To: Professor Heather Richardson Hayton
        Professor Martha Stoddard Holmes
        Professor Oliver Berghof
From: Bryony Kiker
Re: Thesis Proposal, Thesis Outline, Tentative Schedule, and Partial Bibliography
Date: October 9, 2002

Thesis Proposal

As the war between the Greeks and the Trojans rages and nations battle for power, a love story rises to center stage. Throughout the majority of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, the title characters, their meddling voyeur, the narrator, and the readers minimize the importance of Troy's martial aim and shift their focus to the smaller but equally significant struggle for power in the microcosm of a romantic relationship. The two plots converge most completely as the politics of war interfere with the love relationship in book 4, when the Trojan council determines to trade Criseyde to the Greek camp. As Hector strives fruitlessly to protect the vulnerable widow, Troilus, her lover and more logical defender, stands mutely, neglecting to voice a word of protest. While many critics have emphasized the exchange of women referenced in and signified by this crucial scene, I would like to diverge from that issue in order to examine Troilus's silence and reluctance to express his emotions not only in this incident but throughout much of the poem. Early in the narrative, after the God of Love's arrow strikes Troilus, the formerly proud soldier attempts to conceal his plight from the probing Pandarus, insisting, "I hide it for the beste" (1.581). Disregarding his friend's words, Pandarus persuades Troilus to disclose his secrets and, consequently, to cede his agency as a lover to the self-appointed go-between. At this point, Troilus situates himself in a powerless position from which he does not emerge for the majority of the narrative, and, in doing so, he gives Pandarus the ability to control the secrets in the text and to determine when and to whom to distribute them.

Focusing on the economics of information and the commerce of secrets, we see that not only Troilus and Pandarus but the majority of the characters in the text use information (communicated both verbally and nonverbally) and secrets as a means to maintain autonomy and to gain control over others. Even the reader and narrator partake in this information exchange; the narrator carefully controls what facts (both authoritative and speculative) to divulge to the reader, who, in turn, sorts and absorbs the information received and retains the responsibility of interpreting the text in its entirety. However, the examples of Cassandra's explication of Troilus's dream and the hero's troubling silence at the town council indicate the delicate balance between revealing and concealing secrets, suggesting that when someone divulges more than is appropriate or hides truths better expressed, he or she will fail to achieve an influential position in society.

Troilus's reticence in the presence of the Trojan council in particular indicates that the power gained through the wielding of knowledge is not only personal but political. This suggests important parallels between the interchange of secrets in the text and the information exchange and protection intrinsic to Chaucer's social station in a dangerous political time, in which he struggled to retain a secure position in society. To make my argument about the historical significance of the use of secrets throughout *Troilus and Criseyde*, I plan to analyze Chaucer's historical and social contexts and to examine the conveyance of information in the text, paying special attention to the methods through which different types of knowledge are communicated and exploring the localities, including public and private venues, in which information is divulged or concealed. I will demonstrate that the text employs the commerce of secrets to assert that the circumspect use and withholding of information are crucial to one's survival in a precarious societal context.

Proposed Outline

Introduction

> In a brief introduction, I will set up the textual and historical issues that I plan to discuss in the paper and will outline my argument, explaining my methodology and suggesting the connection between the text and its historical context.

Chapter One

> I will begin my argument by analyzing the powerful figures in the text, those that possess the ability to use information in ways that secure their personal agency. In this chapter, I plan to examine the characters of Pandarus, Criseyde, the narrator, and Diomede, all of whom control information skillfully and use it to gain and exercise power, both narrative and societal. Examining the ways in which these characters divulge and conceal secrets and the scenarios in which they choose to do so, I will demonstrate how their conscious choices to use their knowledge results in their claiming powerful positions in the text and/or in society. I will also address the potentially problematic issue of Criseyde, arguing that, although, as a vulnerable individual, she cannot control her ultimate destination, the heroine nevertheless remains one of the text's more powerful and influential figures.

Chapter Two

> My second chapter will discuss those individuals who are generally unable to utilize language and information to gain and to retain power throughout the text, delineating their ineffective attempts to wield their potentially powerful secrets and examining the ramifications of their actions or lack thereof. In this section, I plan to focus primarily on the character of Troilus, whose combination of indiscretion and inappropriate reservation

of speech serves to procure at least some of the text's tragic outcome. In addition, I will highlight the character of Cassandra, who lacks the ability to communicate properly her extensive prescience in a way that will result in her finding a stable place either in the narrative or in society.

Chapter Three

I will use the third chapter to historicize my argument, discussing the poem's contemporary context and sketching Chaucer's position in society. I will then tie in the assertions I developed in the previous two chapters, suggesting my argument's refection of and relevance to Chaucer's time and personal situation. In this final chapter, I will conclude my argument, connecting more concretely the text and its historical context and examining the implications and significance of my claims.

Tentative Schedule

January 5, 2003	Draft of chapter one
February 5, 2003	Draft of chapter two
March 5, 2003	Draft of chapter three
March 20, 2003	Completed draft
April 5, 2003	Final draft (revisions done) sent to committee
April 18, 2003	Oral defense

Partial Bibliography (Annotated)

Aers, David. "Chaucer's Criseyde: Woman in Society, Woman in Love." *Chaucer, Langland,*

    and the Creative Imagination. By Aers. New York: Routledge, 1980. Rpt. in Stillinger

    195-218.

    Aers argues that Chaucer uses the character of Criseyde in order to focus on the role of

    women in the courtly society. He claims that, by doing this, the poet shows that his

    heroine is powerless in her society and, consequently, cannot be condemned justifiably

    for her actions at the end of the text.

---. *Community, Gender, and Individual Identity: English Writing 1360-1430*. London:

    Routledge, 1988.

---. "Criseyde: Woman in Medieval Society." *Chaucer Review* 13 (1979): 177-200. Rpt. in

    Benson, *Critical Essays* 128-48.

Antonelli, Roberto. "The Birth of Criseyde—An Exemplary Triangle: 'Classical' Troilus and

    the Question of Love at the Anglo-Norman Court." Boitani, *European Tragedy* 21-48.

Barney, Stephen A. "Troilus Bound." *Speculum* 47 (1972): 445-58. Rpt. in Shoaf 1-16.

    Barney traces the language and images of bondage throughout the poem and

    demonstrates how Troilus is bound by his love for Criseyde until his world explodes and

    death frees him from his captivity.

Beidler, Peter G., ed. *Masculinities in Chaucer: Approaches to Maleness in the* Canterbury

    Tales *and* Troilus and Criseyde. Cambridge: Brewer, 1998.

Benson, C. David. *Chaucer's* Troilus and Criseyde. London: Unwin Hyman, 1990.

    In the course of his analysis of *Troilus and Criseyde*, Benson describes Troilus's

    transformation from a public prince to a passive lover, demonstrating the hero's inability

to assume the role of an Ovidian lover. In addition, he discusses the multiplicity of love

in the text.

---, ed. *Critical Essays on Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde" and His Major Early Poems*.

Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1991.

---. "The Opaque Text of Chaucer's Criseyde." *Chaucer's* Troilus and Criseyde. By Benson.

London: Unwin Hyman, 1990. Ch. 5-6. Rpt. in Shoaf 17-28.

Benson contends that, while Chaucer's Criseyde is more complex than is Boccaccio's

heroine, she also remains more difficult to read, concealing her inner self from the reader.

While readers occasionally seem to glimpse Criseyde's thoughts and feelings, they

ultimately must interpret her for themselves. By writing Criseyde's "opaque" character,

Chaucer provokes his readers to pass judgement on her while he refrains from

condemning her.

---. "True Troilus and False Cresseid: The Descent from Tragedy." Boitani, *European Tragedy*

153-70.

Berry, Craig A. "The King's Business: Negotiating Chivalry in *Troilus and Criseyde*." *Chaucer*

Review 26.3 (1992): 236-265.

Bloomfield, Morton W. "Distance and Predestination in *Troilus and Criseyde*." *PMLA* 72

(1954): 14-26. Rpt. in Benson, *Critical Essays* 32-43.

Boitani, Piero. "Antiquity and Beyond: The Death of Troilus." Boitani, *European Tragedy* 1-

19.

This article traces the treatment of and portrayal of the death of Troilus throughout

European literature and artwork.

---. "Eros and Thanatos: Cressida, Troilus, and the Modern Age." Boitani, *European Tragedy*

    281-305.

---, ed. *The European Tragedy of Troilus*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989.

Brewer, Derek. *Chaucer and His World*. Cambridge: Brewer, 1978.

---. "Comedy and Tragedy in *Troilus and Criseyde*." Boitani, *European Tragedy* 95-109.

---. "Troilus's 'Gentil' Manhood." Beidler 237-52.

    Brewer discusses the character of Troilus, arguing that Troilus' character conforms to

    Chaucer's definition of masculinity.

Carton, Evan. "Complicity and Responsibility in Pandarus' Bed and Chaucer's Art." *PMLA* 94

    (1979): 47-61. Rpt. in Stillinger 219-42.

    Carton discusses the complicity of the poem's involved members, including the narrator

    and the reader, and discusses our inability to obtain true distance from the narrative,

    despite the fact that we know the text's outcome from its onset. In addition, the author

    contends that Troilus's self-absorbed passivity turns him into an object who needs

    Pandarus.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *Troilus and Criseyde*. *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. 3rd

    ed. Boston: Houghton, 1987.

Crane, Susan. *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's* Canterbury Tales. Princeton: Princeton UP,

    1994.

David, Alfred. "The Hero of the Troilus." *Speculum* 37.4 (1962): 566-81.

    David offers an explanation of why Troilus is Chaucer's hero despite the widespread

    dislike of him.

Dietrich, Stephanie. " 'Slydyng' Masculinity in the Four Portraits of Troilus." Beidler 205-20.

    Dietrich argues that Chaucer gives the character of Troilus masculine characterization

    while allowing him to move away from typical gender roles. While Troilus begins the

    poem exuding masculinity, he slips away from this strong male image, regaining his

    masculine position at the end, but not in time to regain his beloved.

Delany, Sheila. "Techniques of Alienation in *Troilus and Criseyde*." *The Uses of Criticism*. Ed.

    A.P. Foulkes. Lieteraturwissenschaftliche Texte. Theorie und Kritik 3. Bern: Peter

    Lang, 1976. 77-95. Rpt. in Shoaf 29-46.

    Delany applies Brecht's theories of alienation to *Troilus and Criseyde*, arguing that the

    end of the poem makes sense if one takes into consideration the fact that the reader is

    distanced from the narrative throughout the entirety of the poem.

Dinshaw, Carolyn. *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 1989.

    In Dinshaw's discussion of *Troilus and Criseyde*, she defines the act of "reading like a

    man" as a reading technique that promotes structure and unity by excluding, containing,

    and classifying as feminine anything disruptive to the order. She goes on to describe the

    ways that critics, the narrator, and the two major male characters read like men and

    explains that Criseyde, in her focus on wholeness and "every word," reads like a woman.

    Although he does read like a man, Pandarus, Dinshaw argues, does so for Troilus's

    benefit, indicating that men need not read like men despite their male anatomy.

Donaldson, E. Talbot. *The Swan at the Well: Shakespeare Reading Chaucer*. New Haven: Yale

    UP, 1985.

---. "Troilus and Criseyde." *Chaucer's Poetry: An Anthology for the Modern Reader*. By

    Donaldson. New York: Ronald, 1958. 964-80. Rpt. in Benson, *Critical Essays* 44-56.

Durham, Lonnie J. "Love and Death in Troilus and Criseyde." *Chaucer Review* 3 (1968): 1-11.

Edwards, Robert R. "Pandarus's 'Unthrift' and the Problem of Desire in *Troilus and Criseyde*."
Shoaf 74-87.

Edwards discusses the issue of desire in the text, examining, in particular, Pandarus's
introduction of the problem of desire, which remains unresolved at the poem's conclusion
and helps to shape our reading of the text's end.

Evans, Murray J. " 'Making strange': The Narrator (?), the Ending (?) and Chaucer's 'Troilus.' "
Neuphilologische Mittelilungen 87 (1986): 218-28. Rpt. in Benson, *Critical Essays* 164-
75.

Fradenburg, Louise O. " 'Our owen wo to drynke': Loss, Gender, and Chivalry in *Troilus and
Criseyde*." Shoaf 88-106.

Examining the poem from a psychoanalytic perspective, Fradenburg discusses the poem
and its relation to violence in the 1300s, paying particular attention to "honorable" or
"chivalrous" violence. In her examination of this issue, the author contrasts Troilus's
"heroization of suffering" with Criseyde's feminine desire to live.

Frantzen, Allen J. *Troilus and Criseyde: The Poem and the Frame*. New York: Twayne
Publishers, 1993.

Frantzen situates the poem in its historical context.

Fyler, John M. "The Fabrications of Pandarus." *Modern Language Quarterly* 41 (1980): 115-
30. Rpt. in Shoaf 107-19.

Fyler looks at Pandarus's two major falsehoods created in the text and shows that they
end up becoming reality (signifying Fortune's "punishment" of Pandarus). Fyler argues

that these fabrications also serve to highlight the reader's attitude toward reality and

artifice, causing the reader to realize that, despite its distastefulness, artifice is necessary.

Gardner, John. *The Life and Times of Chaucer*. New York: Vintage, 1977.

Hanawalt, Barbara A., ed. *Chaucer's England: Literature in Historical Context*. Medieval

Studies at MN 4. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1992.

Hanley, Michael G. *Boccaccio, Beauvau, Chaucer:* Troilus and Criseyde*: Four Perspectives on

Influence*. Norman, OK: Pilgrim, 1990.

Hanning, Robert W. "Come in out of the Code: Interpreting the Discourse of Desire in

Boccaccio's *Filostrato* and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*." Shoaf 120-37.

Hanning discusses the idea of desire in *Il Filostrato* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, arguing

that, in the former, desire must be uncovered or decoded, stripped from the language that

shields it, and simultaneously must be given meaning. By contrast, in Chaucer's version

of the story, desire (and, by default, Criseyde herself) is subject to multiple interpretations

by the males in the text, who each must impose meaning on the uninterpretable canvas.

Hansen, Elaine Tuttle. *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1992.

Heinrichs, Katherine. *The Myths of Love: Classical Lovers in Medieval Literature*. University

Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1990.

Hermann, John P. "Gesture and Seduction in *Troilus and Criseyde*." *Studies in the Age of

Chaucer* 7 (1985): 107-35. Rpt. in Shoaf 138-60.

Howard, Donald R. *Chaucer: His Life, His Works, His World*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1987.

Howard gives *Troilus and Criseyde* a historical context and discusses the original

audience of the poem.

Kearney, Milo and Mimosa Schraer. "The Flaw in Troilus." *Chaucer Review* 22.3 (1988): 185-191.

> Kearney and Schraer contend that Troilus has unjustly escaped condemnation for his failure to defend and protect Criseyde. Although Chaucer's heroine is significantly more complex than Boccaccio's, Chaucer differentiates Troilus from Troilo in only one major way: his inability to speak in public, which leads to his losing his beloved.

Kellogg, Laura D. *Boccaccio's and Chaucer's Cressida*. Studies in the Humanities: Literature—Politics—Society 16. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.

Kelly, Henry Ansgar. *Chaucerian Tragedy*. Chaucer Studies 24. Cambridge: Brewer, 1997.

---. *Love and Marriage in the Age of Chaucer*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1975.

Kittredge, G.L. "Troilus." *Chaucer and His Poetry*. By Kittredge. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1915. 108-21. Rpt. in Benson, *Critical Essays* 1-7.

Koff, Leonard Michael. "Ending a Poem before Beginning It, or The 'Cas' of Troilus." Shoaf 161-78.

> In his article, Koff debates whether Troilus is a perfect lover and/or hero.

Lambert, Mark. "*Troilus*, Books I-III: A Criseydean Reading." *Essays on* Troilus and Criseyde. Ed. Mary Salu. Cambridge: Brewer, 1979. 105-25. Rpt. in Benson, *Critical Essays* 110-27.

Lees, Clare A., ed. *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1994.

Leicester, H. Marshall, Jr. *The Disenchanted Self: Representing the Subject in the* Canterbury Tales. Berkeley: U of California P, 1990.

Lewis, C. S. *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition*. London: Oxford UP, 1938.

---. "What Chaucer Really Did to *Il Filostrato*." *Essays and Studies* 17 (1932): 56-75. Rpt. in

    Benson, *Critical Essays* 8-22.

    Comparing Chaucer's version of the Troilus story to Boccaccio's, Lewis contends that

    Chaucer approaches the story as a courtly love poet, narrating the theory that has already

    been described.

Mann, Jill. *Geoffrey Chaucer*. Feminist Readings. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities, 1991.

---. "Shakespeare and Chaucer: 'What is Criseyde Worth?'" Boitani, *European Tragedy* 219-

    42.

---. "Troilus' Swoon." *Chaucer Review* 14 (1980): 319-35. Rpt. in Benson, *Critical Essays*

    149-63.

    Analyzing Troilus's notorious faint in book 3, Mann contends that the hero faints because

    he loses his identity. She also discusses the inversion of power relationships in love.

McAlpine, Monica. *The Genre of* Troilus and Criseyde. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1978.

McCall, John P. "The Trojan Scene in Chaucer's *Troilus*." *ELH* 29 (1962): 263-75. Rpt. in

    Benson, *Critical Essays* 57-67.

McGerr, Rosemarie P. "Meaning and Ending in a 'Paynted Proces': Resistance to Closure in

    Troilus and Criseyde." Shoaf 179-98.

McInerney, Maud Burnett. " 'Is this a mannes herte?': Unmanning Troilus through Ovidian

    Allusion." Beidler 221-35.

    McInerney focuses on Ovid's influence on the masculinity of Troilus's character.

Medcalf, Stephen, ed. *The Later Middle Ages*. The Context of English Literature. London:

    Methuen, 1981.

Miller, Robert P., ed. *Chaucer: Sources and Backgrounds*. New York: Oxford UP, 1977.

Moore, Marilyn Reppa. "Who's Solipsistic Now? The Character of Chaucer's Troilus."

    Chaucer Review 33.1 (1998): 43-59.

    Focusing on the ethos of devotion, Moore counters the critics who accuse Troilus of

    being solipsistic by claiming that he abandons his self-centeredness when he lays eyes on

    Criseyde. In falling in love with Criseyde, he undergoes a religious conversion, after

    which he learns to suffer and to meditate in order to find a connection to his society and

    to his beloved.

Muscatine, Charles. "Troilus and Criseyde." *Chaucer and the French Tradition: A Study in*

    Style and Meaning. By Muscatine. Berkeley: U of California P, 1957. 124-32. Rpt. in

    Benson, *Critical Essays* 23-31.

Neuse, Richard. "*Troilus and Criseyde*: Another Dantean Reading." Shoaf 199-210.

Patterson, Lee. *Chaucer and the Subject of History*. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 1991.

Paxson, James J., and Cynthia A. Gravlee, eds. *Desiring Discourse: The Literature of Love,*

    Ovid Through Chaucer. London: Associated UP, 1998.

Pearsall, Derek. *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Biography*. Blackwell Critical

    Biographies 1. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

Reichl, Karl. "Chaucer's *Troilus*: Philosophy and Language." Boitani, *European Tragedy* 133-

    52.

Richmond, Velma Bourgeois. *Geoffrey Chaucer*. Literature and Life: British Writers. New

    York: Continuum, 1992.

Robertson, D.W., Jr. *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives*. Princeton:

    Princeton UP, 1962.

    After spending time outlining Chaucer's work, Robertson discusses the "medieval

    doctrines of love."

Sadlek, Gregory M. "To Wait of to Act? Troilus II, 954." *Chaucer Review* 17.1 (1982): 62-64.

Salter, Elizabeth. "*Troilus and Criseyde*: A Reconsideration." *Patterns of Love and Courtesy:*

    Essays in Memory of C. S. Lewis. Ed. John Lawlor. London: Arnold, 1966. 86-106.

    Rpt. in Benson, *Critical Essays* 92-109.

Scanlon, Larry. "Sweet Persuasion: The Subject of Fortune in *Troilus and Criseyde*." Shoaf

    211-23.

Shoaf, R.A., ed. *Chaucer's* Troilus and Criseyde*: "Subgit to Alle Poesye": Essays in Criticism*.

    Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 104. Binghamton, NY: Medieval and

    Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992.

Stanbury, Sarah. "The Lover's Gaze in *Troilus and Criseyde*." Shoaf 224-38.

    Stanbury discusses Troilus' passivity and feminization in love

Steadman, John M. *Disembodied Laughter:* Troilus *and the Apotheosis Tradition: A*

    Reexamination of Narrative and Thematic Contexts. Berkeley: U of California P, 1972.

Stillinger, Thomas C., ed. *Critical Essays on Geoffrey Chaucer*. Critical Essays on British

    Literature. New York: G.K. Hall, 1998.

Strohm, Paul. *Social Chaucer*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989.

    Strohm's text analyzes the social structure of Chaucer's time (as opposed to major

    historical events alone) and fits the poet and his work into the cultural context.

Taylor, Ann M. "Troilus' Rhetorical Failure (4:1440-1526)." *Papers on Language and Literature: A Journal for Scholars and Critics of Language and Literature* 15 (1979): 357-69.

Taylor, Karla. "*Inferno 5* and *Troilus and Criseyde* Revisited." Shoaf 239-56.

   Taylor emphasizes Troilus' re-creation of Criseyde for his fantasy and Pandarus' creating action from his words.

Wallace, David. "*Troilus* and the *Filostrato*: Chaucer as Translator of Boccaccio." *Chaucer and the Early Writings of Boccaccio.* Chaucer Studies 12. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1985. Ch. 5-6. Rpt. in Shoaf 257-67.

Wenzel, Siegfried. "Chaucer's Troilus of Book IV." *PMLA* 79 (1964): 542-47.

Wetherbee, Winthrop. *Chaucer and the Poets: An Essay on* Troilus and Criseyde. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1984.

Windeatt, Barry. "Classical and Medieval Elements in Chaucer's *Troilus*." Boitani, *European Tragedy* 111-31.

---. *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1992.

   Windeatt provides a helpful overview of the text as well as a discussion of the theme of love and the character of Troilus (as a romance hero).

Young, Karl. *The Origin and Development of the Story of Troilus and Criseyde.* New York: Gordian, 1968.