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The Liberty Tree

This is about the liberty tree and how it will undoubtedly be free now and how it will have leaves and will be fully at liberty now and even though there is a fence about it and how such a fence will be almost nonsense in that it can have no connection with the outcome of the tree from the birth-earth nor can it ever know the outcome of whence the tree goes as it flows upward to free itself

now if you do not understand this profoundly then stand under the tree or walk around it, and the propensities of that fence will be such (but really it will be the propensity of the whole tree and the vision it will offer beyond any boundaries and any iron bound whose irony is after all small and not tall as a so busily beatific tree would be always), that you shall then realize that the true view is not of the pseudo-imprisonment of a tree but of the attempted confinement of everything which tries in itself to be, and you shall see therefore that this sight only emphasizes the tightness of our internment more and by it the tree is merely realigned through our barred eyes with the far size of eternity and the stars—but even that being our nature, sometimes, the sun or moon brightly shining, then there may be no devining of a fence at all nor sense in anything but in our new finding that the blessed essence of our nature may be procured from such a fort-defying and freely fortifying tree

and this is the truth which shall be projected from the one line of that tree so calmly standing in the center of the fence, and the fence may be a circumference which interferes but in nowise could it ever circumvent the main and magnificent intent which is that the tree shall be the center of that or any figure and that nothing shall prevent it from issuing forth and seizing the surprising elevation of the lovely skies (and Ptolemy even if he were sent could not prevent it from thuswise being a big volume and a vehement thick thing above, oh! the well-meant plane and the dusty plain where men have no well-being ever),

and I have not actually seen that tied-up

tree but shall go there now to take cognizance of *my* untidy captivity, still I am sure no tyrants could surround it nor even any fence that would be relentlessly a fence, and I feel moreover that that verdure will be fairly liberal in the air, and, further, I aver, that it shall be in fact fair and truly unattackably intact there, and that is fair enough—and if that is fair who shall go further and what fence anywhere shall claim that it has so much as a name, not wood, nor iron either, and neither should dare to put up a defense or to make false pretenses of being protection at all;

here then this ends, yet the captivity-tree will transcend in the purity of its captivation this or any other unsure art-articulation and indeed it will evoke elation intenser than any article on paper and in its relation to us will be more like an immeasurable elevator that leisurely pokes its way upward to wend even the sky away nor ever stops after it leaves the earth until it achieves an undying top floor, and this it does always, and through the days and nights such that time daily and nightly is quickly lost sight of (yet is no longer unsightly) and becomes tame and like the inoffensive fence then has no name and is of no telling significance and no elegance, and not by chance but because it is so situated and only sadly sits on the damp ground alone while the tree gently and uninhibitedly pounds and hits at the sky and finally fits into eternity nicely and roundly and profusely (and that is why that term may be profoundly used on it and is its very own).

—C. W. T.

Volpone

This little known play of Ben Jonson has been done very seldom in this country. Its size and scope make it forbidding to professional groups as well as smaller organizations. The cutting and editing, however, as done by Mr. Scofield and Mr. Landau does not detract from the beauty and order of the story.

This play is acknowledge as Jonson's greatest, but little known because of the popularity of Shakespeare. The play was written in 1607

and produced for the first time that year at Oxford and Cambridge. History tells what was thought of it and it is done frequently at the twin universities. The lust for money is the central theme with just retribution for those who seek without scruple.

The story is simple. A lecherous old man, childless, rich, feigns sick. He receives gifts from all who want to be his heir. These people profess love for old Volpone and try to ingratiate themselves with him. Volpone, with the help of his Parasite, Mosca, tricks them all into thinking that each will be his sole heir. The trickery is what gives movement to the plot and it is done with great finesse. Justice is done to all of them in the end with the wealth being taken over by the state and Volpone sent "to lie in prison cramp'd with irons, 'till he is sick and lame indeed."

The scale of the present production is grand and the problem of capturing the spirit of Venice has been faced. The King William Players have worked with spirit and enthusiasm. Mr. Camponeschi does a very good job with a hard role. The long and involved speeches are very difficult to give movement to but Mr. Camponeschi overcomes these obstacles well. Mr. di Grandi as the Parasite, Mosca, is also faced with comparable problems which he handles with skill. The other members of the cast are wisely chosen and bring out the subtiles with a technical ease.

"The seasoning of a play is the applause.

Now, though the Fox be punished by the laws,

He yet doth hope, there is no sucering due,
For any fact which he hath done 'gainst you;

If there be, censure him; here he doubtful stands:

If not, fare joviallt, and clap your hands."

O. P. A.

I would like to talk about an overshadowed problem—OPA. It's an important problem not only because we will all be directly affected but if there is no clear thinking about price control we may end up in another boom, another crash, and perhaps people may get hungry enough to start what is for some the long awaited revolution.

And also, I want to talk only about one of the House amendments to the pending bill

to continue OPA. There are eight of these amendments but the most important and most controversial is the "Gossett Decontrol Amendment." This requires removal of a price ceiling on a commodity whenever the production of the said commodity in the latest twelve months exceeds its production for the year ending June 30, 1941.

The argument of those who are working to make this amendment law is this: Unless price controls are removed business men will not invest money in business, and production will not continue to increase above a certain point—that point being the one reached by full production of businesses now operating. From the Department of Commerce's publication "Survey of Current Business," one can find out that for the first quarter of 1940 the National Investment was \$3.5 billion whereas the National Investment for the 1st quarter of 1946 was \$5 billion. Hence, money is not only being invested, but more of it is being invested today than in 1941, the last good year of production of consumer goods.

That would seem to be enough to answer these men but let us delve a little further into figures from the same publication. We find that the amount of goods available to consumers, for instance, in 1940 was \$84.2 billion, or for 1941 \$93.8 billion. And for one quarter of 1946 the figure is \$34.5 billion. Multiply this last by four and you have, in 1946, \$138.0 billion dollars worth of good available. It would seem that now we are up to 1941 production level, and should the Gossett amendment become law most commodities would be without price ceilings. Prices would, on many items, mercilessly rise.

Let us consider why these shortages exist. We have about as much goods now as we had then. (I say "about" because though there is \$44.2 billion of more goods available this year than there was in 1941, the value of the dollar has decreased and so the volume available should be about the same.) Yet there is a great shortage of consumer goods. The answer, of course, is a tremendous demand pent-up and this, too, can be expressed in figures. In 1941 the National Income was \$96.9 billion. For an average year between 1941-1945 the income was \$138.0 billion. This increase in annual income plus four years of savings due to lack of available goods has caused a sharp increase in demand.

What is so very interesting about this is that all the figures here presented were available to every member of the House, yet they passed this amendment. But there is a story that should be told here—perhaps in defense of the Representatives. When the members of the House returned from their Easter vacation, they immediately appropriated subsidy money for housing. On vacation they had actually found out what conditions were like in their home towns and it was believed that should the OPA bill come back from the Senate to again go through the House (Ed. Note: It has.) the Representatives would modify their amendments to serve the many and not the few. What does one conclude? Should our representatives be given bigger and better vacations?

And yet this shouldn't be tossed aside with a smile. I think the issue is grave. If America will ever be ripe for the loss of representative government, she will be so when people are hungry and what quicker way to hunger than a period of tremendous production followed by depleted demand. Changes may be needed, but changes that result from reason, and hungry people cannot be expected to reason.

—ARRON BISBERG.

Buchanan's Brave New Proportion

When I heard that Mr. Buchanan was planning to visit the Tennessee Valley Project over the spring vacation, I recalled another trip that he made shortly after the war began to Fort Knox, and the subsequent effect it had on the student body. The height of the plane, and the depth of his perception cast a number of badly jumbled and disorderly events into a new and understandable pattern, and so naturally it was this kind of experience I had been eagerly anticipating ever since his return from the Valley. It came in the form of a Sunday evening talk on the TVA and Atomic Energy, in the library, Sunday evening last.

The story begins and ends with a proportion.

Cartels Atomic Energy

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T V A World Government

It would be well to deal first with the four terms of the equation separately. Cartel is a funny word, especially in this neck of the woods, where it is not used in a particularly limited sense. It begins with a luncheon engagement of two business men, intent on ham-

mering out some kind of an operating competitive compromise, and winds up somewhere in the Soviet Union. However, I think we can do a little better by Mr. Buchanan than this. A cartel is an arrangement (usually of a business nature) which runs almost directly counter to the famous maxim "divide and conquer"—reading "align and eliminate." This means monopoly on an international scale. It is simply the resolution of the market place (not the class) struggle of competition into a partnership which dictates to the customer, rather than vying for his business. It is usually born out of economic catastrophe, and a neurosis of fear. The shift is from economic hegemony to economic unity which takes on the aspect of secret government. As the power increases at some point it comes into conflict with the interests of the state. This results in either the death of the cartel, or its incorporation into the state, eg. Germany and Russia (a further distinction between these two would be of course necessary in a more thorough analysis). Our government tries to limit the growth of cartels by laws such as the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and agencies like the Interstate Commerce Commission. Both of these approaches to the problem exemplify the two methods generally used to curb such practices, namely Control and Regulation. This brings us to TVA which is often referred to as a yardstick, a measuring or regulating force in the field of electric power.

Mr. Buchanan spoke of TVA as a government corporation. Hypothetically, at least, it is a corporation operating in the public interest, and by that token in competition with the power monopolies (nascent cartels). As an agency serving the public interest it seeks constantly to broaden its function, and has had amazing results in cultivating not only the soil of the valley but the minds and spirits of its inhabitants. The Lilienthal book "TVA—Democracy on the March" was recommended for a more thoroughgoing analysis of this idea. The farmers in the area have dramatically demonstrated this broader understanding by deciding to take the time off from their work, necessary to conduct through and explain the valley to visitors. There is a feeling of pride, of ownership and accomplishment in this attitude—precisely the type of feeling that is absent in the employees of the General Electric Company or the United States Steel Corporation. Such feeling is born of some rather deep under-

standing of wherein their common interests lie.

The Atom Bomb, or better, Atomic Energy, is a human instrument containing the very real potentiality of universal destruction, dangerous and to be feared because its use comes within the orbit of human determination. It literally forces the political problem. Where does the authority lie? In the possessor of Atomic Power and its tools of destruction. In this sense it is a natural sovereign. No nation is secure without it certainly, and possession of it designates the owner as the threat to any other nation's security. Either horn of the dilemma leads to the land of the "Possessed," the anarchy of fear in which wars (in this case wars of total destruction) thrive. Peace and order are no longer desirable but necessary to any kind of survival.

A real World Government can regulate or control this situation. But here we are faced by a misunderstanding which translates such a government into a myth or a monster. It is not a *deus ex machina* which will solve everything, neither is it a police state. It is a universal set of workable political institutions, fortified by the commensurate understanding necessary and essential to their operation. It grows out of better understanding, and is not invoked by edict. It is not a catch-all, answer-all utopian idea, but rather a practical approach to a practical problem. What then is the problem?

For Mr. Buchanan it is to find a working Common Good, which he suggests is difficult, but not impossible. No longer can we define the Common Good in the classical terms of peace, order and freedom. In the old world these objectives were consistent and thereby possible in the so-called negative state. Both the Cartel and Atomic Power have exploded this idea. It seems that either one by their international or universal nature destroy the illusory security of national sovereignty, and by their complication defy simple police control. The kind of positive understanding and application that TVA and World Government imply demands a new definition of the Common Good. The function of the state (in transition the national state, ultimately the World state) shifts out of the negative pattern and assumes the form of a creative force, creative in respect to the formation of *Intelligence* capable of establishing and understanding workable social, economic and political institutions.

The proportion has then developed into a mean proportion, and as Mr. Thornton would say, according to the Gospel of St. John's, is thereby higher in the dialectical hierarchy.

Cartels Education

Education Government

Education has become the mean term because it is through understanding which education creates that we get from economic and political chaos to the Common Good, or the intelligence requisite to living happily and securely in the Atomic world.

What kind of an education can achieve this end? Surprise! Mr. Buchanan did not simply write in Great Books at this point and go home to continue his seminar reading. He told us he felt the best type of education went on while people were working, working hard, and attempting to understand the tools, the machines and eventually the ideas that they are working with. Only at this point is this new conception of a community, or state if you will, possible, when there is a common understanding of means and ends, institutions and objectives. To get this type of education into motion, the Dean offered a resolution that an Educational Development Authority which would probe into and experiment with new and old forms of education (with emphasis on the adult and workers' level) should be established as soon as possible.

For Mr. Buchanan then, as Mr. Meiklejohn, we are hanging awkwardly between two worlds and we must be about this task of developing common understanding immediately if the new and better world is to be born in time.

—BILL GOLDSMITH.

Aristotle (I) and (II)

The "informative character" Mr. Klein promised in his two lectures on Aristotle turned out to be "informative" in an active sense. To use his term, "information" is a sedimented word; his lectures put form into our intellects, by working on his hearers as material and generating a direct understanding of generation. Thus the lectures became the thing they were talking about. The audience, in other words, did not hear a Phrasaic exposition of the letter, but were invited to enter into the intellectual experience of beholding the very being of the cosmos. Here was no scholastic parade of terms

deployed to control all the vantages of debatable ground, but an attempt, in large part successful, to make the student able to see being as Aristotle saw it,—and, I may add, perhaps to some degree as Aristotle did not see it. This was and is dialectic, the intellect at work with being, and if we can achieve this activity, what Aristotle saw or said becomes unimportant.

In his first lecture Mr. Klein developed Aristotle's doctrine of generation (*genesis*), starting with his acceptance of the Platonic paradox of the *eidos*, the looks that can not be seen, the old Greek cosmogony and theogony by myth, and the Socratic practice of seeking the answer to the simple question "why?" in *logos*, in reasoned speech. Aristotle's task was to say in technical terms, what Plato said in myth and paradox. There is no quarrel between Plato and Aristotle about the existence of ideas, but about how they do.

For Aristotle, art imitates nature. By analysis of the procedure of the artist, he shows that there are four answers to the question "why?": the material, the maker, the *eidos* and the end or purpose. When this pattern is transferred to natural making the same elements are discovered, but with a difference. Nature is within the naturally made thing, not standing apart as the artist. Even the artist must be near the thing he is making, but he is apart. In nature the thing itself desires its own being, its "ownness," to suggest a rendering of *ousia* as Mr. Klein illuminated that term. The myth of Eros in the *Symposium* is given a non-mythical *logos*.

"*Physis* is, in each given case, something very definite. It is that which makes a being be what it is. It is that which makes up the being of a being, and consequently can not be taken away from it. It is the very *ousia* of that being. That is what the animal desires, and we face here again, it seems, the Platonic paradox that that which the animal desires is already its own being, it is something which it already owns. It is here that the Aristotelian terminology shows its strength. If nature, *physis*, is that which makes up the being of an animal, both the male and the female, is their *ousia*; if, on the other hand, this *ousia* is that which the animal is and which cannot be taken away from it, its *eidos*, that precisely which one means while speaking about it; if, finally, this *eidos*, like the *eidos* that the carpenter has in mind, provokes the generating motions of the

male animal, already possessing this very *eidos*, then this *eidos* and this *ousia* and this *physis* are one,—the act of generating, the act of *working on a material* which is to be transformed into the same nature: it is *being at work*, it is *energeia*. The product generated, the finished product, is the generation brought to its end (*entelecheia*) and it is nothing but the continued activity of generation. The grown-up animal is what it is only insofar as it is generating. All his other activities are preparatory to the act of generation. At this point it becomes apparent that all making is a rather weak imitation of generation. In all making the finished product is clearly distinct from the operation that leads to its coming into being. Guided by the understanding of human arts in exploring the phenomenon of generation, we finally reach the conclusion that generation is not so much Making as Doing (*praxis*). The difference between making (*poiesis*) and doing (*praxis*) is just this: in making, the product is not the producing; in doing, the *thing done* is the *doing itself*. If we take a walk, for example, the thing done, the walk, is our walking. And similarly a play is the playing. *The change involved in all doing is its own end*. Genesis in Aristotle's understanding is one of the most perfect modes of Doing. And it seems to me that this point in Aristotle's doctrine is usually not taken into account at all."

The informative character of the lecture is in evidence here. No set of scholastic definitions and distinctions suffices to make understandable the terms as Mr. Klein has succeeded in relating them. Only serious dialectical play can inform us with their meaning. If generation is the *eidos* of work what else is in than Plato's participation? In the *Phaedo* (101d), Socrates, in the course of describing his "second tack," the search by means of *logoi* and in *logoi*, says:

"If anyone says to me that something is beautiful I hold simply ingenuously and perhaps foolishly, that nothing else makes it beautiful but the presence (*parousia*) or communion (*koinonia*) or whatever you choose to call it, of the beautiful."

Here is the teaching of the working of the *eidos*, it is a poetic thing (*poiesis* can be doing as well as making and I really take this passage to be saying that *parousia* is a making that is a doing). But *parousia* is participation from the side of the Idea as *metousia* is from the side of

the participant. This is what genesis as Mr. Klein presents it comes to, for as Aristotle makes clear in Physics V, 1 genesis, though change is not kinesis, that is, it is not a temporal process. To say that the animal is only really what it is when it is in the act of generating, is really to establish the eternity of the *eidos* and to make the things which seem to succeed each other in time and which Aristotle says are many in number while one in *eidos* things covered by Plato's collective use of the term genesis, things that tumble about between being and non-being and are metaphorically called imitations of the *eidos*. When we give the same name to two things we are in so far as they partake of twoness naming participants in the *eidos* with the name of the *eidos*. The eternity of the world is thus even for Aristotle, something above an everlasting temporal succession of events, but something that is imitated by a mysterious thing that by moving maintains the looks of eternity. There is, then, something, some *ousia*, other than *eidos* and perhaps inimical to it. It is non-being, it is ananke, unintelligible, that intellect tries to persuade, as Aristotle and Mr. Klein do, but that forever stays just beyond comprehension, and perhaps makes comprehension possible.

This last point leads to the discussion of Mr. Klein's second lecture, where the consequences of the point he established in the first were applied to the intellect and the universe. The universe is one, and Mr. Klein raised a model of it aloft as he spoke, and the conception of *eidos* as *energeia* is what gives it its unity. I have tried to show above that if Mr. Klein is right that Aristotle considered that he was restoring to the universe a unity that Plato had reduced to a duality the Platonist can reply that Aristotle, since he is saying the same thing as Plato must either accept a Platonic duality of allow unity to Plato.

In considering intellect we should note that at the end of *Generation of Animals* I, Aristotle says that since sensation is a kind of knowing and animals have sense, therefore animals have an *energeia* other than generation. In this they differ from plants, whose one *energeia* is to produce seed. Hence male and female are always together in plants, but unite among animals only when the time comes to perform the act of generation. There is here a kind of threat to unity in that there seems a possible dual *ousia* for animals, generation and knowing. What is the animal. It would seem that just as making

is a feeble imitation of doing and so the artist is less than nature, so reproduction is an imitation of knowing, as the English word's ambiguity implies, and the real *eidos* would be that for which as Aristotle says, the *nous* is the immaterial place. This view contains either a way back to the Platonic Ideas or the way forward to Plotinus. Aristotle seems not to be too happy with his position and in the *De Anima* endows the *nous* in its active sense with immortality and eternity but says, alas, we do not remember.

Another part of reviewing a lecture must be critical rather than dialectical. Familiar as we are with "Aristotleianism" we must be forever indebted to Mr. Klein lecturing to us on Aristotle without ever being "Aristotleian." It is hard to overstate the benefit that comes from him immonstration that *eidos* implies activity, that actuality is not a dead term. The etymological interpretation of *ousia* from its everyday meaning of one's own property is illuminating. It is good to have generation lifted out of the region of the mechanics of genetics and restored to its proper place as the ground of poetry. It is a happy suggestion that material be substituted for matter as the translation of *hyle*.

One other comment should be made. The use of logos as the means for the study of being leads to a peculiar consequence. For Socrates logos was the talk of the market place the speeches of the law court, the plays in the theatre, the poems of Homer, the writings of Anaxagoras. When Aristotle began constructing a technical terminology the beginning of Aristotleianism was made. A new kind of logos became a screen that interposed between the sight and its object, rather than a clear mirror, as Socrates conceived logos to be. Aristotleianism, I take it, is the study of terms, rather than things. Aristotle cannot escape responsibility for what he did in this way, even though he himself was not a victim.

Finally it is to be hoped that Mr. Klein will give next year his third lecture and develop the suggestion he made about the modern world's retention of *energeia* as a term, while losing forever the vision of the *eidos*.

—J. S. K.

Van Doren on Chaucer

"Red where-so thou be," Chaucer tells *Troilus and Criseyde* as he brings it to an end, "that thou be understood I God beseeche," but he has written a poem of such extraordinary

equilibrium that to talk about it at all is to misrepresent it. The excellence of Mr. Van Doren's way of talking about it was that he generally refused the temptation to explain rigidly what the story or its characters "mean." But this renunciation is not excellent because a comic work has no meaning or because a comic poet's interest in his characters is amoral, with both of which views the lecturer appeared at times to be in alliance, or at least dalliance. I say appeared because of course Mr. Van Doren is fully aware that such half-truths have other halves—as for example that a comedy has no meaning because it has many meanings, or that a comic poet does not indulge in simple moral judgments of his characters because they are not set up as univocal allegories of the Virtues and Vices. It is probable, however, that somebody, X, not necessarily a freshman, left Friday's question period with the notion that "Mr. Van Doren said that the comic poet thinks this is the best of all possible worlds," as indeed he did. To be sure it was said with a smile, and with the delayed sotto voce footnote "because it is the only possible world," but the responsibility for the obstruction raised, in the degree of Mr. Van Doren's considerable prestige, to X's future understanding of comedies remains partly with the lecturer. The lecture about to be summarized offers, in my opinion, several formulations more epigrammatic than useful, both of the nature of comedy (or rather, of Comedy) and aspects of *Troilus and Criseyde*. This is not to set Mr. Van Doren up as an univocal allegory of critical Vice, in view of the general disclaimer with which the lecture began, but I should like to register in advance two or three dissents from the reading of *Troilus* he proposes.

It does not seem to me that the adjective "infantile" is a helpful one in understanding *Troilus*. It does not suggest his importance, that his exaggerated impulse of recoil from consummation, from success, toward death, is the analogue in extremis of a set of attitudes which deeply infect our own notion of love. The pathos of *Criseyde*, who was not quite up to a grand passion and didn't know why, is not indicated by the lecture. And it does Chaucer a disservice to suggest that Pandarus, who consistently misunderstands *Troilus* throughout the poem (it is in this, among other things, that his pathos lies) is the medium through which the story can be seen clearly as the poet saw it. This misrepresentation destroys much of the

poem's magnificent irony. I would urge, finally, that the concern of the poem is moral and theological, to speak loosely, as well as psychological, to speak loosely again. Now the lecture:

The difficulty of judging a comic work is great. It is relatively easy to define and assess the force of tragedy, but comedies are almost always underestimated. How is one to pronounce on works which do not pronounce on themselves? No one is more modest than the comic poet; indeed he almost destroys himself. The problem of indexing a comedy, as it arises for example in the Britannica project, is somehow preposterous; ideas are there, but with "english" on them, a twist, an unfamiliar emphasis, so that they appear other than they are. One way to avoid misinterpreting a comedy is to be completely serious about it. This is not to doubt that it is comic; *Troilus and Criseyde* is completely so.

As Chaucer wrote it, *Troilus* is an expansion of Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, and paradoxically his additions to the leanly, tragically written Italian work render it more rather than less moving. *Troilus* is more tender, more sympathetic, more understanding. Its mockery is light and soft. The comedy is never so overt as to be really localized; it is in the tone of the whole, so subtly that it is clear why comedy has been called divine.

The ideological source of the poem is in the medieval notion of courtly love (residually with us in such phrases as "my lady," "hopeless love"), the notion that the purest love is extramarital, preferably adulterous, "alone against the world," transcendent, singular. It is because of this tradition that the eternal triangle interests us; actually it is not eternal at all. We do not find this passion celebrated by the Greeks or Romans. It appeared quite suddenly in Europe, probably as a result of the elevation of Mary to Our Lady in the twelfth century or thereabouts. *Troilus* and *Criseyde* think of their love in this context. It is unique and necessarily secret for them. Chaucer is interested in their story, in part, because he wants to say something about the force, and at the same time the absurdity, of this convention. He brings it down to the ground, examines it for its ground-truths, and silently laughs the rest away. It is partly true to experience that "Love too widely known yields bitter fruit;" lovers want to be alone; but the exaggeration of this into a doctrine of love is nonsense.

Of the three characters central to *Troilus and Criseyde*, it is Pandarus, the friendly machinator who finally maneuvers Troilus and Criseyde together, who provides the medium in which their love can be clearly viewed as the unique and typical thing it is, in distinction from the epoch-making thing Troilus thinks it is. Infantile Troilus is the hero only in the sense that it is to him that lovesickness happens. When it does happen he is helpless, and humorless—he has lost his wits. Pandarus vainly struggles to bring them back, rebukes, jollies along, tries to slap melting Troilus back into some kind of solid manful shape. When Troilus collapses in tears before he knows that there is nothing to be done, Pandarus pushes him off to do something. When Troilus wallows in grief, Pandarus calls him the fool that he is. Pandarus has no use for any fool, even love's fool; he talks in figures from the world of fact.

With Criseyde his problem is different. He knows her thoroughly (she is his niece), understands that she must be allowed to feel innocent, to rebuke his little deliberate baldnesses. He has for both of the lovers a genuine tenderness and subtlety of understanding that are more apparent with her than with Troilus, where he suppresses them to shock his friend back to some order and strength. Criseyde's strength is not in doubt. She never joins his madness. Perhaps she always knows that there are other fish to fry. But it is impossible to really judge Criseyde; she is somehow beyond our reach. We watch her coyness, her calculating, her hardness, as it were, without ever being sure just how disingenuous she is. Did she genuinely believe her schemes for returning to Troy from the Greek camp? Did she genuinely swoon, to awake so fortuitously in the nick of time? The genius of Chaucer's portrait of Criseyde is that such questions are never finally answered.

Troilus has everything in it, but weighs nothing. It laughs, and poetry is never more important than when it laughs. As Chaucer's inaudible laughter makes us understand, comedy is half, or all, from one view, of human life. Its area is the middle distance, where riddles are never resolved, and therefore comedies are long. They are full of asides, digressions, criticisms instead of crises, talk instead of action. Comedy is not anecdotal; it escapes and refuses form. It means itself, where tragedy means something else; it rests on no truth as final, rarely acts because it will not act before it knows, but unlike

cynicism goes on talking because it sees more light ahead. When Socrates said that the tragic and comic muses were the same, he meant that both expose what we do not know. But Tragedy sees less than everything and is committed; Comedy sees everything and is never committed. It is irreverent. Caucer's reverence is for all that is. The comic spirit is just and loves the world entire.

—R. A.

Aeneas To Dido

(A speech from an unwritten play. Scene: a room in Dido's palace. Time: the night before Aeneas leaves for Italy. Persons: Dido and Aeneas. Dido is asleep. Aeneas speaks:)

Beyond your heavy arm
and rounded face
the buoy tolls. Beyond
the window sill, the blind housefronts asleep,
the dark parks dead with night
the buoy tolls. Beyond
the echoing boulevards and vacant
lots and docks the buoy tolls.

I can see it anchored out to sea,
rolling in the swell.

The heavy water heaves uneasily,
hissing to itself; the seawind breathes
upon itself, and goes; and the buoy rises
and falls, creaking and rattling
in itself.

And all this night I hear, this side the dock,
the buoy toll; this side the boulevards and
parks

the buoy tolls; here in your arms, I hear

the buoy toll
the slow flow of the tide

until the town's day-voices
drown the buoy-sound
with noisy sunlit stirs.

Now you will hear it clang.

(He wakes her.)

—GENE THORNTON.