The Mirour of His Mynde: Devising Consciousness in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*

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Tutkielma tarkastelee fiktiivistä tajunnankuvausta Geoffrey Chaucerin runossa *Troilus and Criseyde* (n. 1380). Aiheen käsittelyssä hyödynnetään sekä klassisen että kognitiivisen narratologian teoreettisia työkaluja, joita muokataan keskiaikaisen kerronnan erityispiirteiden avulla.

Tutkielmassa esitetään, että runossa keskeisellä paikalla esiintyvä peili symboloi teoksen tajunnankuvausta niin rakenteellisesti kuin temaattisestikin. Runo ilmentää myös keskiajan ristiriitaista suhdetta peiliin yhtä aikaa positiivisesti ja negatiivisesti värittyneenä jäljittelyn välineenä. Kerrontateknisten keinojen analyysin kautta osoitetaan, että henkilöhahmojen tajunnankuvaus tuottaa analogisia, yleistettyjä ja typologisia tajuntoja, jotka yhtäältä pohjaavat kollektiiviseen tuttuuden kokemukseen, mutta toisaalta korostavat oman olemuksensa keinotekoisuutta.

Tutkielman alkupuolella käsitellään kertojan ja henkilöhahmojen käyttämien yhteisten psykoanalogioiden tuottamaa ketjuunnuttavaa vaikutelmaa, joka kyseenalaistaa käsityksen kerronnan agenttien erillisistä diegeettisistä tasoista ja näiden välisestä tiedollisesta hierarkiasta. Tekijän, kertojan, henkilöhahmojen ja yleisön roolit määritellään uudelleen suullisen runouden kehyksessä.

Tutkielman loppupuolella hyödynnetään ja muokataan Alan Palmerin ajatusta fiktiivisistä mielistä kognitiivisina kertomuksina. Lisäksi todetaan, että typologisointi ja yleistäminen runon tajunnankuvauksen keinoina heijastelevat keskiaikaista maailmankatsomusta, joskin henkilöhahmot ilmentävät myös yksilöllisen kokemuksen kaipuuta. Peili symbolisoi todellisuuden ja todellisuuden kuvan välistä eroa: syntiinlankeemuksessa korruptoitunut ihmiskieli ei saa otetta mielestä muutoin kuin kiertoteitse, mikä johtaa ristipaineeseen kertomisen halun ja vaikenemisen välillä.

Loppuluvussa esitetään tutkimustulosten perusteella alustavia huomioita keskiaikaisen narratologian mahdollisista suuntaviivoista sekä modernin ja keskiaikaisen kerronnan teorian yhdistämisestä.

Avainsanat: Chaucer, fiktiivinen mieli, kaunokirjallinen tajunnankuvaus, keskiaikainen kerronta, kirjallinen typologia, klassinen narratologia, kognitiivinen narratologia, *Troilus and Criseyde*

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By chaunce the stripling being strayde from all his companie,
Sayde: Is there any body nie? Straight Echo answerde: I.
Amazde he castes his eye aside, and looketh round about,
And Come (that all the Forrest roong) aloud he calleth out.
And Come (sayth she:) he looketh backe, and seeing no man followe,
Why fliste, he cryeth once againe: and she the same doth hallowe.

-- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*; trans. Arthur Golding, 1567 --

I

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EXORDIUM

Or, Bringing the Mind of the Auditor into a Proper Condition

Somewhere in Troy, during the capture of the city by the Greeks, a young man named Troilus is heading back home from the temple. He is flustered and bemused: he has just seen the most beautiful woman he has ever laid eyes upon and he is walking along trying to sort out his thoughts. When he reaches his room, he sits on the bed and recalls his experience:

> And whan that he in chambre was allone,
> He doun vp-on his beddes feet hym sette,
> And first he gan to sike and eft to grone,
> And thought ay on hire so with-outen lette,
> That as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
> That he hire sauȝ, and temple, and al the wise
> Right of hire look, and gan it newe a-vise.
>
> 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 auenture
> To loue swich oon, and if he dede his cure
> To seruen hir, ȝet myghte he falle in grace,
> Or ellis for oon of hire seruantes pace.
> (*TC = Troilus and Criseyde*, 108)

These two stanzas from Geoffrey Chaucer's late medieval poem *Troilus and Criseyde* (ca. 1380) seek to convey to the reader Troilus's inner life: his turmoil, his memory of Criseyde, his eventual decision to pursue the lady. To achieve this effect, Chaucer employs varied techniques, beginning with the description of the character's desolate body language and gestures ("He doun vp-on his beddes feet hym sette"; "And first he gan to sike and eft to grone"), then moving on to personified thought report ("his spirit mette"; "his herte fynde").

Moreover, the author constructs the hero's state of mind as if he were a house-builder, invoking the familiar concepts of mirror and room in order to imitate in language the complicated workings of human mental functioning: the metaphor of the mind as a chamber ("And whan that he in chambre was allone") and the representation of thought processes as images in a mirror ("Thus gan he make a mirour of his mynde") both serve to naturalise and to make sensible that which is essentially unrepresentable – a precise portrayal of human consciousness through the medium of language.

The representation of thought and consciousness in literature has received considerable attention from narrative theorists over the years. The classical speech-category approach advocated by Dorrit Cohn in her seminal work *Transparent Minds* (1978) has lately been challenged by postclassical narratologists in favour of a more holistic view of the phenomenon, which may arguably be achieved by employing the disciplines of cognitive science in the study of fictional minds (cf. Fludernik 1996; Palmer 2004; Zunshine 2006; Palmer 2010; Herman 2011). Despite their radical differences, both these approaches have in common that they have predominantly focused on the consciousness representation in the modern novel. The medieval mind, on the other hand, has been virtually ignored, save for Monika Fludernik's (2011) sketchy outline of thought representation in Middle English texts. In addition to consciousness representation, the other aspects of medieval narrative have been only partially explored from a narratological perspective, in spite of the fact that a diachronisation of narratological studies was proposed by Fludernik (2003) over a decade ago. In a more recent article, von Contzen (2014) calls for a medieval narratology which would engage in a dialogue with classical and postclassical narrative theories in order to produce a systematic review of the medieval forms of narration.

This thesis aims to contribute to the research gap in narratology by considering Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* in a new context as an early example of consciousness

representation in literature. The poem, composed in rhyme royal and set against the backdrop of the Siege of Troy, retells the sad yet comic tale of the Trojan prince Troilus and his secret beloved Criseyde. As the excerpt above illustrates, in portraying the tumultuous love affair Chaucer is extensively concerned with the characters' "herte and ek the woful goost ther-inne" (*TC*, 396), in other words their inner states ranging from despair and heartbreak to joy and longing. The text therefore challenges the general assumption that there is no proper presentation of consciousness in literature before the eighteenth century (cf. Fludernik 2011, 69) and moreover opposes the suggestion by Elizabeth Hart (2011, 122) that Sir Philip Sidney in the sixteenth century was the first writer in English to experiment with ways of representing consciousness in fiction. Given Chaucer's emphasis on the inner lives of his characters in *Troilus*, it is high time that the poem should be explored in the framework of modern theories of consciousness representation in narrative. All in all, my intention is to show that bringing together Chaucer's medieval text and contemporary literary theory enriches our understanding of both and opens up new perspectives on how fictional minds and narratives are constructed.

My exploration of Chaucer's techniques of evoking his characters' mental activity will lead to the following observations:

1.   The representation of consciousness in *Troilus and Criseyde* is *catenative* (as in the sense of being linked together in a chain) and *instrumental*, and the mirror introduced early in the narrative serves as a symbol for both. The minds of the characters are instrumental, because Chaucer constructs them by portraying inner life in the form of psycho-analogies. This technique strives for the naturalisation of fictional consciousness and yet literally objectifies the representation of the mind. It also entails Chaucer's idea of narrative as a

constant negotiation of meaning between author, characters and audiences. Linked together by the recurring verb "to devisen," the narrator and the characters construct the minds and events in collaboration, mirroring each other verbally and functionally, creating catenative chains of reflection which transgress narrative levels and question the modern idea of narrative communication as a unidirectional process characterised by authorial control over the text. The oral recitation of the poem, as it would have been performed in Chaucer's time, brings into focus the role of the audience in the construction of the minds of the characters, as well as the specific features of medieval *metalepsis*.

2. The minds of the characters in *Troilus* can also be described as *visual*, *collective* and *typological* minds, which reflect everyday experience as well as literary and mythological traditions. The processes of generalisation and typologisation lead to the impression of a skewed reflection of the minds the text purports to represent. Even as Chaucer constantly professes to be presenting the "soth" (truth) with regard to the story and the characters' minds, he also questions the possibility of such a construct. The mirror thus reflects the narrative structure as well as the thematic content of the poem. As the narrative progresses, the mirror breaks: it cannot offer a perfect reflection – the "soth" – of the human mind or the narrative events, which creates in the poem a contradictory drive to fall back to silence.

These arguments will be developed in full in Chapter II. Before that, I will situate the study in the context of previous research by briefly reviewing the key narratological ideas about

consciousness representation that I will make use of in my examination of Chaucer's work. I will also consider the specific features of medieval literature in relation to literary consciousness representation and take a cursory look at the research conducted by Chaucer scholars which, to some extent, coincides with my point of view. Finally, in the light of the findings in Chapter II, Chapter III suggests some future directions for further research with a diachronic orientation.

Consciousness Representation and the Medieval Mind

One of the pleasures of reading fiction is, undoubtedly, the fact that many narratives purport to grant us access to the private thoughts and emotions of their characters. Consequently, cognitive narratology tends to see the representation of mental functioning as the essential feature of fictional narrative. Fludernik's (1996) definition of narrative as "experientiality" postulates that the portrayal of human experience is what produces narrativity, and Herman similarly insists that *qualia*, that is, "the sense or feeling of what it is like to be someone or something having a given experience", is an element of a prototypical story; narratives, in other words, are recognisable as narratives "partly because of how stories orient themselves around the what-it's-like properties of experiencing consciousnesses in storyworlds" (Herman 2009, 145–46). Due to the centrality of fictional characters' mental processes, then, the study of fictional minds will arguably lead to a better understanding of the novelistic form as a whole (cf. Palmer 2004, 12).

Along with the textual minds of characters, the mind of the reader is brought into the spotlight by cognitive narratologists. In Lisa Zunshine's view, we read fiction because of the cognitive rewards it offers us in the form of stimulating our Theory of Mind – that is, our capacity to attribute mental states to self and others in order to understand and explain observable behaviour (Zunshine 2006, 24–25, 162). According to Zunshine, fictional

storytelling is a long-term cognitive experiment which has been running throughout the history of narrative: thus, the desire to test the reader's cognitive faculties should not be seen as solely a modernist feature, but as a practice in which fiction writers of all times have actively engaged (ibid. 26–27, 41).

Outside narrative fiction, to be sure, we constantly apply our Theory of Mind to interpret the actions of our fellow human beings – our mind-reading ability is limited to outward signals of mental states. In reading a story, however, we are often under the impression that we can actually see into the characters' thoughts: in Cohn's (1978) formulation, fictional minds are *transparent*, and the writer's simulated access into consciousness through certain narrative devices – the "penetrative optic" which "allows the narrator to know what cannot be known in the real world" – is exclusive to fiction (Cohn 1999, 16). In third-person narration, the devices of consciousness representation fall into three categories: (i) quoted monologue, (ii) psycho-narration and (iii) narrated monologue (Cohn 1978, 21–126). The most mimetic of the three, quoted monologue, also known as direct thought, is the word-for-word delivery of characters' thoughts (for instance, "Troilus thought: 'I love Criseyde'"). Psycho-narration (or thought report) corresponds to the representation of characters' thoughts in the narrator's discourse ("Troilus realised that he loved Criseyde"), whereas narrated monologue, or free indirect thought, seeks to combine the subjectivity of the character with the narrator's discourse ("Troilus closed his eyes. By Jove, he loved Criseyde!").

Useful as these categories are in classifying different types of narrative, Palmer argues that analysing characters' thought processes with the same tools that are employed in the analysis of their speech (direct, indirect and free indirect discourse, respectively) falls short of fully explaining the complexity of fictional consciousness representation. He suggests that, by focusing on the idea of consciousness as essentially private and verbal, narrative

theory has neglected the social nature of mental functioning and failed to describe the "whole minds" of fictional characters which are constituted by the reader on the basis of several narrative elements, including, for example, descriptive actions and the presentation of intermental thinking (Palmer 2004, 11, 57–69; for a critique of the "whole mind" hypothesis, see McHale 2012). To put the point in another way, the externalist perspective on the mind stresses the aspects that are outer, active, public and social, compared to the internalist perspective with its emphasis on the inner, introspective and individual aspects of the mind (Palmer 2010, 39).

Palmer's "whole mind" refers to the minds of particular characters in a particular novel, but it might also be pointed out that in order to obtain a comprehensive diachronic picture of the phenomenon of consciousness representation and to understand the "whole mind" of narrative fiction, we must not restrict our attention to modernist literature, but investigate the fictional mind-construction of earlier periods as well. This work has already been started in David Herman's edited book *The Emergence of Mind. Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English* (2011), which traces the strategies of depicting the mind in English literature from 700 to the present. Whereas Leslie Lockett and Monika Fludernik's essays in the anthology investigate the general trends of representing the mind in Old and Middle English literature, my study aims at a detailed analysis of a particular text and will at the same time provide insight into the medieval concept of narrative.

Although psycho-narration, quoted monologue and, to a degree, even narrated monologue are certainly present in medieval narrative, it also reveals the inadequacy of the speech-category approach. As Lockett (2011) and Fludernik (2011) establish, and as my analysis of *Troilus and Criseyde* will demonstrate, medieval literature shows, perhaps even more clearly than modern fiction, that the minds of the characters are indeed constructed by the reader – or the audience, to use a term that better reflects the position of Chaucer's

contemporary addressees – on the basis of numerous narrative elements outside the scope of the speech categories. Palmer's "whole mind" argument is therefore especially helpful in the conceptualisation of medieval narrative and, moreover, the emphasis placed by cognitive narratology on the social nature of thought corresponds particularly well with the heightened sense of collectivity which appears to have been a significant aspect of the medieval psyche. As the distinguished medievalist Jacques Le Goff puts it,

> The mentalities and sensibilities of medieval men were dominated by a sense of insecurity which determined the basis of their attitudes. It was a material and moral insecurity, for which, according to the Church, there was only one remedy . . . : to rely on the solidarity of the group, of the communities of which one formed a part, and to avoid breaching this solidarity by ambition or derogation.
> (Le Goff 1988a, 325)

Individualism was not held in as high regard as it is today: indeed, it is a "fascinating tendency of the Middle Ages . . . to be much less interested in the individual and his experiences and reactions, than in the time-honored experiences of all men" (Vitz 1989, 25–26). The value of a medieval experience, then, is measured by its similarity to that of the others, and in life as well as literature "the symbolic, exemplary side of things takes precedence over the specific case" (ibid. 40).

Given these characteristics of the medieval *Zeitgeist* and of the internalist approach stressing the introspective revelation of individual minds, it is no wonder that there should exist a general assumption that consciousness representation cannot be found in the literature of the Middle Ages. Another factor perhaps contributing to this view is the distinct didactic quality of medieval storytelling. The question of why and for what purpose the story is being told was central to the medieval concept of narrative resting on Horace's formulation that poetry must be pleasant and profitable (*dulce et utile*), and poets who seemingly wrote without purpose (*poetas inutiliter scribentes*) were severely criticised by medieval commentators (Minnis 1988, 23; on medieval literature as ethics, see also Allen 1982). If we

moderns indeed read fiction for "maximum cognitive payoff" (Palmer 2004, 176), the medieval audiences, on the other hand, seem to have cherished the idea of narrative as an educative tool to reflect on their morals and to improve their character. Of course, this is a simplified view of both eras. We certainly read novels for, among other reasons, their ethical insight, and, especially in the later Middle Ages, the recreational pleasure provided by literature tends to displace the moral benefits of reading (cf. Olson 1982). While "experientiality" in the sense of a "quasi-mimetic evocation of real-life experience" (Fludernik 1996, 12) might not be the central source of pleasure in all medieval literature, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, as I hope to show, is certainly very much occupied with the experiencing mind.

According to Travis (1987, 205), Chaucer's poetry is "for its era unusually self-reflexive", which perhaps explains the tendency among some critics to view Chaucer as a proto-postmodernist or proto-deconstructivist (for a critique of this argument, see Myles 1994, 1–27). For instance, Leicester (1987), regards *Troilus* as an experimental work which explores the failure of language and breaks down the illusion of a coherent narrative, whereas Knapp (1987) argues that the character of the Wife of Bath from *The Canterbury Tales* represents an attempt to escape a centralising authority that seeks to subject everything to a standardised system of interpretation. These views are similar to my approach in that they both emphasise the inadequacy of language as well as the role of Chaucer's characters and readers not only as passive recipients of a moral lesson, but as active agents in constructing the meaning of the texts in collaboration with the writer who, contrary to the modern preference for the effaced author, is a strong presence in the narrative.[1]

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[1] Since the classical narratological distinction between the narrator, the real author and the implied author is not the main interest of this study (and perhaps not even applicable as such to medieval narrative), I will use the terms "author" and "narrator" or "author-narrator" interchangeably with the author's name. The narrator of *Troilus* can, more or less, be identified with the author from the

The audience and the author, then, are just as central to the structure of *Troilus* as are its characters, which is demonstrated, among other things, by the narrative devices Chaucer employs to capture the inner workings of his love-smitten protagonists and the rest of the *dramatis personae*. In view of this, a question arises: *whose* mind are we in fact talking about – the author's, the reader's or the characters'? Mäkelä (2011, 45) points out that we should not conceive of consciousness representation as being limited to the minds of the characters within the storyworld, due to the fact that there are active minds at work outside of it as well – that of the author (or the narrator) connecting the characters' minds to larger themes and that of the reader whose previous knowledge of narrative devices and techniques inevitably influences her perception of fictional minds. The importance of conventions in representing minds in textual form is also underlined by McHale, who asserts that "these conventions . . . are not part of our natural endowment of everyday experience, but must be learned through exposure to texts" and, furthermore, "they change over time, from one era to the next" (McHale 2012, 120).[2]

The multiplicity of minds as well as the mutability of the conventions of consciousness representation are corroborated in this study by a close reading of Chaucer's fictional minds in *Troilus and Criseyde*, yet the poem will also show that certain narrative techniques familiar to us today go at least as far back as the fourteenth century. Some of these techniques have already been identified by Fludernik, who distinguishes seven modes of

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dedication in the end to Chaucer's friend John Gower (whose moral treatise, incidentally, is titled *Mirour de l'Omme – The Mirror of Man*).

[2] McHale points out that if the cognitivist approach to consciousness representation assumes that the reality of mental experience changes over time and that the changing literary conventions reflect "a succession of attempts to capture that always new, always changing reality," then the project runs the risk of circular reasoning, for "the evidence of historical changes in consciousness is being adduced from the very same textual sources that are then explained *in terms of* those historical changes" (ibid. 121–23; emphasis original). I will have something to say in a later section of this thesis about the debate as to whether fictional minds are like real-world minds (the so-called "anti-Exceptionalist position") or somehow different from them (the "Exceptionality Thesis"), but I will not discuss in detail the medieval theory of cognition. For an introduction on the subject, see Brower-Toland 2012.

medieval consciousness representation, including the speech categories of classical narratology: they are, (i) descriptions of gestures, (ii) direct discourse, (iii) psycho-narration, (iv) narratorial empathy, (v) free indirect discourse, (vi) collective consciousness and (vii) virtual direct speech (Fludernik 2011, 73–93). I shall discuss some of these categories further in the next chapter in which the tools of classical and postclassical narratology will be applied to Chaucer's text to bring out its "modernity in alterity" (Jauss 1979, 198).

II

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CONFIRMATIO

A Geography of the Mind

Let us go back to Troilus's chamber, where the prince is contemplating his love for the beautiful Criseyde in the "mirour of his mynde". The narrator tells us that Troilus is so occupied with thinking about his first encounter with the woman (he is thinking about her "withouten-lette" – without interruption) that eventually he experiences a kind of waking vision ("his spirit mette" – his spirit dreamt) in which the scene replays itself as if in a mirror: "he hire sauȝ, and temple, and al the wise / Right of hire look, and gan it newe a-vise." By employing the image of the mirror, Chaucer further objectifies and makes even more concrete the metaphor of "seeing with the mind's eye," while the reflective quality of the looking glass also implicates the subjectivity of the viewer.[3] The mirror, then, becomes a structurally and thematically significant symbol, expressing at once the author's attempt to imitate the geography of the mind as well as the distorted outcome of that attempt.[4] It also calls to attention the striking visuality of Chaucer's minds that I hope to demonstrate in the following sections.

[3] The "mind's eye" metaphor was known in the Middle Ages, and Chaucer makes use of it in his other poems as well. In *The Canterbury Tales*, a blind man's imagination is described as "thilke eyen of his mynde / With whiche men seen, after that they ben blynde" ("The Man of Law's Tale"; ll. 552–53).

[4] I owe the expression "geography of the mind" to Sabine Melchior-Bonnet (2002, 1), who speaks of the mirror as revealing "a new geography of the body, which made visible previously unfamiliar images (one's back and profile) and stirred up sensations of modesty and self-consciousness." I have adapted Melchior-Bonnet's evocative phrase to better suit the purposes of this study.

A powerful symbol in the Holy Scripture, Neoplatonic texts and the writings of the Church Fathers, the mirror held an ambivalent position in the medieval mind-set. On the one hand, it was seen as an analogy to express the idea of the human soul as a reflection of God; on the other, it was an instrument of the Devil to tempt people onto the path of vanity and pride by making them worship their own image instead of God's (Melchior-Bonnet 2002, 192–95). Jean de Meun wrote of the marvellous yet deceptive powers of the mirror in the *Roman de la Rose* (ca. 1275), emphasising that mirrors could "produce various images in different guises – upright, elongated or upside down", causing "phantoms to appear to those who look in" (de Meun 1994, 280). The spiritual symbolism of the mirror encompassed the principle of imitation and the search for moral improvement: the Bible was seen as "the true mirror in which man should contemplate himself" to live up to his dignified role as a human being created in God's image (Melchior-Bonnet 2002, 108–11). The mirroring function of stories and books was also present in secular literature: besides the "speculum" genre which in encyclopedic form showcased contemporary knowledge for the reader to reflect upon, the short anecdotes known as *exempla* were used to "illustrate a moral or theological point, usually by delivering a salutary lesson" (Le Goff 1988b, 78).

My argument for the symbolic centrality of the mirror in Chaucer's practice of consciousness representation in *Troilus and Criseyde* should become clear in my discussion of the poem's structure below, but before that a few words about the crucial scene of Troilus looking in the mirror are perhaps relevant here. First, it is noteworthy that the mirror scene occurs fairly early in the poem (Book 1, lines 358–371), at a moment which not only shapes the course the narrative is about to take, but without which there would be no story in the first place: on account of the vision in his mind's eye, Troilus makes the decision to court Criseyde ("And that he wel koude in his herte fynde, / It was to hym a right good auenture / To loue swich oon"), despite the fact that he cannot be certain of the outcome ("and if he dede his cure

/ To seruen hir, ȝet myghte he falle in grace, / Or ellis for oon of hire seruantes pace"). Troilus's interpretation of the possible love affair as a "right good auenture" is pointedly literary in nature and reminiscent of the words later spoken by Pandarus, Criseyde's uncle and Troilus's right-hand man in the business of wooing, as he promises Troilus to arrange matters to the prince's liking: "I shal thi proces set in swych a kynde, / And god to-forn, that it shal the suffise, / ffor it shal be right as thow wolt deuyse" (*TC*, 264). Pandarus, in other words, promises to make a good story out of the events presented to him: without him, the plot would simply stop. Both Troilus and Pandarus act as catalysts for the narrative progression, echoing the role of the author as the creative force behind the text and also underlining the literariness of the unfolding events and minds, referred to by the characters as "right good auenture" and "thi proces". This emphasis on the artificiality of the told is, I think, linked to the theme of the broken mirror: on the other side of the smooth reflective chains between the narrative agents we find the dark side of the ambivalent mirror filled with echoes that can lead one astray. As mentioned earlier and as will be shown in the following paragraphs, through his technique of consciousness representation Chaucer presents stories, including *Troilus and Criseyde*, as imperfect reflections incapable of capturing the inner experience.

Secondly, it should be pointed out that Chaucer's expansion and modification of Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* (ca. 1335–40), the text he is translating from, is particularly prominent in the attention he gives to the characters' inner motives. Most of the passages of *Troilus* that I shall discuss below are Chaucer's additions to Boccaccio's account of the story, and it is especially important to my argument that Chaucer should depart from the Italian original precisely in the scene that I consider structurally and thematically pivotal: whereas Boccaccio simply states that Prince Troiolo praises Lady Criseida's appearance in his thoughts, Chaucer adds the image of the mirror, thus setting the stage for the rest of his narrative "proces". I will now move on to explore this process in detail.

Storm Clouds, Winter Trees and Other Pictures

The two so-called "mirror stanzas" that I have already extensively discussed present a good example of Chaucerian psycho-narration, which is the default mode of consciousness representation in *Troilus and Criseyde*: the third-person narrator reports and summarises the character's thoughts in his own discourse, telling the reader that Troilus thinks about Criseyde rather than letting Troilus speak for himself ("And first *he* gan to sike and eft to grone / And thought ay on hire so with-outen lette"). A very common mode of consciousness representation in modern as well as medieval narrative (cf. Fludernik 2011, 79), psycho-narration is a form which perhaps implies "the narrator's superior knowledge of the character's inner life and his superior ability to present it and assess it" (Cohn 1978, 29). It is a technique which, according to Cohn, clarifies a character's consciousness and is particularly useful in the rendering of sub-verbal states:

> Not only can it order and explain a character's conscious thoughts better than the character himself, it can also effectively articulate a psychic life that remains unverbalized, penumbral, or obscure. Accordingly psycho-narration often renders, in a narrator's knowing words, what a character "knows," without knowing how to put it into words.
> (ibid. 46)

"Without knowing how to put it into words" – this proves to be a problematic claim in the case of *Troilus and Criseyde*. As a matter of fact, the characters of the poem often know *exactly* how to put into words their innermost sentiments, pouring out their souls in lengthy quoted monologues which, interestingly enough, tend to reflect the imagery put forward by the narrator in his instances of psycho-narration. This mirror-like tendency can be witnessed in the following passage in which the narrator first describes Criseyde's gloomy state of mind in terms of a cloud eclipsing the sun, and then, only a few lines later, the metaphor is echoed by Criseyde herself in the form of direct thought:

> But right as when the sonne shyneth bright,
> In March, that chaungeth ofte tyme his face,
> And that a cloude is put with wynd to flight,
> Which ouersprat the sonne as for a space,
> A cloudy thought gan through hire soule pace,
> That ouerspradde hire brighte thoughtes alle,
> So that for feere almost she gan to falle.
>
> That thought was this:
>
> . . .
>
> "ffor loue is ȝyet the mooste stormy lyf,
> Right of hym self, that euere was bigonne;
> ffor euere som mistrust or nice strif
> There is in loue, som cloude is ouere that sonne."
> (*TC*, 188–90)

Criseyde's doubts about loving Troilus are thus depicted by both the narrator and the character with the help of the weather simile, first in psycho-narration and subsequently in quoted monologue: a negative thought crosses Criseyde's mind like a cloud and darkens her spirits ("A cloudy thought gan through hire soule pace, / That ouerspradde hire brighte thoughtes alle"), and this thought, put into Criseyde's head by the narrator, gives rise to her own description of her situation as a landscape ravaged by storm ("ffor loue is ȝyet the mooste stormy lyf . . . ffor eyere som mistrust or nice strif / There is in loue, som cloude is ouere that sonne"). Moreover, when Criseyde's monologue is finished three stanzas later, the narrator resumes his reporting and again relies on the weather metaphor to convey the lady's mental condition, stating that her murky thoughts are now beginning to clear: "And after that, hire thought gan forto clere, / And seide, 'he which that nothing vndertaketh, / No thing nacheueth, be hym looth or deere'" (*TC*, 190). Due to its placement right after the stanzas explicitly referring to the weather phenomena, the narrator's depiction of Criseyde's clearing thought is quite easily associated with the idea of a clearing sky. The chain has come full circle: the image is reflected through Criseyde back to the narrator.

The above scene is a case in point of what I mean by the term "catenative consciousness representation": the characters interpret the contents of their thought through

the same metaphoric images as the author-narrator, and at the end of this chain the image is transferred to the reader who in turn visualises it in her own mind. To further illustrate the matter, let us take a look at another example. In the following passage, Troilus has just received a hope-inspiring letter from Criseyde and reads it with his heart racing ("ofte gan the herte glade and quake"; *TC*, 220); the effect of Criseyde's words on the prince is described by the narrator through the burning of fire and the growing of a tree:

> But as we may alday oure seluen see,
> Thorugh more wode or col the more fire,
> Right so encrees of hope, of what it be,
> Therwith ful ofte encresseth ek desire;
> Or as an ook comth of a litil spire,
> So thorugh this lettre which that she hym sente
> Encrescen gan desire of which he brente.
> (*TC*, 222)

The message is simple: the more wood one adds to the fire, the hotter it burns ("Thorugh more wode or col the more fire"), and the theme of growth is continued with the image of a small sprig developing into a great oak ("Or as an ook comth of a litil spire") – "Right so", exactly like that, does Troilus's passion for Criseyde increase as he reads the lady's promise-laden words. Only six stanzas later, the narrator's wood metaphor is picked up and enlarged upon by Pandarus. In an attempt to console Troilus, who is rather crestfallen by Criseyde's game of hard-to-get, the uncle compares the lady's stubbornness to a sturdy oak that is not easily bent by the winds:

> "Thenk here aȝeins: whan that the stordy ook,
> On which men hakketh ofte for the nones,
> Receyued hath the happy fallyng strook,
> The greete sweigh doth it come al at ones,
> As don thise rokkes or thise milnestones;
> ffor swifter cours comth thyng that is of wighte,
> Whan it descendeth, than don thynges lighte.

> "And reed that boweth down for euery blaste,
> fful lightly, cesse wynd, it wol aryse;
> But so nyl nought an ook when it is caste;
> It nedeth me nought the longe to forbise.
> Men shal reioissen of a grete empryse
> Acheued wel, and stant with-outen doute,
> Al han men ben the lenger ther-aboute.
> (*TC*, 226)

Heavy trees, once they receive "the happy fallyng strook", stay down, unlike reeds that "wol aryse" when the wind ceases; thus, by likening Criseyde's disposition to a proud oak, Pandarus tries to make Troilus see that her eventual surrender to the prince will be of permanent nature and that "The easy attainment of love makes it of little value," as one may read in *De arte honeste amandi*, the twelfth-century treatise on courtly love by Andreas Capellanus (1960, 185). A similar pattern may be observed here as in the previous example of the weather simile: the image of the wood is first applied by the narrator to explain a character's mental state, and soon afterwards the image is passed on to the characters who in turn take advantage of it to make sense either of their own emotions (as in the case of Criseyde) or of those of the others (as in the case of Pandarus elucidating Criseyde's frame of mind to Troilus). The narrative thus seems to challenge the modern interpretation of psycho-narration as a form of authorial rhetoric indicating a "disparity between the narrating and the figural consciousness", with the former being capable of reporting subconscious emotions and motivations inaccessible to the characters themselves (Cohn 1978, 28–31). In *Troilus*, the authorial mode that, to the modern mind, seems to start in the narrator's psycho-narration becomes cancelled by the characters in their quoted monologues which replicate the narrator's assessments of their mental states.

The technique of conveying mental movements by metaphorical images in modern fiction is briefly discussed by Cohn, who names these similes "psycho-analogies" and remarks that their use in narratives "objectifies, animalizes, and personifies psychic forces" (Cohn 1978, 42). With respect to medieval narration, Fludernik (2011, 92–93) places such

similes in the category of "virtual direct speech" and quotes a passage from *The Canterbury Tales*, where the representation of fear experienced by the duelling knights gives rise to an extensive simile that goes as far as to include an invented virtual soliloquy by the character inhabiting the source domain for the analogy. Fludernik points out that the technique is relatively rare in Middle English literature and that in Chaucer "such inventive and complex similes . . . stand out and point toward later developments in narrative, particularly toward Elizabethan depictions of characters' emotions in the romance genre."

In *Troilus*, Chaucer's employment of psycho-analogies is so systematic and consistent that it clearly indicates the existence of a broader interpretive pattern important for the poem as a whole. In the course of the narrative, Chaucer creates a variety of these metaphorical images, which become the instruments for conveying to the audience the characters' inner worlds. Sometimes the instrument assumes a simple form, for example when the narrator poignantly describes Criseyde's fading memory of Troilus as a knotless rope slipping through her heart: "ffor bothe Troilus and Troie town / Shal knotteles thorugh-out hire herte slide" (*TC*, 486); more often, however, the narrator and the characters opt for larger visual panoramas, such as the ones introduced above, that the audience is called on to mentally reproduce – or, in Chaucer's own vocabulary, to "devyse".

The Middle English verb "devisen", employed by Chaucer to describe the actions of all the narrative agents, carries such meanings as *imagine*, *design*, *contrive*, *arrange*, *construct*, *compose* and *narrate* (Benson 1987, 1238). I have already briefly referred to Pandarus as the generating force of the narrative action and the designer of the lovers' fate: with God-like authority he proclaims that the events will take place according to his plan, that "This thyng shal be right as I ʒow deuyse" (*TC*, 258), and in the passage I quoted at the end of the previous section, he promised to make certain that everything "shal be right as thow [Troilus] wolt deuyse". In these lines "deuyse" undoubtedly refers to the concrete hopes and

desires of the two characters (that is, their imaginings of how the love affair will proceed), but if we take into consideration the different senses of the verb (such as "to construct" and "to narrate") as well as the larger interpretive framework that I am attempting to establish here, it is intriguing to read the lines as pointing to the functional similarity between the narrative agents, which is particularly conspicuous in the instances of consciousness representation. In constructing the mental sceneries with the help of their "herte, which that is [their] brestes eye" (*TC*, 114), the characters and the audience in effect act as Chaucer's doubles, reflecting the author-narrator's task of creation, to which the narrator frequently alludes by the phrase "as I shal ʒow deuyse". Consider, for example, the following stanzas:

> And as in winter leues ben birafte,
> Ech after other til the tree be bare,
> So that ther nys but bark and braunche i-lafte,
> Lith Troilus byraft of eche welfare,
> I-bounden in the blake bark of care,
> Disposed wood out of his wit to breyde,
> So sore hym sat the chaungynge of Criseyde.
>
> He rist hym vp, and euery dore he shette
> And wyndow ek, and tho this sorwful man
> Up-on his beddes syde adown hym sette,
> fful like a dede ymage, pale and wan;
> And in his brest the heped wo bygan
> Out breste, and he to werken in this wise
> In his woodnesse, as I shal ʒow deuyse.
> (*TC*, 362)

Here the narrator describes Troilus's state of mind after the Greeks have agreed to exchange Criseyde for a prisoner of war, Antenor, and Criseyde is thus forced to leave the city and go to the Greek camp. Again the intense grief experienced by the character is portrayed as a picturesque vision that the audience can easily conjure up in their minds: the narrator tells us that thoughts of happiness abandon Troilus one by one like leaves falling from the trees in winter ("And as in winter leues ben birafte . . . Lith Troilus byraft of eche welfare") until his naked soul is bound in misery that is like the blackened bark of a damaged tree ("So that ther

nys but bark and braunche i-lafte . . . I-bounden in the blake bark of care"). To be precise, the "deuyse" in the final line of the second stanza points to the following description of Troilus's erratic movements as he is basically out of his mind for sorrow ("Disposed wood out of his wit"), but the verb might just as well be applied to the narrator's discourse in the preceding stanzas, where he devises the image of the leafless trees.

The mind of the author-narrator, then, is explicitly present in the narrative, and while the idea of the consciousness of the "authorial I" constantly sneaking its way into the narrative might seem jarring to the modern reader, it is perhaps less so to the medieval audience accustomed to hearing rather than reading poetry. The modern reader who reads silently in solitude, who is accustomed to separate the author from the narrator and who only briefly, if ever, comes into contact with the author in real life, is bound to find diegetic transgressions on page disruptive, old-fashioned or at the very least "unnatural," whereas the audience of an oral performance of a written work is, I think, more effectively placed to understand the interpretation of the work as a mutual process between the participants. But even in those instances when the poem is being read independently and not by the poet to the audience, the first-person references at certain intervals to the author-narrator serve to remind the reader of his presence and hence to maintain the impression of collaboration in the construction of the narrative illusion.

Windeatt (1992, 16) notes that out of all of his poems, in *Troilus and Criseyde* "Chaucer makes his most sustained use of the sense of a poet in the presence of an audience," and I think this emphasis on the physical closeness between the author and the audience is a relevant feature of the poem's consciousness representation as well. The audience plays a great role in *Troilus and Criseyde,* not only in an actual oral performance situation, but also in the structure of the written narrative. This has been noted by many scholars, including

Windeatt who discusses the function of the audience in relation to the impression the poem creates of its simultaneous composition and performance:

> The superimposition of the dramatized composition process and the drama of performance is achieved because the text fictionalizes an audience with special expertise in the poem's subject of love, to whom the poet can refer his compositional concerns. It is an audience of 'lovers' that the poem ostensibly assumes throughout . . . , addressing them as if present in the same place, sharing the same space, where the poet is reciting. . . . In a poem dedicated by name to 'moral Gower' and 'philosophical Strode', such recurrent fictionalizing of an audience of 'loveres' allows any actual audience to locate themselves in relation to that projected audience and hence to the experience the poem analyses, perhaps enjoyably watching themselves collaborating in the creation of illusion.
> (Windeatt 1992, 17–18)

Windeatt rightly pays attention to the narrator's direct addresses to the audience, but I think the task Chaucer assigns to the audience – their "collaborating in the creation of illusion" – is much more complex and versatile than just serving as a quality controller of the fumbling poet's take on the matter of love. There are, after all, many illusions to create, and one of them is the construction of the characters' minds together with the audience. I have already established the importance of the mirror metaphor with respect to the relationship between the narrator and the characters, and as we now look at the role of the audience more closely, we can see that it too is based on the idea of shared consciousness construction.

Let us first go back to the passage in which the narrator is likening Troilus's increasing passion to wood catching fire. "But as we may alday oure seluen see, / Thorugh more wode or col the more fire," the narrator points out and concludes, "Right so encrees of hope, of what it be, / Therwith ful ofte encresseth ek desire". But he cannot refrain from adding yet another clarifying psycho-analogy between Troilus's desire and a growing oak tree: "Or as an ook comth of a litil spire, / So thorugh this lettre which that she hym sente / Encrescen gan desire of which he brente." The narrator stresses that these natural phenomena are familiar to all ("as we may alday oure seluen see"), and implicit in this statement is the

assumption that, because of the familiarity of these analogic images, it should be easy enough for the members of the audience to picture in their minds the prince's fevered state and thus to empathise with the "desire of which he brente." To be sure, the narrator and the characters use similar kinds of affirmative phrases on several occasions throughout the poem to justify and explain mental movements; for instance, in expressing Troilus's feelings for Criseyde, the narrator again adopts the image of fire and concludes with a reference to its general intelligibility: "And ay the ner he was, the more he brende. / ffor ay the ner the fire the hotter is – / This, trowe I, knoweth al this compaignye" (*TC*, 114).

In these passages, precisely as in the ones employing the psycho-analogies of the weather and the winter leaves, the textual rendering of the characters' minds rests on everyday observations of the surrounding physical environment. Here we may once again witness the naturalisation of inward processes, built around the central symbol of the mirror, which aims at the deletion of ambiguity for the sake of clarity and identification.[5] Through the systematic creation and application of these familiar psycho-analogies in the representation of inner life, Chaucer effectively develops an empathetic perspective from which the audience can understand and respond to the mental states of the protagonists. This structural invitation to the audience to participate in the creation of the characters' minds is made explicit in the command spoken by Uncle Pandarus as he is describing his niece's sturdy nature to Troilus: "*Thenk here aȝeins*: whan that the stordy ook / On which men hakketh ofte for the nones, / Receyued hath the happy fallyng strook, / The greete sweigh doth it come al at ones, / As don thise rookes or thise milnestones." Keeping in mind Pandarus's specifically author-like tendencies, it can be said that the demand to think with which the stanza strikingly begins is

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[5] In narratological studies, the term "naturalisation" is understood as an interpretive strategy employed to reconcile textual inconsistencies according to cognitive frames (cf. Fludernik 1996). I use the term in the more general sense of making something more natural or lifelike.

directed not only to Troilus, but also to the members of Chaucer's audience – for when they stop to think or imagine or devise Criseyde's characteristics according to Pandarus's instructions, they too come to understand that Criseyde is not like a "reed that boweth down for euery blaste", but a great and dignified lady whose love and admiration will not be easily gained by the prince.

Thus, the consciousness representation in *Troilus and Criseyde* is partly built on simple observations of real-world phenomena, and because the similes Chaucer uses are so familiar and so easy to comprehend, there is no danger that the listener or the reader will throw down the manuscript in frustration or stand up and head straight into The Tabard for a refreshing drink. In fact, Pandarus's description of Criseyde's perseverance through the images of the oak and the reed is so natural and lucid that he finishes with "It nedeth me nought the longe to forbise" – I need not illustrate further. And Pandarus is absolutely right – there is no need for more examples, for the chain of psycho-analogies that progresses from the author through the characters and still on to the audience is perfectly intelligible even today, after six centuries of the poem's composition: we still know what it is like when a cloud covers the sun; we still know that a thin reed cannot withstand the wind, and we still know that some memories are as clear as pictures in our mind's eye. The straightforward clarity of Chaucer's psycho-analogies thus not only guarantees a rewarding imaginative experience even to the less erudite members of the audience, but it also imbues the poem with a sense of timelessness, creating from the static images a sort of infinite temporality in which the poem – to adapt a line from Archibald MacLeish's "Ars Poetica" – *is* rather than means.

Going back to the beginning of this section and the discussion of psycho-narration as a technique for rendering fictional minds, it has by now, I hope, become evident that the motivation for psycho-narration in *Troilus and Criseyde* differs from modern fiction, where its functions often emphasise the dissimilarity between narrators and characters. If

today the technique works to establish and solidify authorial and narratorial superiority in relation to characters – that is, if it carries the implication of their "superior ability to present and assess" the characters' inner emotions –, then the reason for its existence in Chaucer's poem must be grounded on different kinds of thinking. The author and the characters are both responsible for the production of the pictorial psycho-analogies in their respective discourses: there is no sense of hierarchical diegetic levels with the author-narrator as the final authority on the "truth" of the characters' individual experience. As has become clear, the characters of *Troilus* assume an active role in the organising of their mental experience, which bears consequences for the entire structure of the narrative. For instance, the central scene of Troilus experiencing the vision of Criseyde in his mind should therefore not be read, as some critics have done, as a confirmation of Troilus's passive nature (for a summary of this debate, see Moore 1999), but rather, from a narratological standpoint, as a confirmation of the character's agency and also as a means for Chaucer to firmly ground the subsequent events of the poem in psychological motivation: the prince actively "avises" the lady in his imagination and this process in effect defines the plot of the narrative, not the fact that the author says so or that the author's source says so – which is does not even do, for we must remember that the mirror scene is Chaucer's own addition to the narrative frame provided by Boccaccio.

Thus, the sense of going behind the characters' backs (or minds, as it were) often created by modern psycho-narration is altogether missing from *Troilus*: as I have shown, the narrator cannot or will not assess the characters' mental states any better than the characters themselves, for both agents make use of the same psycho-analogies in drawing the maps of their minds. Chaucer's technique seems to bear witness to Mäkelä's (2011, 71, 155) argument that the process of interpretation (or mind-reading) should not be restricted solely to the reader of fiction, but also penetrates the minds of the characters as they more or less successfully work to make sense of themselves and each other even in earlier fiction – this

tendency is demonstrated by Mäkelä in her analysis of Madame de La Fayette's *La Princesse de Clèves* (1678) and *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (1782) by Laclos, where the characters, artistically organising and structuring their inner lives, appear as kind of authors themselves. A somewhat similar effect is produced in Chaucer's *Troilus*, with the protagonists represented as active devisers of their own minds and hence of the narrative progression.

As in the case of psycho-narration, the function of psycho-analogies in *Troilus* is likewise rather dissimilar to how Cohn defines their role in modern psychological novels, observing that these "synoptic similes" tend to "underline the vague and contradictory nature of thoughts and feelings"; consequently, they are to be found most frequently "at moments when an author is for some reason unwilling to entrust the presentation of the inner life to the character's own verbal competence." (Cohn 1978, 37–44). Although sometimes these similes "seem to induce a fusion between the narrating and the figural consciousness" (ibid. 43), Cohn sees the use of psycho-analogies mainly as an authorial device, while her formulation also seems to suggests that an *authentic* presentation of a character's inner life is something of which only the narrator is capable. It could then be said that in modern fiction psycho-narration coupled with psycho-analogies is an efficient way to establish a hierarchy between the narrator and the characters, with the former in the dominating position.

Not so in Chaucer. While it is certainly the case that some modernist psycho-analogies can be complicated to decipher and open to interpretation, hence indeed imitating the "vague and contradictory nature of thoughts and feelings", in *Troilus* the effect created by the technique is completely different. The image of the mirror, as I have already stated, serves as the concrete manifestation of the poem's catenative structure as well as its emphasis on the lucid visuality of the characters minds. The trio of protagonists – Troilus, Criseyde and Pandarus – do not need the narrator's help in finding suitable images for their inner sentiments, nor are the images produced in the instances of psycho-narration restricted solely

to the narrator, whereas the opposite tendency of not being able to catch hold of one's soul is perhaps more often present in modern fiction, such as in this excerpt from Virginia Woolf's stream-of-consciousness masterpiece *To the Lighthouse* (1927):

> Turning back among the many leaves which the past had folded in him, peering into the heart of that forest where light and shade so chequer each other that all shape is distorted, and one blunders, now with the sun in one's eyes, now with a dark shadow, he sought an image to cool and detach and round off his feeling in a concrete shape. (Woolf 2004, 176)

Cohn (ibid. 44) in fact quotes the same passage as an example of psycho-analogic consciousness representation embedded in the narrator's discourse, but the excerpt is worth reproducing here as well for the sake of contrast. Woolf's James is fumbling for a visual counterpart to his emotions, for an image to "round off his feeling in a concrete shape", and although the narrator later informs us that he in fact manages to envisage a foot mangled by a wagon wheel, the image is definitely more vague and fleeting in nature than the elaborate mental murals painted by Chaucer's protagonists. Indeed, compared to what we are accustomed to as readers of modern literature, the certainty with which the fictitious Trojans verbalise themselves seems to fly in the face of everything that we hold dear in psychologically realistic representations. For example, we are used to thinking that first-person ascription of mental states can be unreliable, which tends to affect our evaluation of first-person narratives, and we are also used to thinking that the literary representation of an emotional crisis often entails the reaching of boundaries in the form of disoriented thoughts that the characters cannot grasp (Palmer 2004, 102–3, 125–29). At a first glance, these cognitive attributes of the real human mind – erroneous first-person ascription and boundary conditions – seem to be totally absent from *Troilus and Criseyde*, but a careful reading of the poem in fact shows its outwardly smooth process of mind creation to be riddled with false

appearances. But before the discussion of this aspect, it is necessary to say a few words more about the catenative relationship between the author and his characters.

Metaleptic House-Builders

What I have said so far about the similarity of the psycho-analogies put forth by the narrator and the characters in *Troilus and Criseyde* bears some resemblance to the "stylistic contagion" of modern fiction. Borrowing the term from Leo Spitzer, Cohn (1978, 33) applies it to "places where psycho-narration verges on the narrated monologue, marking a kind of mid-point between the two techniques where a reporting syntax is maintained, but where the idiom is strongly affected (or infected) with the mental idiom of the mind it renders." To put the point more simply, psycho-narration and narrated monologue often merge almost imperceptibly, and psycho-narration is quite susceptible to being influenced by the character's idiom. Yet when considered in relation to Chaucer's consciousness representation, Cohn's definition of stylistic contagion must be slightly modified. Here, instead of narrated monologue, it is quoted monologue which shades into psycho-narration, and instead of concurrency, we are once again faced with a chain-like construction in which the "contaminated" – or, to better suit my argument, *reflected* – images follow each other in a lengthening line of psycho-analogies, whose introduction into the narrative is sometimes performed by the narrator (as in the case of the weather simile, for example) and at other times by the characters. Thus, due to its sequential nature, Chaucer's technique could be described as one involving *deferred* contagion, and the fact that the act of imitation is equally distributed between the narrator and the characters would seem to indicate Chaucer's desire to challenge his own authorial omnipotence over his characters.

In this sense, Chaucer as narrator appears more modern than many of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers, who are often considered the founders of the modern novel. Referring to the works of Fielding, Thackeray and Balzac, Cohn points out that their mode of narration is "pronouncedly authorial," and that in early fiction there is a tendency for the narrators to be more interested in their own selves than in their characters' inner lives; these highly vocal authorial narrators are "unable to refrain from embedding [their] character's private thoughts in [their] own generalizations about human nature," and, as Cohn continues, "even as the narrator draws attention away from the individual fictional character, he fixes it on his own articulate self: a discursive intelligence who communicates with the reader about his character – behind his character's back" (Cohn 1978, 21–25). Chaucer, on the other hand, is very keen to avoid the authorial mode of narration, and surprisingly enough, it is precisely his use of gnomic statements and generalisations – usually characteristic of the authorial mode of narration – that feeds into the effect of a collapsing hierarchy: not only does he make his narrator imitate his characters (and vice versa), but he also confuses the origin of the frequent proverbial generalisations in ways that are reminiscent of the modern fusion of psycho-narration and narrated monologue. For instance, the following stanzas describe, in authorial psycho-narration, the dangers of sharing one's secrets – this, according to the wise ("ffor it is seyd . . . as thise wyse treten"), is tantamount to being beaten with a rod of one's own making:

> And with that, Pandare of his wordes stente;
> And Troilus ȝet hym no thyng answerde,
> ffor why to tellen nas nat his entente
> To neuere no man, for whom that he so ferde.
> ffor it is seyd, "men maketh ofte a ȝerde
> With which the maker is hym self ybeten
> In sondry manere," as thise wyse treten;
>
> And namelich in his counseil tellynge
> That toucheth loue that oughte ben secree;
> ffor of him self it wol ynough out sprynge,

> But if that it the bet gouerned be;
> Ek som tyme it is a craft to seme fle
> ffro thyng whych in effect men hunte faste –
> Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste.
> (*TC*, 130)

The excerpt begins with psycho-narration, clearly indicated by the narrator's referring to Troilus by his proper name ("And Troilus ʒet hym no thyng answerde"), as well as his summary report of Troilus's state of mind ("ffor why to tellen nas nat his entente"). It is therefore only natural to suppose that also the explanation for Troilus's decision to remain silent comes from the narrator – that it is the narrator who thinks that the wise think that revealing a secret is directly comparable to providing the listener with a self-made weapon, while Troilus himself may not even be entirely conscious of the reasons behind his actions or else may ascribe his failure to speak to a different cause altogether. Only at the end of the stanza do we find out that what we have taken as the narrator's gnomic statements are in fact Troilus's thoughts, as indicated by the narrator's closing line "Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste"; or, better yet, the image of the beating rod may be interpreted as originating in the minds of both the narrator and the character. Here, then, the delayed echo that was witnessed in the previous passages turns into a single compressed image belonging simultaneously to Chaucer and Troilus.

According to Zunshine, this sort of confusion of origin has always been central to the pleasure we derive from reading fiction, for "all fictional texts rely on and thus experiment with their readers' ability to keep track of *who* thought, wanted, and felt *what* and under what circumstances" (Zunshine 2006, 75; emphasis original). The metarepresentational ability of the human mind to keep track of sources of representations is thus exploited by authors, and the practice of "source-monitoring" is crucial to literary interpretation, because it allows the reader to assign different truth-values to the statements and thoughts represented in the narrative (ibid. 47–50, 60). While an unresolved tension between the truth of the narrator

and the truth of the character is often part of the artistic effect of a modern novel, I do not think that the confusion of origin Chaucer creates by his condensed images can be evaluated in the same terms; on the contrary, it should be taken as an aspect of the poem's total design which emphasises rather than disturbs the notion of similar minds at work in the process of interpretation.

The cognitive task of source-monitoring that Zunshine assigns to the reader becomes quite complicated when it is considered in relation to the special characteristics of oral performance, which is the form in which most fourteenth-century people would have experienced Chaucer's work: "Many of those first encountering *Troilus and Criseyde* in Chaucer's time would have had little sense of the poem as a text in its material sense, as a physical object, because they would have heard the work rather than read the book." (Windeatt 1992, 16). The oral recitation of any text drastically alters the nature of source-monitoring, for in such a situation the reader's awareness of a mastermind *behind* the text to which all representations must eventually return is replaced by the actual physical presence of the poet *in* the dramatic reproduction of his poem. If the poet alone speaks the text, without actors miming the action, it stands to reason that the similarity of functions between the author, the narrator and the characters, already present in the structure of the narrative, is even further amplified. Interestingly, Windeatt (1992, 162–63) calls attention to the fact that marginal glosses in some *Troilus* manuscripts identify different speakers by writing their names in the margin (for instance, "Verba Cressaidis"), especially when the characters are engaged in rapid exchanges of dialogue. It must have been relatively easy for someone reading the poem to keep track of who said what by keeping an eye on the occasional source-tags offered by the narrator (for example, "quod Pandarus") or the inscriptions of the speakers' names by the helpful commentators, but the audience of a dramatic recitation does

not have that luxury: they only have one voice, the voice of the poet, which includes the multiple voices of all the characters.

Thus the oral reading of *Troilus and Criseyde* crystallises the poem's structure which stresses the coming together of different minds. The theme of cooperation is further illustrated by the scenes built around the metaphor of house-building. In the first one, Pandarus's caution is compared to the careful planning conducted by one "that hath an hous to founde":

> ffor eueri wight that hath an hous to founde
> Ne renneth naught the werk for to bygynne
> With rakel hond, but he wol bide a stounde,
> And sende his hertes line out fro with-inne
> Aldirfirst his purpos forto wynne.
> Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
> And caste his werk ful wisely or he wroughte.
> (*TC*, 148)

Again, the first five lines may be read as the narrator's summary of Pandarus's feelings and thoughts as he prepares to act as a go-between for the young lovers, but the closing lines "Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte / And caste his werk ful wisely or he wroughte" seem to turn the preceding lines of psycho-narration into narrated monologue; it is as if Pandarus himself is consciously framing his state of mind in terms of the house-building metaphor, which Chaucer (and/or Pandarus) borrows from Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova*. In this thirteenth-century treatise on the composition of poetry, Geoffrey discusses various literary devices and offers practical advice to future writers. In the section cited by Chaucer, he contemplates the premeditation necessary before the poet begins his work: "If a man has a house to build, his impetuous hand does not rush into action. The measuring line of his mind first lays out the work, and he mentally outlines the successive steps in a definite order. The mind's hand shapes the entire house before the body's hand builds it" (Geoffrey 1967, 16–17).

Geoffrey thus employs the house-building metaphor to express the caution with which the poet should advance, whereas Chaucer, on the literal level of his narrative, is describing Pandarus's careful planning of a very mundane event. On the thematic level, however, it is significant that Chaucer should cite a passage which explicitly addresses the role of the poet from a book which specifically deals with the craft of fiction; moreover, the placement of the citation "between" the consciousness of the author-narrator and the consciousness of the character is also significant, as it seems to suggest an affinity between the two. This brings us back to what was said earlier about the characters as instigators – or devisers – of the narrative action, reminiscent of the author himself, and once again it is Uncle Pandarus out of all the characters who is distinguished as the most author-like figure in the poem. The role of the author-narrator as "the sorwful instrument / That helpeth loueres" (*TC*, 84) by his telling of the tale is doubled on the story level by Pandarus's incessant efforts to aid Troilus and Criseyde in their "right good auenture", and this generous act of helping is constantly devised by Chaucer in a manner which underlines the literary nature of the enterprise. In addition to the house-building simile, the other psycho-analogies, especially those forged by Pandarus, often have a literary background as well: for example, the parable of the reed and the oak is familiar from the Bible (Matthew 11:7) as well as Aesop's *Fables*, while the rules of courtly love inscribed in the treatise by Capellanus seem to figure in the characters' perception of themselves. When details such as these are taken into account, it is arguably clear that, as a shadowy counterpart to its naturalising tendency, the consciousness representation in the poem is also constructed by Chaucer in such a way as to underline the artificial and poetic nature of the project: on the other side of the mirror, Chaucer's fictional minds become metafictional minds in a house built of echoes from the narrator's discourse as well as earlier literary sources.

The house-building simile reappears later in the narrative when the scene is finally set for the secret meeting between the lovers:

> ffor he [Pandarus] with gret deliberacioun
> Hadde euery thyng that herto myght auaille
> fforncast and put in execucioun,
> And neither left for cost ne for trauaille;
> Come if hem list, hem sholde no thyng faille;
> And forto ben in ought aspied there,
> That wiste he wel an impossible were.
>
> Dredeles it clere was in the wynde
> Of euery pie and euery lette-game;
> Now al is wel, for al the world is blynde
> In this matere, bothe fremed and tame.
> This tymbur is al redy vp to frame;
> Us lakketh nought but that we witen wolde
> A certeyn houre in which she comen sholde.
> (*TC*, 276)

The situation is described in strikingly visual terms with the statement "This tymbur is al redy vp to frame"; that is to say, the frame is there, but the leading actress Criseyde is still missing: "Us lakketh nought but that we witen wolde / A certeyn houre in which she comen sholde." But, again, who is the source of these sentiments? Whose thoughts are being reported? The excerpt begins with the narrator's summary of Pandarus's preparatory actions that might just as well be read as the actions of the author – after all, it is also the author who has "euery thyng that herto might auaille / fforncast and put in execucioun". But in the fifth line the psycho-narration seems to dissolve into narrated monologue, which briefly captures Pandarus's confident mental state as he waits for Troilus and Criseyde ("Come if hem list, hem sholde no thyng availle"), before psycho-narration once again takes over in the final line of the first stanza ("That wiste he wel an impossible were"). This is relatively clear, and the trouble only starts in the third line of the second stanza, where the past tense suddenly shifts to the present for the remainder of the stanza ("Now al is wel . . . This tymbur is al redy"), which, to make matters even more complicated, closes with a first-person plural reference

("Us lakketh nought…"). These manipulations of tense and person blur the line even more between the narrative levels and their participants. Again one is tempted to contribute the observations simultaneously to Chaucer and Pandarus: the "us" referred to in the penultimate line might consist of the author-narrator and his audience, but it might just as well be read as a direct quotation of Pandarus's thought. The scene, in other words, has been literally and metaphorically framed by both the author and the character, and if we add to this the fact that it is often impossible to decide whether a specific psycho-analogy originates in the mind of the narrator or in the mind of a character, then it is starting to become clear that Chaucer is deliberately compressing the two agents together in order to produce an image of a single consciousness that in oral recitation is incarnated in the physical body of the poet.

The (post)modern reader, accustomed to either keeping the level of the author and the level of the characters firmly apart, or, conversely, to seeing them blend in experimental fiction, may experience a sensation of *metalepsis* while reading Chaucer's poem: the fact that the same psycho-analogies are made use of by both the narrator and the characters creates a peculiar impression of the narrative agents hearing one another across the diegetic levels, which in turn may disturb the reader's sense of mimesis. In Genette's classic formulation, the *extradiegetic* level is the level of a narrator who is not a part of the story she is recounting, while *intradiegetic* level refers to the level of the characters where the events of the primary narrative occur; finally, narratives embedded within the intradiegetic level (for example, a story told by a character) take place on the *metadiegetic* level (Genette 1980, 228–29). Metalepsis occurs whenever there is a deliberate transgression of these diegetic levels, that is, when "an author (or his reader) introduces himself into the fictive action of the narrative or when a character in that fiction intrudes into the extradiegetic existence of the author or reader" (Genette 1988, 88). The effects of narrative metalepses are various: they, for example, "fold narrative levels back onto the present situation of the narrating act, uprooting

the boundary between the world of the telling and that of the told or even, in extreme cases, effacing the line of demarcation between fiction and reality", and "while the result is often to disrupt mimetic illusion, the effect can also be to heighten the fictionality of a narrative" (Pier 2005, 303–4).

There are many instances in *Troilus* of classic metalepsis, where the narrator intervenes and puts one character on hold whilst telling about the other ("Now lat vs stynte of Troilus a throwe, / That rideth forth, and lat vs torne faste / Unto Criseyde"; *TC*, 184), but also the structure of the poem is metaleptic: the narrator, explicitly identifiable with the author existing in fourteenth-century London, merges his *diegesis* with that of the mythical Trojans from thousands of years ago, and as the extradiegetic narrator and the intradiegetic characters echo each other's voices throughout the poem in a series of catenating similes, the boundaries between the diegetic levels evaporate like a fog of breath on a mirror. This is especially true in the case of oral recitation, where the world of the telling and the world of the told overlap in the most dramatic way, as the author and the audience are both present in the same space at the same time – even the characters are there in the physical voice of the poet. It is therefore perfectly acceptable, I think, to argue that metalepsis is a useful concept in the understanding of *Troilus*'s narrative design, yet I think the ultimate function of the poem's metalepsis is in fact radically different from the modern one.

First of all, if one of the effects of modern metalepsis is "to disrupt mimetic illusion", then it must be asked, which mimetic illusion? The one defined by us moderns in the twenty-first century? Certainly to us a part of this conventional illusion is the existence of diegetic levels, the breaching of which tends to draw attention to the fictionality of the action that is being narrated in a manner which some readers may find quite unpleasant. But perhaps the desire to keep the levels apart, to separate the voice of the characters from that of the narrator and the voice of the narrator from that of the author, is a decidedly modern one, and

the idea of narrative hierarchy is something that the modern reader automatically tends to impose even on medieval texts. Perhaps our tendency to distinguish between the diegetic levels as well as the narrator's and the character's discourse is not at all relevant to the medieval idea of narrative, or, if such categories are relevant, perhaps there is a difference of attitude.

The modern attitude is implied in the negative vocabulary employed in narratological studies to describe the blending of narrative levels and voices. As can be recalled from the preceding paragraphs, we speak of "stylistic contagion" between different techniques, of psycho-narration becoming "contaminated" or "infected" by the character's idiom (Cohn 1978, 33, 70), and the effect of metalepsis is often presented in similarly negative terms by referring to it as an act of, for example, contamination, transgression or disruption (cf. Pier 2005 & 2015). Implicit in these terms is the assumption that the hierarchical separation of the different narrative instances is the default, while any other mode is a deviation from this norm. In *Troilus*, on the other hand, the merging of minds calls for a whole different set of vocabulary. The poem's inherently social nature is repeated in its structure, in the reflected rather than infected discourses of the narrator and the characters that mirror and echo rather than contaminate one another, occasionally overlapping and combining into a single luminous image. Outwardly, the function of the poem's metaleptic structure resembles the modern functions of metalepsis: as I have shown, an oral recitation, in a way, effectively blurs the line of demarcation between fiction and reality, and the artificiality of the poem is certainly heightened by Chaucer to bring into focus the thematic concerns of the narrative. But inwardly there is a difference, for *Troilus*'s metaleptic structure, mainly manifest in its instances of consciousness representation, is not meant to disturb the reader or to cause any unpleasant sensations of the rug of mimesis being suddenly and unexpectedly pulled from under her feet; rather, it is meant to accentuate the nature of the poem as a shared

creation, with the author, the characters and the audience all acting as poetic house-builders in the process of its conception and interpretation. Perhaps, then, we could also talk about readerly and chronological metalepsis in the sense of the modern reader introducing herself into the medieval poem armed with the illusion of separate diegetic levels and of the layered epistemological tensions those levels entail. Of course, one cannot make generalisations about all medieval literature based on a single poem, but in the case of Chaucer's *Troilus*, the answer to the question of why the medieval audience read (or listened to) the text must be quite different from the answer suggested by Zunshine, who, as was pointed out above, underlines the importance of the reader's task of source-monitoring throughout the history of literature. For if the structure of *Troilus* is inherently based on the annulment of authorial mode of narration and the negation of diegetic levels, then the idea of reading as a "whodunit" detection of sources begins to look like the wrong approach. Moreover, when Chaucer's technique in *Troilus* and the circumstances of oral performance are considered in the context of the general medieval tendency to prefer commonality to individuality, and to fit unique experience into the reassuring frame of convention and models from the past, it is perhaps more suitable to think of the pleasure bestowed by the narrative not in terms of private cognitive exercise but in terms of collective exercise in imagination.

To recapitulate briefly, I have now demonstrated how the author-narrator and the characters in *Troilus and Criseyde* mirror each other verbally and functionally, and how this narrative mechanism is especially visible in the poem's consciousness representation. Through my discussion of Chaucer's use of psycho-narration and psycho-analogies, I have shown that the modern conceptions of the authorial function of psycho-narration and of psycho-analogies as underlining the haziness of thought are not applicable to *Troilus*, and I have also shown that the metaleptic structure of the poem can be read as the confirmation of its social function. At the heart of the narrative is the desire to elucidate, to improve the

communication from the author to the audience, which is partly achieved by the treatment of the characters minds as easily decipherable images. Even so, it should be kept in mind that Chaucer is lulling his audience into a false sense of security. The mirror of the mind, either in the sense of subjective reflection or in the sense of a narrative endeavouring to simulate inward processes, is full of cracks which may lead one astray, just like looking into a real mirror may, in the words of Melchior-Bonnet (2001, 102), lead "one's gaze on an indirect course marked by echoes and analogies" which underscore "the hazy, inverted, and intentionally distorted nature of any self-portrait" (ibid. 6). Behind the smooth surface, there is a labyrinth of fallacy of which more will be said in the next section.

"Ascaunces": The Broken Mirror

In keeping with the poem's structural and thematic concerns, the act of looking is central among the variety of actions performed by the characters in *Troilus and Criseyde*. The audience's attention is frequently drawn by the narrator to the characters closely observing one another and attempting to deduce each other's states of mind from their outward gestures and expressions. Troilus, upon first seeing Criseyde, detects a note of disdain in the lady: her "chere" is "somdel deignous" as she glances at the prince out of the corner of her eye, as if challenging him with an unspoken question: "for she let falle / Hire look a lite a-side in swich manere / Ascaunces, 'what, may I nat stonden here?'" (*TC*, 104). Similarly, Pandarus deciphers the identity of Troilus's love from his blushing at the mention of Criseyde's name: "Tho gan the veyne of Troilus to blede, / ffor he was hit and wax al reed for shame. / 'A ha!' quod Pandare, 'here bygynneth game.'" (*TC*, 136). In the following stanzas, Pandarus studies the face of the grief-stricken Troilus:

> And Pandare, that ful tendreliche wepte,
> In-to the derke chambre, as stille as ston,
> Toward the bed gan softely to gon,
> So confus that he nyste what to seye –
> ffor verray wo his wit was neigh aweye.
>
> And with his chiere and lokyng al to-torne
> ffor sorwe of this, and with his armes folden,
> He stood this woful Troilus by-forne,
> And on his pitous face he gan byholden;
> But, lord, so ofte gan his herte colden,
> Seyng his frend in wo, whos heuynesse
> His herte slough, as thoughte hym, for destresse.
> (*TC*, 372)

Pandarus, lost for words upon learning about the exchange of Criseyde for Antenor ("So confus that he nyste what to seye"), looks at his friend in silence in the dark chamber and feels his heart grow cold at the distress evident on his face ("And on his pitous face he gan byholden; / But, lord, so ofte gan his herte colden, / Seyng his frend in wo"). There is a sense of doubled perception in the scene: the audience, with their heart that is their "brestes eye," is looking at Pandarus looking at Troilus, and even if the narrator does not explicitly inform the audience that Pandarus is feeling sad, the character's state of mind is nevertheless easy to decipher from his distraught look ("his chiere and lokyng al to-torne") and rigid posture ("with his armes folden").

This sort of natural "mind-reading" triggered by observable action is, of course, precisely the foundation on which cognitive narratologists build their argument that the study of fictional consciousness representation should not be restricted solely to those instances where the different speech-category modes are being employed to explore the private contents of characters' minds: "[O]ur minds are perfectly visible to others in our actions," Palmer concludes, "and the workings of fictional minds are perfectly visible to readers from characters' actions" (Palmer 2004, 11; see also Zunshine 2006, 6). At a first glance, this certainly seems like a good approach for the exploration of consciousness representation in

Chaucer's *Troilus*, the narrative of which is filled with small gestures and expressions indicative of emotional states. Indeed, as Burrow puts it,

> Chaucer was evidently impressed by Boccaccio's notation of those small behaviours, especially looks, by which characters communicate their thoughts and feelings. When he finds them in the Italian, he takes them up and develops them: such things as, in the temple scene, the head-toss of Troilus and the downward gaze of Criseyde. He also introduces significant looks, expressions, and little moments of his own invention . . . Hence *Troilus* becomes one of the richest of all medieval narrative sources for an understanding of the part played by non-verbal communication in familiar private exchanges.
> (Burrow 2002, 135–36)

Concentrating on the formal gestures and looks, Burrow offers a fine reading of the code that governs social exchange in the poem (ibid. 114–36), but from a narratological point of view it might be added that *Troilus*'s rich depiction of gestures also becomes an important source for an understanding of the development of narrative techniques employed to represent the inner workings of the human soul. Obviously, it is not the only medieval narrative to include descriptions of physical movements. Fludernik (2011, 75–6) notes the importance of gestures in medieval narrative, stating that, because of "the plot-centered bias of narratology", these "narrative indexes of interiority" have previously been treated as part of the plot or as descriptive elements of the narrator's discourse. But precisely because they form, in Fludenrik's words, "an extremely natural category", I think we should proceed with caution when analysing gestures and other behaviours in medieval (or, for that matter, contemporary) fiction with respect to consciousness representation. After all, descriptions of gestures and body language tend to occur so often that very soon everything on page, every shrug and every turn of the head, begins to look like consciousness representation – to be sure, this tendency of cognitive narratology to "turn nearly *everything* into a manifestation of fictional mind" is precisely the loophole for which McHale (2012, 119–20; emphasis original) criticises the externalist approach to consciousness. To avoid this pitfall of ubiquity, we

should through a careful analysis of the whole decide which medieval texts employ non-verbal communication just for the sake of ornamental and rhetorical flourish, and which, in turn, make use of it in ways that clearly attribute to it a narrative function deeper than the surface, as is the case with *Troilus and Criseyde*.

The visibility of the characters' minds – literally and metaphorically speaking – is a highly important feature of *Troilus*'s narrative strategy, and the expansion of perspective beyond the traditional speech categories is undoubtedly necessary for its understanding. The poem would thus seem to conform nicely to some of the tenets of cognitive narratology, and yet at the same time it also challenges some of its relatively simplistic assumptions. Can we really say, as Palmer does, that minds are *perfectly* visible in actions? Moreover, does the medieval art of fiction produce minds that are similar to everyday minds or minds that are somehow exceptional and not comparable to the ones in the real world? Although the understanding between Chaucer's lovers is so complete that Criseyde thinks Troilus is reading her mind – "It semed hire he wiste what she thoughte / With-outen word, so that it was no nede / To bidde hym ought to doon or ought for-beede " (*TC*, 274) – there are nevertheless cracks in the lovers' mirror. The mirror of the mind produces images that are not just visible but extremely visual; they are, in fact, *distorted* images that instead of an individual reflection contain traces of other minds.

If we consider the strategies that the audience and the characters of *Troilus* apply to make sense of the different minds in the narrative and attempt to find common ground with the modern terminology of cognitive narratology, then Palmer's idea of fictional minds as *cognitive narratives* might be of relevance. According to Palmer, the term "cognitive narrative" refers to the fact that "the reader has a wide range of information available with which to make and then revise judgments about characters' minds"; in other words, a cognitive narrative contains "the whole of character's mind in action: the total

perceptual and cognitive viewpoint, ideological worldview, memories of the past, and the set of beliefs, desires, intentions, motives, and plans for the future of each character in the story as presented in the discourse." By collecting all the isolated references to a character, the reader constructs a consciousness that continues between the mentions of that character, and then by applying this "continuing-consciousness frame" to the discourse she is able to form a cognitive narrative of the character's mind. Correspondingly, *double cognitive narratives* "refer to the versions of characters' minds that exist in the minds of other characters, the presence of one person's mind within the mind of another, or, in my terms, the construction of a double cognitive narrative for one character within another character's cognitive narrative" (Palmer 2004, 183–93, 230–39; Palmer 2010, 10–12).

The concept of fictional minds as cognitive and double cognitive narratives seems like a good starting point for the analysis of *Troilus*, where the characters' overtly interpret their own and each other's minds either in terms of everyday experience or literary models. By now it should not come as a surprise that Pandarus especially is very keen to make conclusions about the other characters' states of mind. If we go back, once more, to the oak and the reed scene, we can see that the simile is in fact the result of a series of conjectures by Pandarus. Observing Troilus's appearance as he reads the letter, Pandarus concludes that the prince is quickly losing hope of ever gaining Criseyde's affection; this, in turn, inspires the pandering uncle into imitating Troilus's thoughts in the first person, as well as posing as the personified voice of his uncertainty in an attempt to convey the prince's mental state to himself, the prince and the audience :

> "Peraunter thynkestow: though it be so,
> That kynde wold don hire to bygynne
> To haue a manere routhe vp-on my woo,
> Seyth daunger, 'nay, thow shalt me neuere wynne.'
> So reulith hire hir hertes gost with-inne,
> That though she bende, ʒeet she stant on roote;
> What in effect is this vnto my boote?

(*TC*, 226)

This stanza, together with the succeeding ones in which the simile of the oak and reed is introduced, is a double cognitive narrative in Palmer's sense: after concluding from Troilus's appearance that the young man is in pain due to Criseyde's indifference and perhaps believes the lady to be as invincible as a great tree ("So reulith hire hir hertes gost with-inne, / That though she bende, ȝeet she stant on roote"), Pandarus quickly forges these sentiments into a psycho-analogy which he then offers as helpful advice to the prince. We are in fact dealing with a triple cognitive narrative, for as Pandarus performs an analysis of the lovers' minds in the form of a psycho-analogy, Troilus's supposed narrative of Criseyde as being unconcerned for his feelings becomes embedded in Pandarus's narrative of Troilus's suffering. Of course, it stands to reason that such multi-layered construction makes source-monitoring rather difficult in oral performance, where one person performs all the characters. But source-monitoring, as I have been attempting to demonstrate, is not a relevant interpretive framework for *Troilus*, which seeks to distribute the task of creation between the participants of the narrative situation.

This tendency can also be seen in the distinctively collective nature of the characters' assessments of each other's minds. After comparing Criseyde's eventual surrender to the fall of a tree, Pandarus goes on to elaborate on the pleasure that people without a doubt feel after a long and difficult task ("Men shal reioissen of a grete emprise / Acheued wel, and stant with-outen doute, / Al han men ben the lenger ther-aboute.") and similarly embeds Troilus's impatience in a larger perspective:

> "But he that parted is in eueri place
> Is nowher hol, as writen clerkes wyse.
> What wonder is though swich oon haue no grace?
> Ek wostow how it fareth of som seruise,
> As plaunte a tree or herbe in sondry wyse
> And on the morwe pulle it vp as blyue,

No wonder is though it may neuere thryue.
(*TC*, 142)

Rather than giving voice to the uniqueness of Troilus's experience, Pandarus frames it in universal terms by describing it as similar ("Ek wostow") to that of a man planting a tree or a herb only to pull it up the next day to see if it has grown. Troilus's impatience hence gives rise to a general description by Pandarus of an impatient act, and a similar tendency can be witnessed, for instance, in the narrator's representation of Troilus's confusion as he is waiting in vain for Criseyde to return: "This Troilus, with-outen reed or loore, / As man that hath hise ioies ek forlore, / Was waytyng on his lady euere more" (*TC*, 446) – again, it is no longer or not only Troilus's state of mind that is being described, but that of any man succumbing to sorrow. In the modern context, these three lines of psycho-narration would undoubtedly be interpreted as indicating an authorial mode of narration, where "the inner life of an individual character becomes a sounding-board for general truths about human nature" (Cohn 1978, 23) and thus asserts a maximal dissonance between the narrator and the character (ibid. 28–31). In the medieval context, however, *Troilus*'s generalisations should not be taken as representatives of the author's epistemological superiority, but rather as yet another manifestation of the medieval trend to highlight the movement from particular to universal and from specific to exemplary. Through the representation of the characters minds as vessels for collective experiences, the author-narrator in fact relinquishes his private right to determine the exact nature of his characters' inner emotions and places himself on the same level with them and the audience: precisely as with the psycho-analogies based on everyday phenomena, the function of the generalisations is to underline the similarity between the minds involved in the process of the poem's interpretation and also to emphasise the status of an individual mind as a part of a larger cultural narrative, which relied heavily on the predecessors of the past.

Le Goff states that in the Middle Ages "mentalities, sensibilities, and attitudes were prescribed predominantly by the need for reassurance" and goes on to suggest that "[r]epetition was the expression, in the intellectual and spiritual life, of the desire to abolish time and change" (Le Goff 1988a, 325–27). This need for confirmation is inscribed in the consciousness representation of *Troilus* in the form of generalisations which repeat and thus validate the characters' experiences. Moreover, the general observations are often accompanied by references to higher authorities. For instance, in the stanza above, Pandarus's representation of Troilus's impatience as a universal condition is supported by "clerkes wyse", and when Pandarus is trying to prove that the distress Troilus is feeling will only enhance the sweetness of happier times, just as black and white complement each other, he once again appeals to men of wisdom: "Eke whit by blak, by shame ek worthinesse, / Ech set by other, more for other semeth, / As men may se, and so the wyse it demeth" (*TC*, 126). Similar expressions ("as bokes telle", "the wise seith" and "as techen vs the wyse", to mention but a few) abound in the narrative – it is as if the fact that we "alday oure seluen see" is not enough, but general references to *auctores* are needed in order to convince the audience. In the Middle Ages, *auctores* were figures of trust; as Minnis (1988, 10) puts it, "the term *auctor* denoted someone who was at once a writer and an authority, someone not merely to be read but also to be respected and believed. . . . The writings of an *auctor* contained, or possessed, *auctoritas* in the abstract sense of the term, with its strong connotations of veracity and sagacity." Although the narrator and the characters of *Troilus* often refrain from mentioning names, it is clear that the mere allusion to a legitimate source behind their formulations is enough to give them an air of dignity (at times, perhaps, ironical).

The generalisation of individual minds is achieved in *Troilus* by the alignment of the characters' experiences with those of everyone else, yet model experiences are also drawn from specific mythological sources. As Pandarus is trying to picture Troilus's sadness,

he immediately thinks of the pain that the giant Tityos must endure in Hell: "I graunte wel that thow endurest wo, / As sharp as doth he Ticius in helle, / Whos stomak foughles tiren euere moo / That hightyn volturis, as bokes telle" (*TC*, 132). Again the double cognitive narrative of Troilus's mind that exists in the mind of Pandarus turns into a triple cognitive narrative, as Pandarus interprets the prince's mental strife as a reflection of the anguish experienced by Tityos. Likewise, the lovers' pain of separation is compared by the narrator to the pain and tears of Myrrha who metamorphosed into the myrrh tree: "So bittre teeris weep nought, as I fynde, / The woful Mirra thorugh the bark and rynde" (*TC*, 414).

The narrativisation of minds with the help of literary models falls in line with the principles of *literary typology*, which Warren Ginsberg sees as the basis for medieval representation of character. In Ginsberg's view, medieval characters gain dramatic and moral depth, because they point beyond themselves; that is, "a secular character repeats the experience of another character, usually biblical, thereby demonstrating the universality of his condition and providing a frame of reference in which to understand the full implications of the character's actions" (Ginsberg 1983, 96). Technically speaking, the view of fictional minds as narratives bears some resemblance to literary typology, as both are based on the idea of character as the result of sporadic references which form a coherent frame or narrative in the reader's mind. But in the medieval context, the frame of reference moves outside the text and the character: if in modern narratives the references to the character precede the construction of the continuing-consciousness frame, in medieval narratives, including *Troilus*, the frame seems to precede the references. Furthermore, the narrativisation of the mind, it would seem, is not merely a process of completing the frame as one goes along, but could be taken literally in the context of medieval typology: the experiences of medieval characters are narrativised in the full sense of the word as they are being read and represented through the narratives of other fictional characters, and this process tends to turn them into tools of moral

persuasion that are applied to advance the ethical purpose of the narrative as a whole. In this sense, it could be said that medieval minds exhibit some pronouncedly story-like properties.

Based on all this, we can definitely agree that "experientiality," central to the definition of a text as a narrative and defined by Fludernik as "quasi-mimetic evocation of real-life experience", plays a part in Chaucer's poem; similarly, we can also agree that the poem does involve Herman's prototypical "qualia," that is, the what-it's-like property of an experiencing consciousness. But the quality of the characters qualia is decidedly different from that of modern characters in terms of originality. According to Herman, the sense of qualia "stems from the intuition that conscious experiences have ineliminably *subjective* properties, a distinctive sense or feeling of what it is like for someone or something to experience them" (Herman 2009, 146; emphasis mine). This is not the case with *Troilus*, nor medieval narrative in general. Unlike modern representations of fictional consciousness, which often seek to explore the individual psyche of the characters, medieval consciousness representation is not even trying to capture the unique qualia or the personal "truth" of individual experience – it is already experienced, and that is the point. As Vitz aptly puts it in her discussion of Pierre Abelard's autobiography from the twelfth century, "The individual seeks to align himself with these old models . . . these old truths; not to feel or say new and different things, or distinguish, for example, between *his* experience of pain and that of the martyrs" (Vitz 1989, 26; emphasis original). Correspondingly in *Troilus*, the minds of the characters breach their immediate boundaries and reach outside and beyond themselves – not just the poem's psycho-narration, but the whole ethos of its consciousness representation may be called centrifugal and social: the mirror does not show a lifelike reflection of a unique mind, but a skewed reflection of someone else. The minds of *Troilus* metamorphose into those of everyman or mythological characters, and the particular qualia becomes overshadowed by the universal one. *Troilus* hereby emerges as an early example of the self-

deconstructing tendency, which, according to Mäkelä (2011, 13), is characteristic of the tradition of consciousness representation in modern Western literature. Mäkelä argues that the narrative techniques employed in the representation of fictional minds are based on linguistic and thematic schematisation, which, rather than successfully capturing the private contents of an individual psyche, creates a mind that is not natural but conventional and literary (ibid. 46, 90–91).

Typology as the fundamental mode of thought is reflected in *Troilus* also in the characters' peculiar desire to see themselves as fundamentally textual. Criseyde states this openly when she proclaims to make of herself an *exemplum* – a mirror – which shows, when looked into, the effects of love's cruelty:

> "Endeth thanne loue in wo? ȝe, or men lieth,
> And alle worldly blisse as thynketh me:
> The ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupieth.
> And who-so troweth nat that it so be,
> Lat hym vp-on me, woful wrecche, ysee,
> That my self hate and ay my burthe a-corse,
> ffelyng alwey fro wikke I go to worse.
>
> "Who-so me seeth, he seeth sorwe al atonys,
> Peyne, torment, pleynte, wo, distresse.
> Out of my woful body harm ther noon is,
> As angwissh, langour, cruel bitternesse,
> Anoy, smert, drede, fury and ek siknesse.
> (*TC*, 398)

Troilus, too, is extremely aware of the literary quality of his own narrative. He compares Criseyde's mind to a text from which he is trying to find a certain passage ("Though ther be mercy writen in ȝoure cheere, / God woot the text ful hard is, soth, to fynde"; *TC*, 316) and is downright elated by the exemplary potential of his battles with the god of love: "Thanne thoughte he thus, 'O blisful lord Cupide, / Whan I the processe haue in my memorie / How thow me hast wereyed on euery syde, / Men myght a book make of it lik a storie" (*TC*, 476). Clearly the characters are fond of the idea of themselves as potential examples to be quoted in

the future, willingly interpreting their mind movements as reflections of exemplary experiences and wishing to set up these reflections as new examples in the repetitive chain.

When all of the above is taken into consideration, it is obvious that Palmer's approach to fictional minds as narratives has some relevance to the consciousness representation in *Troilus*. However, the definition of mind as a narrative is rather vague and misleading. Palmer seems to be using the term to convey the idea that the fictional minds in a given text become more complete in the reader's mind as the story progresses. But to say that a fictional mind is a narrative invites a myriad of follow-up questions, regardless of the literary period. Narrative in which sense? In the classical sense of having a beginning, a middle and an end? In the ethical sense of delivering a salutary lesson? To what genre do they belong? The term "narrative" also seems to suggest a verbal consciousness, which, ironically enough, is exactly what Palmer seeks to criticise, and, moreover, in its implied linearity seems incapable of encompassing those aspects of fictional minds that cannot be analysed in terms of coherent progression.

In *Troilus*, one such aspect is the visuality of the minds. The characters do not as much narrativise as they illustrate each other's minds, which are also represented as canvases upon which impressions can be cast. Troilus's falling in love is described as a process by which Criseyde's image becomes imprinted in his heart: "And of hire look in him ther gan to quyken / So gret desire and swich affeccioun, / That in his hertes botme gan to stiken / Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun" (*TC*, 104). Similarly, Criseyde is said to *portray* Troilus in her mind ("And in hire self she wente ay purtrayng / Of Troilus the grete worthynesse"; *TC*, 484) and as she confesses her love to the prince, she tells him that he is "so depe in-with myn herte graue" that she simply cannot stop thinking about him (*TC*, 324). The heightened attention Chaucer gives to the visual aspects of the characters' minds is of course related to the symbolism of the mirror as reflecting the distributed process of mind construction. This

impression is naturally enhanced by the presence of the audience. Windeatt (1992, 15) is of the opinion that the famous frontispiece picture to the Corpus manuscript of *Troilus and Criseyde* represents "a product of the poem's power to create a sense of a listening group"; it must be added that the sense of a seeing group that the poem creates is just as relevant to its central thematic of the mind as a visible and visual entity. In a live performance, the members of the audience can see each other's spontaneous reactions to the events being told, which may give rise to an experience of the narrative effect entirely different from that of the modern solitary reader. In psychology, subconscious mirroring is the empathic imitation of the behaviour of others in social situations (cf. Chartrand & Bargh 1999). This human tendency to imitate postures and facial expressions seems to me an essential aspect of oral literature. In the storyworld of *Troilus*, the emotions expressed by others are often duplicated by the characters – for example, the pain the characters see in others tends to turn into pain they feel themselves, such as in the above example of Pandarus observing Troilus's face in the dark. One would presume that this text-internal imitative action is doubled in the actual world by the audience observing each other's expressions and gestures. (I am almost tempted to imagine Chaucer's audience sitting hand in hand before the poet, creating concrete physical chains). Thus the "double sorwe" (*TC*, 84) of Troilus, which the author declares in the beginning to be the subject of his narrative, is potentially reproduced and multiplied in the course of the narrative in the facial expressions adopted by the poet and the audience, which in turn would generate a dramatic and possibly cathartic effect that is essentially social and external to the text of the poem. The importance of seeing, built into the text's structure, is renewed in its recitation.

And yet, no matter how genuine the emotions evoked in the audience by the narrative, Chaucer never seeks to conceal the artificiality of the images that are being created in the process. In the scene where Troilus's anguish is compared to the leafless winter trees,

the narrator points out that Troilus sits on his bed "fful like a dede ymage, pale and wan": he is like a reflection in the mirror, lifelike but not perfect nor authentic, his mind consisting of images within an image that are highly general, highly literary and as such not at all expressive of his individual psyche. In a similar vein, the narrator describes the effect of grief on Criseyde through comparing the lady's face to an image of Paradise changed into a funeral effigy lying on the bier: "She was right swich to seen in hire visage / As is that wight that men on beere bynde: / Hire face, lik of Paradys the ymage, / Was al ychaunged in a-nother kynde" (*TC*, 400). The vocabulary of lifeless images is present here as well, as is the sense of the narrator actually seeing the characters with his own eyes ("She was right swich to seen in hire visage"); in fact, a visual connection between the narrator and the characters is established at several points in the narrative. The narrator states that Criseyde's sorrow is "So gret that it a deth was forto see" and later elaborates: "Aboute hire eyen two a purpre ryng / By-trent in sothfast tokening of hire peyne, / That to biholde it was a dedly thyng" (*TC*, 400). But the final two lines of the stanza in fact seem to suggest that the mind of Pandarus, who is standing in the same room with Criseyde, is somehow involved in the perception: "ffor which Pandare myghte nat restreyne / The teeris from hise eighen forto reyne" carry the implication that it is also Pandarus who sees the purple rings around Criseyde's eyes, and moreover, he might be responsible also for the image of the funeral effigy that comes right before the lines describing Criseyde's red-rimmed eyes. Again we are faced with a condensed image of the narrator and Pandarus's perceptions, with Pandarus echoing the narrator's earlier description of the mortifying effect of seeing Criseyde's mournful face ("So gret that it a deth was forto see" – "That to biholde it was a dedly thyng"). Thus, a visual as well as an auditive metalepsis is formed in the narrative, and in an oral recitation they both become embodied in the figure of the poet.

Despite their dream of exemplarity, as it were, and their active verbalisation of their emotional states through psycho-analogies, the characters of *Troilus* also seem peculiarly apprehensive about the possibility of being objectified, of being reduced to a "dede ymage." Troilus, for example, is said to often imagine himself through the eyes of others, tremendously concerned that his love for Criseyde can easily be deduced from his altered appearance by the gossipy Trojans: "And of hym self ymagened he ofte, / To ben defet, and pale, and waxen lesse / Than he was wont, and that men seyden softe, / 'What may it be? who kan the sothe gesse / Whi Troilus hath al this heuynesse?'" (*TC*, l478). Troilus's tendency to imagine himself in the eyes of strangers, reported in the previous lines in psycho-narration, is repeated in one of the prince's own narrated monologues:

> "What wol now euery louere seyn of the
> If this be wist, but euere in thin absence
> Laughen in scorne and seyn, 'loo, ther goth he
> That is the man of so gret sapience,
> That held vs loueres leest in reuerence.
> Now, thanked be god, he may gon in the daunce
> Of hem that loue list fiebli for to auaunce.
> (*TC*, 118)

Here Troilus addresses himself in the second person ("What wol now euery louere seyn of *the*"), yet in his construction of the scornful minds of "euery louere" he exists in the third person ("'loo, ther goth *he*"); in other words, Troilus's "double cognitive narrative" is a two-way mirror – it is not a projection of the strangers' minds only, but also, and especially, of that of Troilus himself, reflecting his insecurity and hesitations. Indeed, the narrator points out that "al this nas but his malencolie, / That he hadde of hym self swich fantasie" (*TC*, 478), and it should be added that the prince's "fantasies" are a literary mixture of the rules and regulations found in Capellanus's treatise on the art of loving, the one that also Pandarus turned for support when framing his niece's mental state in terms of the analogous comparison to a mighty oak tree. Among the rules of courtly love are declarations such as,

"Love rarely lasts when it is revealed", "Every lover turns pale in the presence of his beloved" and "A lover is always fearful" (Capellanus 1960, 184–86) – Troilus's identity as a lover seems to consist of these rules in his own mind as well as in his idea of himself in the minds of others. Although he is himself the source of these literary illusions, the fear of being turned into a narrative is, paradoxically, a constant fear for the prince who takes several precautions to hide – unsuccessfully – from the others' gaze: for instance, he rides so fast that people do not have the time to observe his face ("That no wight of his contenance espide"; *TC*, 474); he also tries to feign an air of carelessness through dissimulation (and momentarily succeeds, for "so wel dissimulen he koude"; *TC*, 270); and finally, he withdraws into the loneliness of his room behind closed windows and doors ("euery dore he shette / And wyndow ek"; *TC*, 362).

But closed doors will not keep the author and the audience out. Their gaze is permanently there, thwarting the characters' desire to be real, unique and solitary. Whether one calls it narrativisation or illustration, there is always an element of active forcing present in the process which seeks to manipulate the target into serving a larger purpose, that is, into realising their roles in the work's aesthetic and rhetorical design. The idea is somewhat similar to the explanatory technique known as "glossing" in the Middle Ages, which, according to Hanning (1987, 27), functioned in a broader sense "as a metaphor for all kinds of language manipulation, even what might be called textual harassment". As Hanning shows in his analysis of the characters of Criseyde and the Wife of Bath, when applied to people glossing becomes a powerful tool of dehumanisation, for the "glossed" people "are reduced to the status of texts that the wily glossator can 'explain' (i.e., control) as he pleases" (ibid. 40). This kind of textual harassment is performed in *Troilus* by all of its characters who seem dreadfully trapped between the universal and the particular. Even as the characters attempt to resist their own glossing through dissimulation while also welcoming it, the author invites the audience into the dehumanising and objectifying process of mind-construction, where the

illusion of consciousness is obtained through the extreme generalisation and typologisation of experience. In conclusion, *Troilus*'s minds could be described as *collective universalising glosses*, a term which stays true to the poem's historical context and also seems to surmount the connotations and limitations of "narrative" and "image."

The violence of generalisation and typologisation establishes a thematic undercurrent: the disillusionment with storytelling. The narrative of the poem is a broken mirror which cannot produce a truthful reflection neither of the mind nor the events in which the characters engage. Although they are highly able to verbalise their thought as psycho-analogies first put forth or subsequently copied by the narrator, and although the mechanisms of generalisation and typologisation purport to produce a coherent representation of mental dispositions, the emerging image is still just an illusion: in the end there is a "diuersite required / Bytwixen thynges lik" (*TC*, 268). There is always something about the inner life that escapes definition, something that cannot be captured in language or expressed through exemplary stories. To convey this elusiveness, Chaucer introduces an element of error into which at first sight seems lucid and bright. This kind of iconoclastic approach is, to be sure, characteristic of Chaucer's writings. As Leicester (1987, 23) puts it, Chaucer's "typical practice is to begin by assuming and miming the conventions that try to sustain the logocentric coherence of 'what everybody knows'", but this "miming of traditional attitudes is conducted in such a way as to bring out contradictions and the dilemmas they lead to."

Throughout *Troilus*, Chaucer questions our ability to perfectly read ourselves and one another. He holds up the mirror only to crack it: even if the narrator and the characters are active agents in the process of seizing and portraying their inner sentiments, their agency will often carry subtle signs of deterioration. Chaucer shows us that the attempt to gauge inner sentiments – to gloss the other – by observing gestures and looks is an operation which cannot be trusted even inside a fiction. In the scene where Troilus falls in

love with Criseyde, the lady's sidelong glance is interpreted by Troilus as a disdainful reaction to his admiring stare that the lady seems to utterly misread, wordlessly answering with a question: "for she let falle / Hire look a lite a-side in swich manere / Ascaunces, 'what, may I nat stonden here?'". A little earlier in the same scene, the narrator has recourse to the same pattern as he openly represents his interpretation of Troilus's complacency as guesswork based on the prince's gestures: "And with that word he gan caste vp the browe, / Ascaunces, 'loo, is this naught wisely spoken?'" (*TC*, 98). The process of mind-reading is an "as if" ("ascaunces") enterprise, as are the glosses produced through psycho-analogies and exemplary models: they are lifeless reflections in the mirror, not perfect reproductions of the thing they seek to depict.

Although arguments have been made for the therapeutic and ethical value of figural thinking (Vitz 1989, 33–4; Allen 1982, 292), it is impossible to know to what extent the literary processes of generalisation and typologisation made use of in *Troilus* and other medieval narratives truly reflected medieval people's experience of their own and one another's minds in everyday life; to what extent, as Allen (ibid. 312) so eloquently puts it, "Real life . . . heals itself by becoming a character in the allegory." In the narratological debate as to whether fictional minds are "exceptional" or "anti-exceptional" (cf. Herman 2011), that is, whether they are different from or similar to the minds in the real world, *Troilus* stands as an example of both in its awareness of the dialectic between the natural and the unnatural, between the conventional and the personal. In the discourses of both the narrator and the characters, the conventional verification of experience sought from the exempla and *auctores* is set against the ineffability of private emotion. When Pandarus points out to Troilus that love is not gained, "as techen vs the wyse," by weeping incessantly "as Nyobe the queene" (*TC*, 128), Troilus states that his grief is his own and not comparable to that of the ancient queen: "But suffre me my meschief to bywaille, / ffor thy prouerbes may

me naught auaille./ . . . What knowe I of the queene Nyobe? / Lat be thyne olde ensaumples, I the preye" (*TC*, 132). This "crisis of exemplarity" (cf. Rigolot 1998; also Curtius 1990, 53) re-emerges in the narrative when the narrator points out that Pandarus understands – " in his herte he koude wel deuyne" – the quality of Troilus's heartsickness without consulting the literary models – "This knew he wel ynough with-oute booke" (*TC*, 462). The everyday experience of what it is like to be a human being in the world – what everybody knows – may well suffice in the interpretation of the other's mind, but a clear view is nevertheless denied even from the author attempting to see into the characters' souls. The narrator points out that, although Troilus appears quiet and composed, he cannot swear that the prince is not troubled in his heart, for such is the reaction people usually have in a similar situation:

> Nil I naught swere, al-though he [Troilus] lay ful softe,
> That in his thought he nas somwhat disesed,
> Ne that he torned on his pilwes ofte,
> And wold of that hym missed han ben sesed.
> But in swich cas men ben nought alwey plesed,
> ffor aught I woot, namore than was he;
> That kan I deme of possibilitee.
> (*TC*, 27)

According to Leicester (1987, 22–3), Chaucer's work depicts "a society that exhibits the relative fragmentation, self-consciousness, and alienation of a 'modern' age. But this culture still tries to mystify itself, to treat its institutions as if they were still supported by the logocentric guarantees of common understanding and a shared world." *Troilus*'s narrative structure is built around this contradiction between the truth of what everyone knows and its inevitable fragmentation. The narrator and the characters constantly seek to convince the audience of the validity of their sentiments by adding such remarks as "the soth for to seyne" (that is, "to tell the truth"), but in the end the truth that "was, and is, and ʒet men shall it see" (*TC*, 100) is shown to be an artificially devised illusion. The representation of the inner "soth" of the mind in language is not an easy task, for often the characters' emotions are, quite

simply, indescribable: since they "passeth euery wit for to deuyse" and "passeth al that herte may bethynke", they "may nought written be with inke" (*TC*, 334). Through the various psycho-analogies and typological comparisons, the narrator attempts to "shewe in som manere" (*TC*, 86) the mind movements of the protagonists, but eventually these narrative techniques are presented in the poem as a detour from the original object of representation.

The inexpressibility topos is, of course, a common device in medieval rhetoric (cf. Curtius 1990, 159–62), but in Chaucer's *Troilus* it gains a particular narrative intensity beyond mere rhetorics. Chaucer shows that condensation and displacement are necessary in the craft of fiction, although at one point he, in the words Burrow (2002, 114), "plays with the idea of total narrative" by taking a moment to explain that, even if he and the audience wanted to, he cannot give a complete account of every look, gesture and word:

> But now, parauntour, som man wayten wolde
> That euery word, or soonde, or look, or cheere
> Of Troilus that I rehercen sholde,
> In al this while vnto his lady deere:
> I trowe it were a long thyng forto here,
> Or of what wight that stant in swich disioynte,
> Hise wordes alle, or euery look, to poynte.
>
> ffor sothe I haue naught herd it don er this
> In story non, ne no man here, I wene;
> And though I wolde, I koude nought, y-wys;
> (*TC*, 274)

A total narrative, then, cannot be achieved through a meticulous imitation of the original in language, which is understandably impossible and if attempted would likely produce a comic effect; the only way in which a total narrative can be achieved is through a narrative structure which cancels the author's prerogative to have the last word and steers the characters and the audience into sharing responsibility for the textual creation. The poem is represented as a text "under construction" to be rewritten by the audience:

> ffor myne wordes, heere and euery parte,
> I speke hem alle vnder correccioun
> Of ȝow that felyng han in loues arte,
> And putte it al in ȝoure discrecioun
> To encresse or maken dymynucioun
> Of my langage, and that I ȝow biseche –
> (*TC*, 314)

If Criseyde's "delit or ioies" (*TC*, 314) or Troilus's "pleynt, his langoure and his pyne" are impossible for the author to "telle aright or ful discryue" (*TC*, 460), the audience or "thow redere" is openly called to adjust the gloss, "to encresse or maken dymynucioun" according to their skill or taste.

Thus, the role of the audience as devisers of the characters' minds within the mirror of their own minds liberates Troilus and Criseyde from the narrow confines into which the narrative mechanisms of generalisation and typologisation inevitably place them. Whereas the audience is free to devise as vast and precise a construction as they please, the author's discourse is of necessity restricted to the stylised words on paper. This produces a paradoxical effect of contradictory forces in the narrator's discourse: the desire to tell is contrasted with the desire to reach an end. To "telle in short" is a frequent formula of abbreviation as the narrator seeks to compress and crystallise the linguistic form and pace of his narration. This rhetorical pressure to reach a conclusion which is "euery tales strengthe" (*TC*, 164) conforms to the representation of the characters mental functioning as compressed and distorted glosses, where condensation necessarily comes at the expense of precision. Moreover, the instrument used to express these glosses is imprecise and imperfect: in the medieval view, the human language was corrupted after the Fall from Paradise, which had radical consequences for its expressive powers. As Reiss (1986, 115) writes: "Necessarily a man's way to truth, language is just as necessarily deceptive and inadequate for revealing it; and recognition of this fact would seem to be built into late medieval literary structures." Acutely perceived by the narrator of *Troilus*, the imperfection of language does not transmit to the characters, who are

fond of repetition and retelling. Troilus will never tire of praising Criseyde throughout the day and well into the night, his ever-resuming tale providing a contrast to the narrator's brief and concise opening line:

> This is a word for al: this Troilus
> Was neuere ful to speke of this matere,
> And forto preisen vnto Pandarus
> The bounte of his righte lady deere,
> And Pandarus to thanke and maken cheere;
> This tale was ay span newe to bygynne,
> Til that the nyght departed hem atwynne.
> (*TC*, 332)

Troilus and Criseyde are also said to be retelling their story to one another, and, unlike the narrator, they do seek to capture every detail: "Tho gonne they to speken and to pleye, / And ek rehercen how and whan and where / Thei knewe hem first, and euery wo or feere / That passed was" (*TC*, 318). Impossibly, the lovers appear to be making their own total narrative out of words, and despite the many similarities between theirs and the narrator's technique of constructing the mind, this is where the two differ.

If language fails, what is there left to do? The narrator places his trust in the shared understanding of what it is like to be human. There is no need to elaborate on whether the lovers are feeling happy as they embrace each other: "Nought nedeth it to ʒow, syn they ben mette, / To axe at me if that they blithe were," he says and resorts to one of his regular devices, the hyperbole, to convey the lovers' pleasure: "ffor if it erst was wel, tho was it bette / A thousand fold, this nedeth nought enquere" (*TC*, 332). Thus the vague line "a thousand fold" is hyperbolic and condensed at the same time: the lovers' immense happiness is portrayed in the small space of the boundless expression. After pointing out that he cannot list "euery word, or soonde, or look, or cheere," the narrator presents the audience with a summary description that covers the lovers' state of mind throughout their passionate affair and the narrative to which this "tyme swete" gives rise:

> But to the grete effect: than sey I thus,
> That stondyng in concord and in quiete
> Thise ilke two, Criseyde and Troilus . . .
> (*TC*, 276)

The "concord" and "quiete" in which the two lovers find themselves cannot, and indeed need not, be perfectly captured in words. The ruined language is not an instrument of precision, but it can be manipulated into producing an illusion of accuracy and authenticity, of seeing fully and face to face, instead of through a dark glass. But it is a sham mirror, where the glimpse of the lost Paradise recedes even as it approaches.

III

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PERORATIO

In Our Image, After Our Likeness

The analysis of consciousness representation in *Troilus and Criseyde* seems to confirm that the tools of both classical and postclassical narratology are needed in order to gain an understanding of the medieval fictional mind. The classical speech-categories form the basis for the construction of consciousness even in a text as old as *Troilus* and therefore cannot be dismissed, whereas the cognitive approaches with their emphasis on the social nature of consciousness help to accommodate the collective aspects of medieval minds. But as I have shown, many of the familiar classical and postclassical concepts undergo a change of function in *Troilus*, and the function of Chaucer's narrative techniques within the poem's structure is precisely what I have been attempting to determine in the previous pages. The next step would be to move outside the text and consider the structure and thematic content of the poem in relation to the medieval concept of literature as ethics. Suffice it to say here that the failure to communicate the mind through language, the impossibility of representing "soth" in a narrative form and the positioning of the audience as active co-builders rather than passive recipients would seem to challenge the idea of medieval narrative as simply a vehicle for moral learning.

In this thesis, I have analysed a specific narrative aspect of one medieval text in the framework of modern literary theory. If a medieval narratology is to be constructed, then a wider perspective is required that would seek to bring medieval narrative theory into dialogue with the modern one and explore various medieval texts from different cultural areas across

Europe. With respect to consciousness representation, the techniques employed in *Troilus* provide some indication of how the medieval authors conceived of the phenomenon and how they sought to express the minds of the characters in their texts, but a larger sample is certainly needed to determine if the results achieved from *Troilus* are applicable to medieval narrative in general.

My analysis of *Troilus* shows that the minds of the poem's characters are unnatural and literary constructions, rather than exact replications of the human psyche, and the problematic relationship between what we can and cannot represent in narrative form becomes an important theme in the work. Despite the cognitivist desire to see fictional minds as being similar to everyday minds, no definite conclusions about the mental experience of any given period can be drawn from literary representations of consciousness. To form a picture of the medieval psyche is a difficult, if not impossible, task which must be based on conjectures. We cannot have direct access into the medieval mind; we cannot know precisely how the medieval audience experienced a given text, and the exact effect of oral recitation is likewise lost in history. In addition, the modern printed edition of *Troilus* that was consulted during this study is a far cry from the original manuscripts of the poem. I believe that a medieval narratology would benefit from the exploration of primary sources instead of modern editions. The miniature illustrations and the marginal glosses accompanying the medieval manuscripts might provide useful information as to how certain narrative devices were understood at the time, whether one is interested in consciousness representation or some other aspect of narrative, or whether one's theoretical framework is classical or postclassical.

The study of medieval texts raises specific ethical questions in relation to the methods and the evaluation of the research results. It could be argued that medieval literature should be studied only within its own paradigm, but such a view would fail to appreciate the

evident connection between the ages: literary conventions did not appear out of nowhere, and the history of their development is yet far from complete. In this process, the cultural-historical context of medieval texts must not be ignored any more than the historical position of the researcher. As we approach medieval texts with a modern perspective, we may well become mirrors that produce phantoms. But sometimes phantoms inhabit the borderline between past and present, transcending their boundaries through the integration of both.

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