ON PANDARUS IN "TROILUS AND CRISEYDE"

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Much has been written on Troilus and Criseyde, yet the poem still offers many interesting problems to the students of mediaeval literature. A few years ago, Mr. C. S. Lewis of Magdalen Coll., Oxford published a view at once new and illuminating that the poem is the mediaevalization of Boccaccio’s Il Filostrato, and lately affirmed it in his The Allegory of Love.¹ He explains that Chaucer combined in this poem the interest of story and that of erotic doctrine and philosophy known as l’amour courtois which were long estranged and developed independently, that he obtained the first from Boccaccio and drew the second from the Roman of the Rose, and that “in the story Chaucer, by means of episodes borrowed from Boccaccio, brings the personified accidents of the Roman out of allegory and sets them moving in a concrete story.”² The view is admirably illustrated by many quotations from Boccaccio, Roman, and Troilus, and, I trust, is now generally accepted. But there is one point in his explanation of the character of Pandarus that I can not wholly subscribe to, and that is his suggestion that ‘Pandarus is a son of Jean de Meun’s Vekke.’ Now

² The Allegory of Love, p. 177.
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this Vekke or an old woman is the keeper of Bialacoil who in hir enfaunce, had lerned muche of Loves art, and of his pleyes took hir part. In Meun's continuation, she is approached by Courtesy and Largess and immediately agrees, by the promise of gifts, to act as a go-between to assist the Lover to win Bialacoil's favour for the capture of the rose-bud. Soon she brings a chaplet from the lover to Bialacoil and teaches her 'love's wiles' which prove to be a mock-codes of love and a satire against woman. Her counsel to the Lover lasts some two thousand lines, but its general tone is, as the following quotation shows, never on the doctrine of love, but merely on ars amatoria.

In love, fair son, remain you free,
Fix not on one especially:
Suffer your heart at will to roam,
Nor lend nor give it to one home,
But let it be your constant boast
That, his it is who pays the most,
Yet see the buyer doth not get
A bargain though his gold you sweat.

She knows 'ech wrenche and every gyse of love, and every loveres wyle,' and is a typical go-between. She is experienced in love, but only in its practical side and never in its theoretical or the doctrine of l'amour courtois. Then, is there any resemblance between her and Pandarus? Is Pandarus a son of Vekke? Is this character of Vekke the prototype of Pandarus? I should like to attempt to solve this question not only to clarify the origin of Pandarus but to enlighten Chaucer's attitude in modifying Il Filostrato concerning this character. But as the preliminary step, the comparison of Pandarus and Pandaro, especially the evolution of the former from the latter, must be studied.

Pandaro is

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1 Pseudo-Chaucerian Roman, ll. 4288–90. Quotations from Chaucer are all from the complete edition of his works by Skeat.
2 Roman, ll. 13743–50, trans. by Ellis.
3 Pseudo-Chaucerian Roman, ll. 4292–3.
A Trojan youth, of courage high imbued
And ancient lineage born. (Canto II, st. 1)¹

He is Criseis' cousin, Troilo's close friend, and himself a lover.
He is a youth breathing the air of freedom of the early Italian
Renaissance, steady in his true friendship to Troilo, yet amorous
and well experienced in love. Though he confesses he is pining
with an unrequited love, it's because he cannot break off the
liaison as it is made public, and he is practical or rather realistic
towards love while Troilo is idealistic.

All men like saints their brows and speech may raise,
But, when the world's asleep, they little care.
No one shall ever know Prince Troilo's ways;—
Relieve his pain,—to do him well but dare.
They do great ill who can, but do no good,—
And they all waste their time who live in scornful mood.
(Canto II, st. 13j)

Or again,

Methinks no woman lives who doth not will
To live full amorously; 'tis only fear
Lest shame befalls that curbs and keeps her still;
But if to cure this dread some means appear,
Some honest medicine her wish to fill,
Foolish is he who scorns her favours dear;
My cousin, though a widow, craves no less
The joy of love, whate'er denial the truth suppress.
(Canto II, st. 27)

He knows the innermost heart of both sex; and as he can see
through them both, he never can believe in the doctrine of courtly
love. Love is to him a clever intrigue. Man and woman are
amorous by nature, but only restrained by the fear of public
scandal. Secrecy or some means to keep their reputation whole
be provided, they will not hesitate to have their will. Thus
secrecy is the key to love. Nor he can believe in Troilo's passion

¹ All the quotation from Il Filisteo is from the English translation by Mr. H.
Cummings.
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to Criseis; he thinks he will soon cool down, and even attempts to hint at his extreme anguish and sorrow at Criseis’ departure that Troilo might pick up a most beautiful girl in Troy. And when Troilo is bewailing in rapture of love’s passion on the Trojan wall, he secretly laughs at him.

‘It comforts me’ then Troil softly said,
‘To have my gentle thought and wishes pure
Make me so certain that sh’ll come ere long for me.’
But Pandar only laughed inwardly
At that he heard Prince Troil raptly say,
For he, no one else, could know and see
The cause that moved the young knight’s lips that way;
(Canto VII, st. 9-10)

He knows what Troilo’s ‘gentle thought and wishes pure’ are.
Pandarus is very much different from Pandaro though his part in this tragedy of love is the same. He is Criseyde’s uncle and much older than Troilus. Nor he is a frivolous lover as Pandaro is, but a true subject of Venus and firm believer of courtly love. Hear what he says at his first discovery of Troilus’ sorrow:

What? shulde he therfor fallen in despeyr,
Or be recreaunt for his owene tene,
Or sleen him-self, al be his lady dayr?
Nay, nay, but ever in oon be fresh and grene
To serve and love his dere hertes quene,
And thenke it is a guerdoun hit to serve
A thousand-fold more than he can deserve. (Bk. I, st. 117)

Or his words at Troilus’ raillery against Love:

He hasteth well that wysly can abyde;
Be dilligent, and trewe, and ay wel byde.
By lusty, free, persevere in thy servyse,
And al is wel, if thou werke in this wyse. (Bk. I, st. 137)

And sith that god of love hath thee bistowed
In place digne un-to thy worthinesse,
Stond faste, for to good port hastow rowed;
And of thy-self, for any heavinesse,
Hope alwey wel; (Bk. I, st. 139)
But trewely, it sete hir wel right nouthe
A worthy knight to loven and cheryce,
And but she do, I holde it for a vyce. (Bk. I, st. 141)

Now here is revealed the true vein of l'amour courtois. What is expounded by Pandarus is the four steps of courtly love: constancy, service, gentility, and humility. Nor he thinks that the intrigue or cunning secrecy is the key to love, but such love as Troilus entertains for Criseyde is legitimate and he interprets secrecy in the very terms Andreas Chappelanus or Provençal poets taught. Also he warns Troilus that his love of Criseyde is bestowed on him by the god of love and that he should never look on it as a sexual pleasure. As a true subject of the god of love, Pandarus is ever faithful in his service. When Pandaro says to Troilo that he can find another beauty and forget Criseis, he really means it, but Chaucer carefully puts the following comment on the similar speech from Pandarus:

Thise wordis seyde he for the nones alle,
To helpe his freend, lest he for sorwe deyde.
For douteless, to doon his wo to falle,
He roughte not what unthrift that he seyde. (Bk. IV, st. 62)

And important of all, his counsel to Troilus is entirely on the doctrine and codes of love and never falls as low as the wiles of love.

Now the difference between Pandaro and Pandarus is, I believe, fairly clear. The former lives in the age of Renaissance and the latter in the mediaeval age when the codes of courtly love still bound men and women of upper class. Pandaro understands love in its sexual term and Pandarus in that of l'amour courtois. Pandaro seduces his cousin merely to give them pleasure of life, and Pandarus does everything as he firmly believes in the propriety of Troilus' love and worthiness of such love. But in neither case can be detected the influence of Vekke in the Roman. Neither speaks of the wiles of love nor is as low a bawd as Vekke is. In spite of humorous side of Pandarus' character, his speech is always
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on the philosophy and doctrine of love, and most of all he is a firm believer and supporter of l'amour courtois, which is a vital difference from Vekke. Sometimes Pandarus makes jokes on love, but that he does not mean it is recognised and admitted by Mr. Lewis himself. Then what resemblance can there be between them two? I can not trace none nor think Vekke the prototype of Pandarus. Then, where can we find it? Is it entirely Chaucer's creation? I incline to think it otherwise. There is a character or accident in the Roman which bears a closer resemblance and a greater significance to the character of Pandarus. It is Friend.

When the Lover in the Roman is driven out from the rose-bud by Daunger, he goes to Friend for advice remembering what Love told him. He tells the Lover that Daunger can be pacified by service and obedience:

I shal the telle what thou shalt do,—
Mekely I rede thou go him to,
Of herte pray him specialy
Of thy trespase to have mercy,...(ll. 3381-4)

When Daunger is pacified:

Now goth wel thyn affaire,
He shal to thee be debonaire,
Though he aforn was dispitous,
He shal heeraftir be gracious.
If her were touchid on som good veyne,
He shuld yit rewen on thy peyne.
Suffre, I rede, and no boost make,
Til thou at good mes mayst him take.
By suffraunce and by wordis softe,
A man may overcomen ofte
Him that aforn he hadde in drede,... (ll. 3455-65)

What Friend advises is service, obedience, humility (softe wordis), and secrecy (no boost make), and echoes what Pandarus says to

\[ f \] Allegory of Love, p. 193.
Troilus. Perhaps resemblance may seem vague at first sight, though here are the bones and bases of Pandarus’ speech; but it will become clearer when the part Friend plays in the Roman is surveyed.

God of Love gives instructions on l’amour courtois to the Lover when he feels passion for the rose-bud. When he finds his anguish of love overwhelming, he must go to his friend.

Therefore I rede thee that thou get
A felowe that can wel concele
And kepe thy counsel and wel hele,
To whom go shewe hoolly thy herte,
Bothe wele and wo, Ioye and smerte:
To gete comfort to him thou go,
And privily, between yow two,
Ye shal speke of that goodly thing,
That hath thy herte in hir kepyn...
Of al thy state thou shalt him say,
And aske him counsell how thou may
Do any thing that may hir plese;
For it to thee shal do gret ese,
That he may wite thou trust him so,
Bothe of thy wele and of thy wo.
And if his herte to love be set,
His companye is muche the bet,
For reson wol, he shewe to the
Al utirly his privite;...
Than shal he forther, ferre and nerc,
And namely to thy lady dere,
In siker wyse; ye, every other
Shal helpen as his owne brother,
In trouthe withoute doublenesse,
And kepen cloos in sikerenesse. (ll. 2856-80)

Thus Friend is allotted a part not only to be a close friend of the Lover but his adviser. And in the same capacity Pandarus approaches Troilus. Pandarus tries to persuade Troilus to discover his cause:

The wyse seyth, “wo him that is allone,
For, and he falle, he ath noon help to ryse;”
And sith thou hast a felowe, tel thy moone; (Bk. I, st. 100)
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which reflects literary what Love says about Swete-Spchei in the Roman. When Troilus tells him his wele and wo, Pandarus, as Love told the Lover, shows his own case and promises him every help. And at Troilus' raillery comes the above counsel which, as I suggested already, echoes that of Friend, and the very passage is again reflected in his words of persuasion to Criseyde. And as for the rest of Pandarus' efforts to realize Troilus' passion is merely the representation in concrete form of Love's advise that Friend shall

    forther, ferre, and nere,
    And namely to thy lady dere,
    In siker wyse;

Thus the resemblance between Friend and Pandarus is considerably close, and Chaucer, who set the personified accidents moving in a concrete story, must have received the hint for Pandarus from Friend in the Roman. And this relation furthermore sheds a new light on Chaucer's modification of Pandarus' character from a young beau to an old man and from Criseis' cousin to her uncle. If Pandarus is only given a part of go-between and Troilus' friend, why should he be put forward in his age? There is no incongruity to retain his original age in the English version if we take such view. But suppose he is derived from Friend with his function as Troilus' close friend and adviser, it would be more natural if the adviser were older than the one advised by him; and he would be better be an uncle than a cousin from his

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1 Whan that I here
Spoken of him that is so dere,
To me it voidith al my smerte,
Y-wis, he sit so nere myn herte.
To speke of him, at eve or morwe,
It cureth me of al my sorwe... 
She wist ful wel that Swete Speking
Comfortith in ful mucho thing.

(Pseudo-Chaucerian Roman, II. 2845-50, passim.)
age. This seems to me what occurred in Chaucer's mind at his work, and by this process Pandarus became older than Torilus and an uncle to Criseyde.

Putting these two points side by side,—the resemblance between Friend and Pandarus, and the change made in Pandarus' age and relation to Criseyde—and weighing them together carefully, all the circumstance seems to point to Friend as the origin of Pandarus and again to the probability that Chaucer obtained a hint from Friend in the Roman for his Pandarus. This view, I believe, does not crash with that of Mr. Lewis, but goes with it to illustrate Chaucer's greatness as one who combined the estranged traditions of mediaeval romance to create one far greater and unrivalled—the crowning victory of mediaeval romances; and furthermore it also offers, in the change of Pandarus' age, another example of what some scholars call Chaucer's realistic touch.