelle.
But the Troian gestes, as they felle,
In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dite,
Whoso that kan may rede hem as they write. [I, 141-147]

By referring his reader to Homer, Dares, and Dictys for a comprehensive narrative of the Trojan war, Chaucer indicates that he intends neither to follow the authorities associated with his subject nor to write one more version of the Trojan epic, so that it is clear that Chaucer's interest does not lie in warfare, which may occasionally be alluded to but which is never the focus of his narrative. In other words, and to parody the title of a French play by Jean Giraudoux: "Le Roman de Troie n'aura pas lieu." In *Troilus and Criseyde*, History—what happens to a nation, a people, or a community as referred to in the phrase "the Troian gestes"—is evicted and replaced by the portrait of an individual:

The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovyng, how his aventures fellen
Fro wo to wele, and after out of joie,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye. [I, 1-5]

Standing as a counterpoint to the traditional treatment of the matter of Troy as expounded in Book I, 141-147 above, the architecture of the very first stanza of the poem is representative of Chaucer's chosen perspective. Playing down the historical, collective, and epic background of the story, these opening lines foreshadow the lyrical tone of the work and its concern with Troilus and his love rather than Troy and the Trojan geste. This is primarily why the war is shoved into the background and does not constitute the story proper. As a matter of fact, even before the prologue to Book I, the title bears

testimony to this authorial intention: far from referring directly to Troy, Chaucer singles out two names and leaves the war unmentioned. Throughout the five books of the poem, the contrast between the scarce, sporadic allusions to Troilus as a warrior and the detailed characterization of the protagonist as a lover shows that Chaucer intends to focus on an individual destiny. As a logical consequence, warfare violence, when evoked, is not mentioned as a part of the history of Troy but is meant to contribute to the portrait or the story of the eponymous hero. For instance, compared to his single-stanza death, Troilus's ascension to the eighth sphere and his final cathartic laughter at "this little spot of erthe", "this wrecched world" [V, 1815, 1817] is given due attention because it leads to a generalizing address to lovers. Strategically placed as they are at the beginning of the poem, the two stanzas about Troy [I, 141-147] and Troilus [I, 1-5] could not be clearer about the poet's purpose: *Troilus and Criseyde* is not meant to be the English "Troian gestes" that some might expect.

This is not to say that the war plays no part whatsoever in the story of the lovers. The foremost example is that of Criseyde's departure from Troy and subsequent estrangement from Troilus, which is shown as the consequence of the war bargain between the Greeks and the Trojans, the latter preferring to sacrifice one of their citizens to get back Antenor, a warrior. This episode evokes the violence inflicted to individuals by the diverging interests of a community and its members. For Chaucer, the war is less a question of Greeks against Trojans than it is a matter of society versus individuals.

Nor is downright violence absent from the poem, but, in Chaucer's particular narrative perspective of the Trojan war, violence in *Troilus and Criseyde* can be said to be, like its hero, "subgit unto love" [I, 231], that is to say subsumed into the story of Troilus's "double sorrow [...] in lovyng". As a consequence, warfare is replaced by the violence of love, whether it be the intensity of an individual's feelings, or the appalling consequences of such a maddening passion. And it is true that, for the Trojan hero, the boar that appears in one of his dreams is much more dangerous, hostile, and dispiriting than any Greek warrior could ever be. And so is the eagle that wrenches Criseyde's heart in one of her dreams. For the lovers and for Chaucer too, true violence is not situated on the battlefield—it lies in the lovers' ill-fated passion.

It is my contention that the violence of love is expressed in the lovers' dreams. This specific violence, which reads mental distress and torment, surfaces within the two protagonists' most solitary moments because their dreams or daydreams are the key stages in the inexorable unravelling of the story towards its ending. This is alluded to in a seemingly trivial detail inserted by the narrator at the beginning of Book II. As Pandarus calls on his niece with the view to breaking the news of Troilus's love, Criseyde tells her uncle

that she dreamt three times of him the night before [II, 90]. This visit, which is Pandarus's first attempt to talk his niece into accepting Troilus's love service, might well be considered useless by some readers. However, this small talk unobtrusively enables Chaucer to hint that the occurrences of the dream motif in *Troilus and Criseyde* do represent landmarks in the completion of his purpose announced in the "proem" to Book I. In this line of thought, it is interesting to note that Shakespeare's Troilus witnesses Criseyde's betrayal with Diomedes in an overhearing scene [V, ii] whereas Chaucer prefers to resort to his favourite device to depict his hero's awareness of Criseyde's unfaithfulness. In retrospect, Shakespeare's theatrical option brings to light the importance of the dream motif in the medieval Troilus.

After the oblique preliminary statement that dreams constitute indispensable episodes because they drive the plot towards its ending, Chaucer develops his point with the first dream narrative in his poem—Criseyde's eagle dream [II, 925-31]. Short as it is, the eagle dream is the climax of Book II because nowhere is sheer physical violence greater. A defenceless prey, Criseyde can only endure the eagle's brutal attack on her body. The bird of prey's sharp talons standing for its indomitable willpower tear Criseyde's heart out of her breast and the bird gives her its own instead. As the dream is being told, Criseyde gradually disappears from the narrative and is replaced by a sole reference to her heart. At the same time, from a linguistic point of view, Criseyde becomes the grammatical object of the sentences—in other words, a helpless victim of her assailant whereas she used to stand up for her freedom. By substituting its own heart for Criseyde's, the winged herald of love has forcibly instilled passion in the heroine. These narrative choices—especially the dream and the exchange-of-hearts motifs—convey the underlying meaning of the episode. Love is violence because, like a dream, it has nothing to do with one's free will. Reason, discretion and willpower are useless weapons against the overwhelming force of love that swoops down on Criseyde in the guise of an eagle. From now on, Criseyde is deprived of the power to steer her life and destiny.

However, the eagle's sudden attack and its negative connotations are made up for by the colour of its feathers, "whit as bon" [II, 926]. Like the angel Gabriel in the Annunciation, who is usually represented holding a white lily, the eagle's colour discloses its benevolence as an agent of love. Moreover, since hawks, falcons, and other birds of prey were closely connected in the Middle Ages to the nobility who trained them for hunting, it can also be regarded as a symbolic double of prince Troilus, who sees his passion for Criseyde as courtesy. The hunter's lofty longing is revealed by the fact that, in spite of its brutality, the falcon's attack is not levelled against the lady's whole body, but

against her heart in particular. In such a construction of the episode, Troilus is shown as the falconer and Criseyde as his game. However, although the exchange of hearts is a traditional feature of courtly poetry which symbolizes the lovers' mutual affection, Chaucer's double substitution within the motif—that of the eagle for Troilus and that of the attack for the exchange—makes Criseyde's awakening to love a traumatic experience that precludes her freedom of will. Also, and quite paradoxically, if we admit the association between Troilus and the eagle, the exchange of hearts indicates that Criseyde is now as much the owner of Troilus's heart as he is master over her feelings. In André Le Chapelain's late twelfth-century treatise *De amore*, the Latin word *amor* is said to derive from *hamare*—to catch, to hook [Camille, 12].⁴ In the context of *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer's sophisticated courtly aesthetics hints that both the hero and the heroine are at the same time hunters and game, assailants and victims.

The context in which this event crops up reinforces the very violence of the dream and makes its conclusion more decisive—Criseyde's freedom as a lover and as a lady is denied. The beginning of Book II, which deals with the heroine, is organized in three parts: her misgivings about love [II, 652-812], Antigone's song [II, 813-875], and finally Criseyde's dream. The first two passages introduce two divergent conceptions of love: Criseyde's idea that love is a loss of freedom and Antigone's idyllic conception, symbolized by a nightingale [II, 918]. The sudden appearance of the eagle at the conclusion of this carefully-constructed sequence comes as a sharp answer to Criseyde's irresolution and as a rebuttal of her lengthy plea for freedom. In a single stanza, the dream decides her case and seals Criseyde's destiny—against her will.

Although she asserted her free will,
For man may love, of possibilite,
A womman so, his herte may tobreste,
And she naught love ayein, but if hire leste. [II, 607-9]

This free lady—"myn owene womman, wel at ese", "unteyd in lusty leese" [II, 750, 752] in her own words—is turned forcibly into what she dreaded most to be—a woman in love:

[...] "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?"

4. Michael Camille, *L'Art de l'amour au Moyen Âge: objets et sujets du désir* (Cologne: Köne-mann, 2000).

Ther loveth noon, that she nath why to pleyne. [II, 771-7]

“Folie”: this is the gist of Criseyde’s soliloquy until the eagle’s attack paralyzes her reason, sets fire to her emotions, and ensnares her in a deleterious *folie à deux*—the delusion that the words love and liberty can be synonyms.

Ultimately, Criseyde’s conversion to love is presented as the direct consequence of her niece’s song in favour of husbands and lovers in general, a chance event that underscores Criseyde’s incapacity to decide for herself as well as the pressure of circumstances on the heroine. To understand the Antigone passage, it should be remembered that the eagle is associated with the sun in *The House of Fame*:

Me thoughte I sawgh an egle sore,
But that hit semed moche more
Then I had any egle seyn.
But this as sooth as deth, certeyn,
Hyt was of gold, and shon so bryghte
That never sawe men such a syghte,
But yf the heven had ywonne
Al newe of gold another sonne;
So shone the egles fethers bryghte,
And somewhat downward gan hyt lyghte. [HF, I, 499-507]⁵

A solar bird that can look the sun in the eye, Criseyde’s herald of love is also mentioned in the panegyric for lovers delivered by Antigone, who resorts to a solar metaphor to define love:

“What is the sonne wers, of kynde right,
Though that a man, for fieblesse of his yen,
May nought endure on it to see for bryght?
Or love the wers, though wrecches on it crien?
No wele is worth, that may no sorwe dryen.
And forthi, who that hath an hed of verre,
Fro cast of stones war hym in the werre!
“But I with al myn herte and al my myght,
As I have seyde, wol love unto my laste
My deere herte and al myn owen knyght,
In which myn herte growen is so faste,
And his in me, that it shal evere laste.
Al drede I first to love hym to bigynne,
Now woot I wel, ther is no peril inne. [II, 862-75]

In these stanzas, Antigone equates the force and the greatness of love to the blazing rays of the sun. However, since the symbolism of the eagle associates this bird with the sun, the solar bird that appears in Criseyde’s dream turns to

5. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The House of Fame*, edited by John M. Fyler, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, Larry D. Benson, general editor, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

be the agent of the god of love. Moreover, the echo of Antigone's imagery of the fusion of the lovers' hearts ("In which myn herte growen is so faste, / And his in me") in Criseyde's dream ("with herte left for herte") shows that the former's conception and will have been imposed on Criseyde and have eventually overcome her misgivings. In the stanza before the heroine falls asleep, a nightingale is singing a "lay / Of love" [II, 921-2], a much milder symbol of love than the eagle. The contrast between the two birds conveys the conclusion of the whole passage. Criseyde is not meant to experience blissful love. She is to be the victim of destructive passion.

Quite interestingly, Aberdeen University Library MS 24 reminds the medievalist that bestiaries are symbolic and didactic texts in which the animals, real or imaginary, are used to convey a truth "in such a way that the soul will at least perceive physically things which it has difficulty grasping mentally; that what they have difficulty comprehending with their ears, they will perceive with their eyes"⁶ [Aberdeen MS 24, f. 25v]. This can be applied to Criseyde, who is made to realize physically what she is unable to grasp mentally—her conversion to love. And so can it be said more generally speaking of Chaucer's use of beasts in *Troilus and Criseyde*.

As Criseyde's destiny is sealed by an animal, so a beast heralds Troilus's final peripeteia in another allegory in Book V. Moreover, the revelation of the hero's future and fate is revealed in a dream, as was Criseyde's. Dreams, beasts, fate and violence hardly ever appear separately in *Troilus and Criseyde*. In a way, they constitute the quadriga that drives the poem toward its end. The dream motif, appearing repeatedly in Book V, dominates most of the episodes in the last part of the poem. Introduced as early as line 246, this motif first conveys the protagonist's fear of being left alone and defeated by his enemies. Troilus's remark that this prophetic dream foretells his forthcoming death [V, 316-8] reasserts the twofold idea that the eponymous hero cannot escape his fate and that his future is foreshadowed in dreams. Next comes Troilus's major dream [V, 1233-1241], whose central figure is a boar. Dangerous and somewhat repulsive as it is, Criseyde is kissing the beast, which is basking in the sun in a forest. A strong, powerful, formidable animal "with tuskes grete", the boar resumes the hunting image that constituted the core of Criseyde's dream. As a dreamer and a mere viewer of the scene, Troilus is denied the pleasure of a duel with his rival, a situation that is reminiscent of Criseyde's helplessness in her own dream. Violence in *Troilus and Criseyde* is first and

6. The Latin original reads: "et per picturam simplicium mentes edificare decrevi, ut quod simplicium animus intelligibili oculo capere vix poterat, saltem carnali discernat, et quod vix poterat auditus, percipiat visus." Iain Beavan, general editor, *The Aberdeen Bestiary* (Aberdeen University Library MS 24), The Aberdeen Bestiary Project (<www.clues.abdn.ac.uk:8080/besttest/firstpag.html>).

foremost the overwhelming force of necessity that deprives the protagonists of their freedom to respond to what happens to them. In such a context, Troilus's remark that "Al certeynly [...] I mot nedes dye" [V, 318], whose phraseology refers to Boethius's *The Consolation of Philosophy*,⁷ lays stress on one of the major ideas of the poem—the eponymous heroes' absence of free will.

This motif is taken up by the presence of Cassandra and Jupiter in this part of Book V. Unlike Boccaccio⁸ who allows his hero to interpret his dream, Chaucer prefers to introduce Cassandra for this purpose: "And hire bisoughte assoilen hym the doute / Of the stronge boor with tuskes stoute" [V, 1453-4]. Her role as a "devynresse" [V, 1522] also results from her other name, Sybil [V, 1450], which refers to the mythological character who foretold Aeneas's future correctly. Steeped in book lore, from Statius's *Thebaid* to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Cassandra is portrayed as mastering the prophecies of the past [V, 1494], thus implying that she can read the oracles of Troilus's present as well. A symbol of truth, Cassandra's prophecy is a prison which shuts her brother up in his unavoidable future.

Moreover, the sudden and somewhat unexpected reappearance of Jupiter in this part of the narrative reminds the reader of the tragic announcement in the prologue of Book V and highlights both the prophetic nature of the boar dream and the correctness of Cassandra's interpretation. Along with Jupiter, there comes again the lexicon of predetermination which pervaded the prologue. The reader is meant to conclude that this dream episode realizes Troilus's "fatal destyne" [V, 1]. Placing the two stanzas one after the other is quite a telling comparison:

Aprochen gan the fatal destyne
That Joves hath in disposicioun,
And to yow, angry Parcas, sustren thre,
Committeth to don execucioun;
For which Criseyde moste out of the town,
And Troilus shal dwellen forth in pyne
Til Lachesis his thred no lenger twyne. [V, 1-7]

Fortune, which that permutacioun
Of thynges hath, as it is hire comitted
Thorough purveyaunce and disposicioun
Of heighe Jove, as regnes shal be flitted
From folk in folk, or when they shal be smytted,
Gan pulle away the fetheres brighte of Troie
Fro day to day, til they ben bare of joie. [V, 1541-7]

7. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, translated by V. E. Watts (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969).

8. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Filostrato. Chaucer's Boccaccio: Sources of Troilus, and The Knight's and Franklin's Tales*, edited and translated by N. R. Havelly (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1980).

Although the second quotation properly refers to Troy and not to Troilus, the resemblance of their names has connected their fates in the reader's mind as early as Book I. In addition to the continual echoes, the phrase "bare of joie" indicates that the "permutacioun" announced in the poem's seminal phrase—"Fro wo to wele, and after out of joie" [I, 4]—has now come true.

Lastly, this short survey of dreams in Chaucer's poem⁹ would not be complete without a reference to Troilus's continual daydreaming. In fact, despite what has been said up to now about his ominous dreams in Book V, Troilus is a character who does not sleep, who cannot sleep. This is not to say that Troilus does not spend many an hour alone in his bedroom. On the contrary, his bed, which should be the very place to find rest and relief from his suffering, becomes the paradoxical symbol of his sleeplessness. Like Troilus's dreams, this contributes to his characterization as a dissatisfied lover. Along with his recurrent fever, his loss of stamina, and his general pessimistic dejection, wakefulness is first a symptom of his unrequited love, then the consequence of the fickleness of his beloved. The loss of his ability to sleep denotes the end of his smooth-running teenage years.

Contrary to sleep which provides rest, relief and regeneration, Troilus's wakeful nights are also landmarks of his physical and psychic deterioration. Presented as the epitome of gallantry and manliness, Troilus is later compared to Queen Niobe [I, 699] who could not stop shedding tears for the slaughter of her children—a highly degrading association which turns the warrior into a woman. In addition, this mythological allusion is an accurate metaphor of Troilus's state of mind and inaction. Like Niobe, he is now a statue of stone that is unable to do anything except lament over his own lot. Therefore, his bed, which can easily be imagined as the typically medieval closed bed, is meant to symbolize the hero's imprisonment. Troilus's daydreams in his chamber are the ultimate stage of an extended metaphor, ranging from Troy, a "cite biseged al about" [I, 149], to Troilus's bed, a symbol of his imprisonment as a lover.

And whan that he in his chamber was allone,
 He doun upon his beddes feet hym sette,
 And firste he gan to sike, and eft to grone,
 And thought ay on hire so, withouten lette,
 That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette

9. French-speaking readers interested in this subject can refer to my (unpublished) PhD dissertation for further developments: "Rêves et liberté chez les écrivains de langue anglaise des XIV^e et XV^e siècles: Étude de *Troilus and Criseyde*, du *Nun's Priest's Tale* et du *Kingis Quair*". Thèse de doctorat. Université Paris IV/Sorbonne, 2001, 445 p. More generally speaking, critical feedback is most welcome at <Franckz91@aol.com> .

That he hire saugh a-temple, and al the wise
Right of hire look, and gan it new avise. [I, 358-64]

His bedroom becomes a torture chamber because Troilus, excluded from the shelter of unconsciousness in slumber, experiences loneliness as an obsessive memory of Criseyde, instead of regenerating himself in this solitude. What this stanza depicts is the protagonist's inability to master himself, to control his mind as much the physiological troubles that beset him. Even though the phrase "his spirit mette" is properly speaking a synecdoque which substitutes Troilus's mind for the hero, this formulation reveals with particular emphasis the character's disintegration, the dichotomy between the man and his mind, the fact that they are now two separate things. His mind, endowed with its own willpower, is beyond its owner's control. A body weakened by "the loveris maladye / Of Heroes" [*The Knight's Tale*, I, 1373-4],¹⁰ the protagonist is also a mind adrift, a man deprived of free will. Even when he is awake, when his reason should not be overpowered by his dreams, he is the slave of love through the memory of Criseyde in the temple ("he hire saugh a-temple"). Another trope in the Canticus Troili turns him into the captain of a steerless ship tossed by a tempest at sea [I, 415-8]. An uncontrollable mind in a body adrift ensnared in a story that jostles him: such is Troilus's lot. Sleeplessness is no different from dreams—an obsessive image, a compulsive thought.

This accounts for the unexpected conversion of this former arch-enemy of love and lovers:

Thus gan he make a mirour of his mynde
In which he saugh al holly hire figure,
And that he wel koude in his herte fynde.
It was to hym a right good aventure
To love swich oon, and if he dede his cure
To serven hir, yet myghte he falle in grace,
Or ellis for oon of hire servants pace.

Imagenynge that travaille nor game
Ne myghte for so goodly oon be lorn
As she, ne hym for his desir no shame,
Al were it wist, but in pris and up-born
Of alle lovers wel more than biforn,
Thus argumented he in his gynnynge. [I, 365-77]

The word "argumented" is quite ironic in the two contexts of Troilus's obsession and depersonalization, and his former disparagement of love, which came down to a single word: "folye" [I, 193], just the same as Criseyde

10. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Knight's Tale*. Eds. Ralph Hanna III and Larry D. Benson, in *The Riverside Chaucer*. Larry D. Benson, ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

used in her soliloquy [II, 774]. For Troilus, daydreaming becomes a “mirour” that forces him to discover the world afresh—a world he was unaware of: daydreaming is a Joycean epiphany, a moment of heightened experience that brings about the revelation of an unsuspected truth. However, from the perspective of his earlier allusion of a love affair with Criseyde as folly, Troilus is jumping from the frying pan of lovephobia into the fire of an obsessive adherence to love. Like Criseyde’s dream, Troilus’s daydreams bring about the substitution of one prejudice for another.

In spite of its lack of military combat, of clattering swords and of battlefields strewn with dead bodies, Chaucer’s poem depicts a violent world. However, violence in *Troilus and Criseyde* is seldom a matter of interpersonal aggression. On the contrary, it lies deep within each protagonist’s self, as is shown by the importance of dreams and daydreams in the plot. Violence is first exemplified by the hero’s and the heroine’s tormenting indecision which eventually drives Troilus along the path of his destructive love affair and untimely death. It is also the violence inflicted by both story and history to individuals deprived of their free will. This is the main message that the protagonists’ dreams convey throughout the poem. In these dreams, the beasts, which embody the violence coming from the outside world, from fate, are the ultimate allegorization of Chaucer’s tragic world of love. However, as Troilus’s daydreams show, the self’s daemon is one’s greatest and most formidable enemy.