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"'His helm tohewen was in twenty places': Reconstructing Troilus"

by Sandra M. Hordis

In recent years, Chaucer's Troilus has become a fragmented hero. Scholars delineate and compare Troilus's identity to the reconstructed societal ideals of either late fourteenth-century England, to Boccaccio's early fourteenth-century Italy, and even to a rather enigmatic Trojan past as Chaucer understood it. Or scholars examine only a small aspect of Troilus's identity, exploring his masculinity, his courtliness, or his martial vigor as separate defining elements. Such approaches, however, inevitably lead to the subordination of characteristics (using Troilus's status as a lover to prove his masculinity, for example) or a binary effect (is Troilus's masculinity off or on?) in identity research. Caroline Walker Bynum, in her book *Metamorphosis and Identity*, calls such binary fragmentations of scholarly inquiry reductive, suggesting that "a more labile and nuanced" delineation is necessary for understanding the true complexity of the influences on and manifestations of identity (165-7).[1] In order to unlock the identity gestalt of a figure such as Troilus, scholars must approach the character from the outside, exploring the context in which the identity exists in order to fully appreciate the complexity of such qualities as gender, courtliness, spirituality, and rank, and how

they work together to form the depths of identity to which students and scholars alike respond.

Chaucer presents one clearly contextualized lens of Troilus's prismatic identity in the armors which appear at heightened moments of emotion and decision. Supplementing and adding references to the story of Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* which likewise climaxes at Trolio's sight of Diomedes' captured breastplate, Chaucer's attention to armor reveals not only the importance of armor in conveying the identity of the wearer, but also expresses the use of armor as a catalyst for others' reactions to that identity. Such contextualizing of identity has the immediate effect of bestowing meaning on the actions and responses of the character beyond fragmented, binary definitions of identity. In Troilus's case, the meaning of his identity builds through his broken armor worn on his triumphant return to Troy in Book II, is redefined in his martial request of Pandarus to sacrifice his arms to Mars and Athena, and culminates in his pathos-inspiring response to Diomede's captured armor of Book V. In these scenes, armor reveals Troilus's continual attempts to negotiate his difficult position, suspended between his service to Troy and his love-devotion to Criseyde, and to inscribe meaning on the pains of love.

Troilus's Broken Armor

The first that we encounter any mention of Troilus's armor in Chaucer's tale is in the well-known scene in Book II, which nearly triples the number of lines from the corresponding scene in Boccaccio (II, 82-3).[2] After Pandarus has discovered his friend's lovesickness and has manipulated Criseyde, both physically and emotionally, to be more receptive of Troilus's suit, Criseyde sits by a window pondering her uncle's subtle arguments concerning her position. Someone in the street cries out that "Troilus/ Hath right now put to flighte the Grekes route!"(II. 612-13),[3] and amid the cheers and joy of the townspeople,

> This Troilus sat on his baye steede
> Al armed, save his hed, ful richely;
> And wownded was his hors, and gan to blede,
> On which he rood a pas ful softely.
> But swich a knyghtly sighte trewely
> As was on hym, was noght, withouten faille,
> To loke on Mars, that god is of bataille.
> So lik a man of armes and a knyght
> He was to seen, fulfilled of heigh prowesse,
> For bothe he had a body and a myght
> To don that thing, as wel as hardynesse;
> And ek to seen hym in his gere hym dresse,
> So fressh, so yong, so weldy semed he,
> It was an heven upon hym for to see.
> His helm tohewen was in twenty places,
> That by a tyssew heng his bak byhynde;
> His sheeld todasshed was with swerdes and maces,
> In which men myghte many an arwe fynde
> That thirled hadde horn and nerf and rynde;

And ay the peple cryde, “here cometh oure joye,
And, next his brother, holder up of Troye!” (II, ll. 624-44)

Troilus's relationship to his armor here is a complex one, full of apparent inconsistencies. Chaucer's description begins by reinforcing Troilus's identity as a warrior; he is compared favorably to not only a clear knightly ideal but to Mars, the god of battle and supporter of the Trojan defenses. Seven lines pay special attention to Troilus's body (ll. 630-37), delineating his prowess, strength and hardiness, cresting in the image of perfection which Troilus presents in his armor (ll. 635-37). But then, for a brief five lines (ll.638-42), Troilus disappears and is replaced by the description of his broken and battered armor which would seem to contradict the two previous stanzas. Troilus's armor here is not the unsullied armor of the romance hero. He has been attacked with all of the primary weapons of medieval battle, and has taken enough damage from them that not only are their specific imprints and remains discernible on his shield, but his “tohewen” and “todasshed” defensive armor has been rendered useless. Indeed, Stephanie Dietrich notes that "Troilus has been acted upon in an unusually brutal way" in the battle, and that Chaucer denies his offensive weapons, relegating the description only to Troilus’s defensive gear,[4] suggesting the intensity of battle which Troilus has seen.

Troilus's blushing response to the communal praise which floods the streets around him reembodies his position as a knightly man of arms, framing the description

of the broken armor and reinforcing his primacy in the scene. Unlike in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, when Gawain "disappears into (or becomes the disembodied product of) his elaborate accoutrements and knightly insignia,"[5] as a whole, the structure of Troilus's description forces a reinscription of Troilus's martial identity on the armor. Troilus, sober and noble (ll.647-8), triumphantly outshines and outlasts even his armor in battle.

But with no description or narrative of that battle, Troilus's broken armor has no real referent; nowhere in the text does it indicate that Troilus was riding out to battle the Greeks that day. Only a voice from the crowd yelling how Troilus has just defeated the Greeks provides context, both situational and temporal, for Troilus's ride through town. Rightly so, the celebrating community understands Troilus's battlefield markers to be actively achieved in the defense of the city. For the audience of Chaucer's tale, however, there has been only one skirmish in which Troilus clearly took part to this point in the narrative. In the temple in Book I, Troilus japes at his men for their lovelorn behaviors, thereby angering Cupid:

> And with that word [Troilus] gan caste up the browe,
> Ascaunces, "Loo! Is this naught wisely spoken?"
> At which the God of Love gan loken rowe
> Right for despit, and shop for to ben wroken.
> He kidde anon his bowe nas naught broken;
> For sodeynly he hitte hym atte fulle --
> And yet as proud a pekok kan he pulle. (I, ll.204-10)

Cupid's arrow hits Troilus both figuratively and spiritually here. Troilus, the male aggressor and alpha leader of his comrades, is immediately reprimanded for his mockeries through the effects of Love's arrow. Troilus is hit "atte fulle," suggesting that Cupid's shot is accurate, strong, and effective. But the phrase "atte full" suggests something else more literal. John Gillingham notes that from early on, the knight's combination of "shield and armour made him virtually invulnerable to arrows."[6] The arrows piercing Troilus's shield in the scene in Book II, however, deeply penetrate "horn and nerf and rynde" (l.642), just as Cupid's zealous shot successfully and "fully" pierced the mocking character of Troilus in Book I.

Additionally, the narrator's understated phrase, that the god of love made clear that "his bowe nas naught broken" points to the scene again where Troilus's armor is damaged, literally by the Greeks but figuratively and spiritually by Cupid himself. Since a knight's armor and shield are all that separates him from the crushing and piercing blows of battlefield weapons, Troilus's damaged and hewn armor suggests that death is close at hand. Indeed, E. Jane Burns also argues that in Arthurian literature, the loss of a helmet specifically connotes the nearness of death.[7] But here, Troilus physically gives no indication that it is the Greeks who have brought him to the edge of life; his body is whole and hardy, an exemplar of martial prowess. Troilus's death, however, does loom large in Book I; this death, though, is his death caused by Criseyde's beauty and unrequited love. It appears that Cupid has given him his mortal

wound with the only effective offensive weapon in the conflict. Troilus's brusque attacks of lovers in Book I could not withstand the counter-attack of Cupid's bow, and just as his armor fails against the Greeks but Troilus's body triumphs above it, so too does Troilus gain glory and reward in his defeat by Cupid as he rides through the town in triumph.

What results in the scene in Book II in terms of Troilus's identity then is twofold. While clearly the loss of Troilus's armor, especially his helmet, indicates a certain vulnerability in battle with the Greeks, it is clear that despite this he is knightly, "fulfilled of heigh prowesse" (l. 632), and therefore presents a martial figure which shines through his damaged armor and gives meaning to it. Such an identity, however, is created in the midst of the repercussions of Cupid's successful attack on Troilus. This spiritual attack on Troilus, the indefensible victim, also generates meaning from the broken armor in the ennobling effects of courtly love. Chaucer makes Troilus's heightened sense of prowess clear just after he dedicates himself to Cupid:

> And yet was [Troilus], where so men wente or riden,
> Founde oon the beste, and longest tyme abiden
> Ther peril was, and dide eke swich travaille
> In armes that to thynke it was mervaille. (I, ll.473-6)

But it is not because of his wartime dedication to his city that Troilus accomplishes such great feats:

But for non hate he to the Grekes hadde,
Ne also for rescous of the town,
Ne made hym thus in armes for to madde,
But only, lo, for this conclusioun:
To liken [Criseyde] the bet for his renoun. (I, ll.477-80)

The battle with Cupid has ended in a type of empowering victimization which enhances and redefines Troilus's identity at its core. The scene in Book II where Troilus rides through a jubilant Troy in his broken armor, blushing at the praises of the community, crystalizes the duality of his identity as both warrior and lover, servant of Mars and newly dedicated servant of Cupid.

It is clear that Troilus's increasingly complex identity as it is evidenced in his armor is lost on the community. The citizens of Troy are unconcerned with the subtle shifting of Troilus's character; their collective words, continually proclaiming the martial ability of Troilus and comparing him to Ector as a "holder up of Troye" (II, l.644), point to how they desire to see Troilus, as warrior and protector. Criseyde, however, having learned of Troilus's love for her, must see Troilus differently, her perspective emanating but separate from the collective point of view.[8] But this does not suggest that Criseyde's reaction of "Who yaf me drynke?" (II, l.651) is solely dependent upon her knowledge of Troilus's love; what plays on Criseyde's resolve is the image before her.

Until the moment when she sees Troilus in his broken armor, she does not welcome his suit with any enthusiasm. Indeed, her first reaction to Pandarus's encouragement that she should accept Troilus's love is one which reveals much of her: "A, Lord! What me is tid a sory chaunce!/ For myn estat lith in a jupartie" (II, ll.464-5). Her concern for her precarious position in Troy is certainly justified; she remains unmolested in the city which her father betrayed through the good will of Ector alone. In her conversation with Pandarus, she returns to her concerns about the Greek siege of the city twice, asking if the invaders have gone and how the defenses hold. Her concern for her estate and her safety are clearly central to her thinking. When she looks on the image of Troilus, then, shining through his broken armor, whole and noble despite the Greek damage his armor has taken, she sees the answer to her personal fears. Troilus certainly presents himself to the community as the equal to Ector as defender of Troy, but to Criseyde, who knows of Troilus's desire to be her lover, he presents not only an idealized and generalized protector of the city, but her own champion who triumphs over her personal fears. The narrator acknowledges Troilus's double identity in Criseyde's heart, "And after that, his manhod and his pyne/ Made love within her for to myne" (II, ll.676-7), suggesting that Troilus's martial identity coupled with his identity as a lover generates her own returned affection.

Criseyde reacts to the identity which Troilus projects in his broken armor as a whole; her love is not given to Ector, Troilus's martial equal in defending Troy, nor is it

so casually given to Troilus-as-lover when Pandarus presents his suit. Troilus's broken armor provides a lens for Criseyde to see him not merely as a defender of the city, but as an empowered victim of Cupid whose devotion and love could ease her very real fears.

Troilus's Sacrificed Armor

At the start of Book V, Troilus's armor once again displays his identity as both martial savior of the city and Criseyde's lover, but the context in which Troilus discusses the armor reveals his struggle in negotiating easily between these two spheres. Nothing surprising, at least according to the narrative traditions of medieval romance, happens following the triumphant and contextualizing scene in Book II where Troilus's broken armor prismaticly delineates the complexity of Troilus's identity and the relationship between the two primary aspects of warrior and lover. Troilus and Criseyde spend three years as lovers (V, ll.8-11), and successfully keep their relationship a secret. But when the Greek proposal arrives that Criseyde be traded for Antenor, the romance turns tragic. The trade, which Troilus oversees, occurs without incident, save for Troilus's inner lament at his loss and Diomede's attendant wooing of Criseyde on their trip back to the Greek camp. Unable to wait the ten days until Criseyde's planned

escape from the Greeks, Troilus echoes his sorrows of Book I to Pandarus, expecting his own death:

> But of the fir and flaumbe funeral
> In which my body brennen shal to glede,
> And of the feste and pleyes palestral
> At my vigile, I prey the, tak good hede
> That that be wel; and offre Mars my steede,
> My swerde, myn helm; and, leve brother deere,
> My sheld to Pallas yef, that shyneth cleer (V, ll.302-08)

It would seem that Troilus makes a dying battlefield request of Pandarus, that his weapons and armor be sacrificed to Mars and Pallas Athena, and that the feasts and games commonly held at the wake of a hero be attended to properly. Indeed, he has earned these honors for his continued service to Mars. But Troilus's language shifts in the next stanza, when he tells Pandarus what exactly to do with his ashes:

> The poudre in which myn herte ybrend shal torne,
> That preye I the thow take and it conserve
> In a vessel than men clepeth and urne,
> Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
> For love of whom thus pitouslich I sterve,
> So yeve it hire, and do me this pleasunce,
> To preyen hire kepe it for a remembraunce. (V, ll.309-315)

This episode of Troilus's sorrow has been broadly included in the sphere of Troilus's love-longing, or his "[wallowing] . . . like a man lost at sea."[9] Troilus's proposed sacrifice, however, provides insight into his attempt to maintain the complex, doubled,

and demanding construction of his identity, despite the contextual shifting occurring around him.

As in Book II, Troilus's armor serves as a communally recognized symbol of his role as a successful warrior; his request for the sacrifice of both his offensive and defensive arms at his imminent funeral rites accords with Greek tradition, echoing Homer's Iliad, Boccaccio's Teseida and Chaucer's own "Knight's Tale."[10] What is striking in Troilus's sacrifice is the split of his arms between Mars and Pallas Athena, the former being a supporter of the Trojan defenses and the latter acting unabashedly in favor of the Greeks. The split offering may be understood to reinforce an aspect of the logic which Diomede uses in his suit to Criseyde:

> "For though ye Troians with us Grekes wrothe
> Han many a day ben, alwey yet, parde,
> O god of Love in soth we serven bothe." (V, ll.141-43)

Dealings with the gods are part of the public communal sphere, as Diomede suggests in his knowledge of Trojan worship, as are the games, plays and vigils of a great warrior's funeral. Troilus maintains his publicly expected identity as defender of the city in his request by relegating the arms which served the public and were given meaning by the community in Book II to the public arena of the warrior's funeral.

Troilus's understanding and preservation of his communal identity as warrior has influenced his actions and in effect, has created his current sorrow. During the trade

of Criseyde and Antenor, Troilus considers the possibilities of action to save his lover from the Greeks:

> Why nyl I make atones riche and pore
> To have inough to doone er that she go?
> Why nyl I brynge al Troie upon a roore?
> Whi nyl I slen this Diomede also?
> Why nyl I rather with a man or twofold
> Stele hire away? Whi wol I this endure?
> Whi nyl I helpen to myn owen cure? (V, ll.42-49)

But he chooses to do nothing. Troilus's inaction preserves his own position as protector, and preserves the secret of Troilus's love. But in allowing Criseyde to leave Troy without argument, Troilus not only loses his lady, he also loses his motivation for maintaining his identity as warrior. Criseyde, who represented the sole reason for his valiant battlefield exploits (I, ll.477-80), is gone, thereby dismantling the two major spheres of Troilus's identity.

The context which the scene in Book II creates for Troilus's later proposed sacrifice, however, also builds an opportunity for Troilus to reiterate his identity apart from the crumbling communal ideal. To Mars, Troilus offers those arms which had failed him in Book II– his (injured) horse, his (missing) sword, and his (broken) helm— suggesting his personal abandonment of service to the god while upholding the public show of the offering. But to Athena, the Greek advocate, he desires to sacrifice his shield, the one piece of armor that clearly had protected him against the Greek swords

and arrows in Book II. Such a sacrifice of his shield creates layers of connection to not only the Greeks, who now possess Criseyde, but to women, be they gods or lovers, in a romanticized perception of battle and the warrior's life. Athena becomes a publicly proclaimed but privately delineated surrogate for Criseyde, whose protection from the Greeks is now paramount to Troilus.

Cupid's service, however, in which Troilus is Criseyde's lover and in which he has dedicated three years to their secret, also demands its sacrifice. Troilus's request to Pandarus to place his ashes in a golden urn recalls the metal encasing which armor provides (disagree with Barney Bound). In this ornamental configuration of an urn made of gold, Troilus reinscribes meaning; he will discard his martial armor, in effect, leaving Mars' service, for the sake of Cupid and Criseyde, for whom he truly dies. Indeed, the golden urn glorifies his body, which in Book II is established as the seat of his identity as lover, in ways which reflect his previously broken armor. He is once again the ennobled victim of Cupid, having died and burned for love's sake, his remains ending in the possession of his lady. In this reconfiguration of his armor, he abandons all references to his communal identity; the urn, while recognizable as a sign of Cupid's influence, does not proclaim Troilus's martial aspect but refigures Troilus's armor to have private meaning for the lovers.

Clearly, Troilus tries to satisfy both his martial identity and his identity as lover in his sacrifice. In death, he cannot serve Mars, but his death can serve Cupid. Troilus attempts to satisfy both identities in his offering; his armor and golden urn maintain the secret of his love from the community, while they also uphold and separate those two spheres by (re)creating a symbol which has different meanings to different audiences. Certain of where each seat of his identity lies, Troilus immutably, and rather morbidly, negotiates between his body and his armor, the cupidinous and the martial, attempting to maintain some control of his own identity as events conspire around him to break down the relationship which he has built his identity upon.

Diomede's Captured Armor

Armor also sparks the climax of Troilus and Criseyde's tale, but this armor belongs to Diomede, Troilus's rival in love and battle, and calls attention to Troilus's understanding of his own manipulation of identity in the story's context. Troilus, skeptically dismissing the interpretations of his dream of a boar which suggest that Criseyde has abandoned him, struggles to keep hold of his identity as it has been constructed through the love of Criseyde. He holds his suspicions in check with the hope that Criseyde has simply been detained at the Greek camp and unable to escape back to Troy. But Troilus's hope blurs when he receives a return letter from Criseyde

which suggests that she will not return to Troy, or to him. But the clarity of his loss crystalizes when he encounters Diomede's captured armor, being paraded through the city of Troy:

> Stood on a day in his malencolie
> This Troilus, and in suspecion
> Of hire for whom he wende for to dye.
> And so it bifel that throughout Troye town,
> As was the gise, iborn was up and down
> A manere cote-armure, as seith the storie,
> Byforn Diephebe, in signe of his victorie;
> The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius,
> Deiphebe it hadde rent from Diomede
> That same day. And whan this Troilus
> It saugh, he gan to taken of it hede,
> Avysyng of the lengthe and of the brede,
> And al the werk; but as he gan byholde,
> Ful sodeynly his herte gan to colde,
> As he that on the coler fond withinne
> A broche, that he Criseyde yaf that morwe
> That she from Troie moste nedes twynne
> In remembraunce of hym and of his sorwe.
> And she hym leyde ayeyn hire feith to borwe
> To kepe it ay! But now ful wel he wiste,
> His lady nas no lenger on to tryste. (V, 1646-1666)

The change which this encounter renders in Troilus is distinct; while unsure of Criseyde's fidelity and desire, Troilus pined for her return painfully, anxious to return to the city when Pandarus tries to distract him in Sarpedon, and once returned, viewing locations in the city in context to his relationship to Criseyde. But in seeing the brooch on Diomede's armor and confirming his loss of his lady, Troilus discards his *history-based view*s and rages with revenge:

Of Troilus, this ilke noble knyght,
As men may in thise olde bokes rede,
Was seen his knyghthod and his grete myght.
And dredeles, his ire, day and nyght,
Ful crewely the Grekis ay aboute;
And alwey moost this Diomede he sought.

And ofte tyme, I fynde that they mette
With blody strokes and with wordes grete,
Assayinge how hire speres weren whette;
And, God woot, with many a cruel hete
Gan Troilus upon his helm to bete! (V, ll.1752-1762)

The change in Troilus from pining lover to vengeful wild man seems to occur the instant of seeing Diomede's armor. What triggers this dramatic change in Troilus begins with his bifurcated identity and his approach to his rival, the armor, and his own identity. As has been clear from the beginning, Troilus has constructed his identity around his relationship with Criseyde. They are secret lovers, and Troilus's battlefield exploits are accomplished for the sake of bringing honor to his lady rather than solely in the defense of Troy. But with Criseyde in the Greek camp and subject to Diomede's attentions, Troilus's anxiety builds to the point where his panic "prevents him from appraising the evidence [of Criseyde's infidelity] objectively."[11] In this sense, Troilus encounters Diomede's armor not as a warrior who takes stock of his enemy through the shape and quality of his arms, but in the only other way he can: as a lover who searches for answers in whatever evidence is placed before him. Indeed, Troilus does not expect to find the brooch, a clear symbol of Criseyde's favor of the Greek; he approaches the coat armor with private questions, in search of Diomede's identity.

Troilus's perspective on Diomede's armor echoes his own suggestion to Pandarus that he sacrifice the hero's armor to Mars and Athena earlier in the book. The parading of an enemy's armor through the streets accomplishes several things in the public sphere. Juxtaposed to the hero's sacrifice of arms at his triumphant funeral, parading an enemy's captured arms in war time boosts morale for the community because they reduce the enemy to a defeatable object who is subject to the scorn and ridicule of spectacle. Knowing also that the armor is the seat of martial identity and ability, the display of captured armor emasculates the enemy by publicly advertising the victimization of the enemy, suggesting the consequent masculine superiority of the victor.

But while Diomede's armor symbolizes the potentiality of the Greeks' defeat to the public audience, Troilus's view of the armor has a drastically different reading. Looking for the answers that have been nagging him in dreams since Criseyde left Troy, Troilus sees Diomede's armor much like his own: as a seat and medium for his identity. Once again, he views the armor doubly, having public meaning and private, but he does not like what the private message conveys. The brooch on Diomede's armor which Troilus originally gave to Criseyde the morning she was traded carries no meaning to the community watching the parade, but has substantial meaning for Troilus's secret love. For Troilus, the meaning of the brooch stands opposed to the intent of the armor's display. To Troilus, the armor and brooch means that Diomede is not a weak Greek

victim whose armor may be had for ridicule and pejorative display; he is the victor in the battle for Criseyde.

The display of Criseyde's brooch on Diomede's armor hits Troilus particularly in his subtle struggle to negotiate between the two primary aspects of his identity. Diomede ultimately presents an identity here much like Troilus's, but one which is fully integrated; his armor, the seat of martiality, also carries the public display of his identity as Criseyde's lover. Troilus, because of the necessary secrecy of his love for Criseyde, could not inscribe meaning on his armor in such a way, where signs of the love could be read accurately to outsiders. But here, both aspects of Diomede's primacy are on display, integrated into a whole which the community of Troy may only encounter piecemeal, but which Troilus, and likely the Greeks, understand completely.

Troilus's identity clearly shifts in his realization of his loss, newly centered on Diomede and the homosocial bonds of battle instead of on the kaleidoscopic pains of love.[12] Indeed, Henry Ansgar Kelly argues that this shift occurs because Troilus "puts the chief blame on Diomede" for his loss, and sees his battlefield revenge on the Greek as an "act of virtue" in response to the seduction of Criseyde.[13] The shift in identity in the context of Troilus's heartbreak and martial revenge points to Troilus's subordination of the aspects of his identity which Cupid inspired; he does not wish to pine away in private as he did in Book I, nor does he look to Pandarus for guidance through the pain

of love. Troilus tells Pandarus “myn owen deth in armes wol I seche” (l.1718) because death is no longer an abstract result of love; Troilus turns to the death promised by Mars, more brutal and more public, since Cupid's promises of Criseyde's love have been broken.

Conclusion

Interestingly, Chaucer himself contextualizes Troilus's identity in the last stanzas of the story, suggesting that while Troilus is a worthy warrior, his authorial interest lies in his identity as a lover:

> And if I hadde ytaken for to write
> The armes of this ilke worthi man,
> That wolde ich of his batailles endite;
> But for that I to writen first bigan
> Of his love, I have seyd as I kan --
> His worthi dedes, whoso list hem heere,
> Rede Dares, he kan telle hem alle ifeere – (V, ll.1765-71)

Chaucer points out the worthiness of Troilus as a martial man while controlling the parameters of his love story, and in doing so, he holds the martial and the cupidinous aspects of Troilus's identity equally, though one is narratologically appropriate to his purpose and the other is not. For Chaucer and his writerly stance, the two primary aspects of Troilus's identity do not compete; they possess qualities which are

appropriate at certain times and places, but never do they struggle for dominance. Chaucer masterfully controls the story, and despite the consistent and defining presence of the martial, Troilus's story remains focused on love.

A final question, however, remains: is Troilus himself in control of his own multi-faceted identity, or do the Mars and Cupid-driven aspects of Troilus's personality vie for dominance throughout the story? Troilus clearly attempts to negotiate between his secret love and community-prescribed role as warrior, at times hiding his heart-wrenching emotions as during the trade of Criseyde for Antenor, and at times languishing in the throes of love, putting aside the stoicism and strength necessary for the battlefield. Troilus, however, never seems torn over choice. He is, of course, upset that Criseyde must leave Troy, but their plan for her return allows for both of Troilus's aspects to remain solidly grounded in their appropriate spheres. The contextualized whole of Troilus's identity even seems stronger than its constituent parts; Troilus's love for Criseyde enhances and dignifies his martial exploits, and his battlefield experiences make appeals to Criseyde's affection.

Troilus's armor, then, becomes a conduit for the interaction between the two primary aspects of Troilus's identity. Troilus clearly understands that his armor displays important elements of his communal identity in Book II, and his use of recast and reinscribed armoring at the beginning of Book V informs his reading of armor in

the private sphere, as well. And when he sees Diomede's armor paraded through the streets of Troy at the end of Book V, Troilus demonstrates that he can read the armor of others, revealing that he understands that the gestalt of identity shown through armor is not simply a personal symbol which he himself creates and manipulates, but that the multiplicity of identity can be read in the context of any warrior's armor.

Endnotes:

[1] Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Metamorphosis and Identity* (NY:Zone Books, 2005).

[2] Boccaccio, Giovanni. *The Filostrato of Giovanni Boccaccio,* Nathaniel Edward Griffin and Arthur Beckwith Myrick, eds. (NY: Biblo and Tannen, 1928).

[3] All references to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* are taken from Larry Benson's *The Riverside Chaucer* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987).

[4] Deitrich, Stephanie. "'Slydyng' Masculinity in the Four Portraits of Troilus." *Masculinities in Chaucer*, Peter G. Beidler, ed. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1998): 210.

[5] Kinney, Clare R. "The (Dis)Embodied Hero and the Signs of Manhood in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*." *Medieval Masculinities*, Clare A. Lees, ed. (Minneapolis: U of MN P, 1994): 49.

[6] Gillingham, John. "An Age of Expansion, c.1020-1204." *Medieval Warfare*, Maurice Keen, ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999): 78.

[7] Burns, E. Jane. "Refashioning Courtly Love: Lancelot as Ladies' Man or Lady/Man?" *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz, eds. (Minneapolis: U of MN P, 1997): 118.

[8] I suggest that we must look more closely at what has led to Criseyde's gaze, as opposed to incorporating Criseyde in the communal gaze as Sarah Stanbury has argued ["The Lover's Gaze in *Troilus and Criseyde*." *Troilus and Criseyde: "Subgit to Alle Poesye"*, R. A. Shoaf, ed. (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992)].

[9] Barney, Stephen A. "Troilus Bound." *Troilus and Criseyde: "Subgit to Alle Poesye"*, R. A. Shoaf, ed. (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992).

[10] See Homer's *Iliad,* Book 24 [Robert Fitzgerald, trans. (NY: Anchor Books, 1974)], Boccaccio's *Teseida,* Book 11 [*The Book of Theseus,* Bernadette Marie McCoy, trans. (NY: Medieval Text Association, 1974)] and Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, lines 2853-2966.

[11] Hatcher, Elizabeth. "Chaucer and the Psychology of Fear: Troilus in Book V." *ELH* 40, 3 (Autumn 1973): 323.

[12] Dietrich, 218-20.

[13] Kelly, Henry Ansgar. *Chaucerian Tragedy* (Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 1997): 130.