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A Comparison of the Uses of Astrology in the Works of John Gower and Geoffrey Chaucer

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A COMPARISON OF THE USES OF ASTROLOGY IN THE WORKS OF JOHN GOWER AND GEOFFREY CHAUCER

BY

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**A THESIS
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INTRODUCTION

The literary interest in astrology, which had been gradually increasing during the fourteenth century in England, culminated in the works of Geoffrey Chaucer and John Gower. It is not surprising that these two poets have used astrology very extensively in writing stories for their medieval audiences since the average man in the Middle Ages believed that his life depended upon the influences of the seven planets in their various positions in the zodiac. It is the purpose of this thesis to present a comparison of the uses of astrological material in the works of Geoffrey Chaucer and John Gower. In this comparison it will be necessary to divide this thesis into six parts in which passages from their works will be presented as evidence of the ways in which they have used astrology in writing for their medieval audience. It will be necessary to refer to some passages more than once. In the first part a comparison will be made of the personal beliefs of Chaucer and Gower concerning astrology. In the second part a comparison will be made of the ways in which these two poets have used astrological influences as motivating forces in their stories. In the third part a comparison will be made of the ways in which Chaucer and Gower have used astrological material in describing their characters and explaining their actions. It is the pur-

pose of the fourth part to compare the powers and influences of the various planets as they are presented by Chaucer and Gower. In the fifth part a comparison will be made of the distinction in theory and practice between astrology and astronomy as they are presented in the works of Chaucer and Gower. In the sixth part, an effort will be made to determine whether or not Chaucer and Gower confused the seven planets with the ancient deities of the same names.

CHAPTER I

Chaucer's curiosity and extensive learning in the sciences stand out in striking contrast to those of Gower. It is not merely that the extent of Chaucer's knowledge is much greater. It is clear that Chaucer had studied the sciences until he had become at home with them and was capable of thinking in terms of them. In Chaucer, the stuff of astrology is woven into the fabric of his stories. In writing for his medieval audience, Chaucer found it necessary to discard much of the ancient mythological machinery and to substitute as a motivating force that formative and impelling influence of the stars in which his age believed. In order to substitute such a motivating force for the final stages of action, Chaucer has skillfully gone about transferring the power of the ancient gods of his sources to the astrological planets of the same name.¹

1. W.C. Curry, Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences. New York: Oxford University Press, 1926, pp. 119-120.

To thinkers of the Middle Ages, myths about the ancient gods

were merely figments of the poetic imagination or creations of the philo-
sophic mind put forward to express an esoteric meaning. As early as the
twelfth century Albericus, philosophus, arranges the gods whose persons
he is describing in their astrological order and indicates that they are
to be considered as planets and not as gods. He says, for example, that
"Venus holds the fifth place among the planets, and on that account she
is described fifthly."²

2. Ibid., pp. 149-150.

It is difficult to generalize concerning Chaucer's belief in
astrology from the evidence furnished by the scattered passages in his
tales. This can be plainly seen in connection with his beliefs regard-
ing judicial astrology and astrological magic. The two main branches of
judicial astrology are called "genethliacal" and "hoary". Genethliacal
astrology has reference to the determination of a person's character and
fortunes from the positions of the heavenly bodies at the moment of his
birth. Hoary astrology is the art of choosing suitable times for im-
portant undertakings. This choice or "election" depends primarily upon
the situation at birth, called the root, and consists in finding a time
when the celestial bodies dominating the birth shall be in a favorable
situation for the particular undertaking contemplated.³

3. J.M. Manly, ed., Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. New York:
Henry Holt and Company, 1928, pp. 140-141.

The wife of Bath ascribes her amorous disposition to her horoscope:

Myn ascendant was Taur, and Mars therein.⁴

Hypermnestra derived her beauty and her character from Venus and Jupiter and owed her death in prison to Saturn. Criseyde, lamenting her fated departure from Troy, accuses the "cursed constallacian" under which she was born. The astrological system of "elections" is also taken for granted. In the "Squire's Tale" the lusty children of Venus dance when that planet is in her exaltation. Troilus speeds well in love because Venus is in her seventh house. Pandarus chooses a moment for delivering a message to Criseyde when the moon is "in good plyt." The misfortunes of Constance in the "Man of Law's Tale" are partly due to the fact that the voyage was undertaken under an "infortunat ascendant." Chaucer's characters hold such opinions on the subject of magic as might be expected of medieval folk. The Parson denounces geomancy and divination with the usual orthodox vehemence, although he is willing to moderate his condemnation in the case of medicinal charms, if they really accomplish cures. Chaucer's Franklin is likewise careful to guard himself against the possible charge that he would countenance occult practices. In commenting upon the astrological magic of the Orleans Clerk, he seeks shelter under the orthodox doctrines of the Mother Church.⁵

4. "The Wife of Bath's prologue," The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. by F.N. Robinson. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1933, p.98, line 613.

5. T.O. Wedel, The Medieval Attitude Toward Astrology Particularly in England. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920, pp. 148-150.

Although, in the persons of the Parson and Franklin, Chaucer deferred to ecclesiastical hostility toward magic, he accepts a moderate judicial astrology, and the system of "elections," without protest. In turning to the "Treatise On The Astrolabe," we find him holding a view regarding astrology in practice that is ultra-conservative. However, he retains certain astrological doctrines which had become inseparable from astronomical science. He adopts such notions as the characteristics of the signs of the zodiac, the correspondence between the constellations and the parts of the human body, and the rule of the planets over the days and hours. Chaucer tells us in the prologue to his "Treatise On The Astrolabe" that the work, when completed, would include tables of astrological houses, of the "dignities" of planets, and other "useful thinges." All these admissions are more than offset by an outright condemnation of judicial astrology itself.⁶ After discussing ascendants in general, and the various "aspects" which render the lord of the ascendant favorable or unfavorable, Chaucer exclaims:

Natheless, this ben observaunces of indicial
matiere and rytes of payens, in which my spirit
no hath no feith, ne no knowing of her horoscopum.⁷

6. Ibid., pp. 150-151.

7. "A Treatise on the Astrolabe," Robinson, op.cit.,
p. 648, lines 62-65.

Judging from the references to astrology apart from those in his "Treatise on the Astrolabe," Chaucer subscribed to all the doctrines of science as it was taught in his day. Judicial astrology, in so far

at least as it undertook to define the individual's inclinations according to the configuration of the stars at birth, is nowhere condemned.⁸

8. wedel, op. cit., p. 149.

John Gower's use of astrology is very superficial. It is in his formal treatment of the various sciences rather than in his stories that we must look for his astrology. The fullest statement of Gower's astrological faith and practical knowledge is found in the description of the education of Alexander in the seventh book of the "Confessio Amantis." The information in this discussion may be considered under four heads: planets, signs, the fifteen stars, and the authors who wrote about astronomy. He takes each of the seven planets in its correct Ptolemaic order and describes its various characteristics and influences upon the affairs of man. He also mentions the particular region of the world which is dominated by the planet. The planet Jupiter is described in the following lines:

The sexte Planete of the sevene,
 Stant Jupiter the delicat,
 Which causeth pes and no debat.
 For he is clepid that Planete
 Which of his kinde softe and swete
 Attempreth al that to him longeth;
 And whom this planete underfongeth
 To stonde upon his regiment,
 He schal be meke and pacient
 And fortunat to Marchandis
 And lusti to delicacie
 In every thing which he schal do.
 This Jupiter is cause also
 Of the science of lyhte workes,
 And in this wise tellen clerkes

He is the Planete of delices.
 Bot in Egypte of his offices
 He regneth most in special:
 For ther be lustes overal
 Of al that to this lif befallerh:
 For ther no stormy weder falloerh,
 Which myhte griove man or beste,
 And ek lond is so henseste
 That it is plentevous and plein,
 Ther is non ydel ground in vein;
 And upon such felicite
 Stant Jupiter in his degre.⁹

9. G.C. Macaulay, ed., The Complete Works of John Dowor,
 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901, vol. 3, p.251,
 Book VII, lines 679-684.

The description of Sagittarius may be taken as typical of
 the entire passage in which he describes the signs of the zodiac.

The nynthe signe in nombre also,
 Which folweth after Scorpio,
 In cleped Sagittarius,
 The whos figure is marked thus,
 A monstre with a bowe on honde:
 On whom that sendri sterres stonde,
 Thilke eighte of whiche I spak tofore,
 The whiche upon the tail ben bare
 Of Scorpio, the heved al faire
 Bespraden of the Sagittaire:
 And eighte of othre stonden evene
 Upon his wombe, and othre sevne
 Ther stonde upon his tail behinde.
 And he is hot and draie of kinde:
 To Jupiter his hous is fre.
 Bot to Mercurie in his degre,
 For thei ben nocht of on assent,
 He worcheth gret emperement.
 This Signe hath of his proprete
 A monthe, which of duste
 After the sesoun that befallerh
 The plowed oxe in wynter stalleth;
 And fyr into the holle he bringerh,
 And thilke drinke of which men singerh,
 He torneth must into the wyn;
 Thanne is the larder of the swyn;

That is Novembre which I meene,
 When that the lef hath lost his greene.¹⁰

10. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 264, Book VII, lines 1140-1168.

In these lines Gower tells us the shape of Sagittarius, the number of stars in each of three subdivisions of the sign, and the "quality" of the sign. He also tells us that Sagittarius is the house of Jupiter and that the month over which the sign rules is November.

After this unusual treatment of the zodiac, he next describes the "fifteen stars." Although he was aware of the fact that this material belonged to the realm of natural magic, he includes it in what Alexander learned of astrological lore. "Some have said that there is no herb on earth, which has not a star in the sky; which is concerned for it and causes it to grow."¹¹ Gower, however, nowhere gives an explanation of the efficacy of these stars, stones, and herbs nor of the means by which they become efficacious.

11. George G. Fox, The Mediaeval Sciences In The Works of John Gower. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1931, pp. 80-81.

Gower concludes his discussion of the astrological education of Alexander with a list of authorities on astrology. To his previous citations of Ptolemy, the Almagest, Albumazar, and Hermes he adds Nimrod, Arachas Alfraganus, Gebuz, Alpetragus, Abraham, and Moses.

According to Fox, Gower was not acquainted with the authors

whom he lists. He gives several reasons for this opinion. These are authors of difficult and technical works on astronomy. Only a man with a keen interest in astrology could wade through them. Any possessing such an interest would never have turned out as puerile a performance as the astrological portion of the education of Alexander. The works of some, or all, of these writers may have passed through Gower's hands, but it is not likely that he had mastered them. Gower's mind was not deeply affected by astrological theory. On the contrary, it is fairly certain that his acquaintance with astrology was of a superficial and unimportant variety.¹²

12. Ibid., p. 83.

Although Gower's principal treatment of astrology is contained in his description of the education of Alexander, he also makes use of his knowledge of astrology in the tale of Nectanabus. Nectanabus was primarily a magician, but because astrology was so closely associated with magic, the story must be considered here in regard to its astrological details in order to get a complete picture of Gower's astrological lore. The first indication that Nectanabus is an astrologer as well as a sorcerer appears in his visit to queen Olympias.

Sche sende for him, and he com,
 With him his astellabre he nom,
 Which was of fin gold precious. 13
 With pointz and cercles merveillous;

13. Macaulay, op.cit. p. 218, Book VI, lines 1889-1892.

Nectanabus also takes with him an illustrated book describing the stars and entertains Olympias with a lecture on astronomy until the opportunity comes to speak of more personal matters. An astrological interrogation is made on the prediction that Olympias will bear a child to the God Ammon. According to Gower, Nectanabus pretends to receive this information while worshipping the God in his temple in Egypt. When Nectanabus goes home, he makes a wax image of queen Olympias and places it on a bed. He anoints it with certain herbs and by means of incantations causes the queen to dream of the entrance of Ammon into her bed. Gower reproduces these features and makes this addition:

He loketh his equacions
 And ek the constellacions
 He loketh the conjunctions
 He loketh the recepcons,
 His signe, his houre, his ascendent,
 And drowth fortune of his assent.¹⁴

14. Ibid., p. 220, Book VI, lines 1959-1964.

All Nectanabus has done is to consult the stars as to the favorableness of the time for his undertaking. Having found the favorable time, he anoints the image and begins to conjure. These are the employments of ordinary magic. The deception of the queen and her justifica-

tion before the king and courtiers are all accomplished by this magic art. As the queen lies in childbed, Nectanabus scans the heavens. He prevents the delivery of the child, saying the first time that a child born in that configuration of stars would be half man and half chicken. The moment finally arrives when the position of the stars promises a mighty emperor, and Nectanabus allows the suffering Olympias to give birth to Alexander the Great. Gower explains the astrology in the following lines:

Nectanabus, in private
 The time of his nativite
 Upon the constellacion
 Awaiteth, the relacion
 Makth to the queene how sche schal do,
 And every houre apointed so,
 That no mynut thereof was lore.
 So that in due time is bore
 This child,¹⁵

15. Ibid., p. 227, Book VI, lines 2251-2259.

The death of Nectanabus is of extreme interest in reference to Gower's attitude toward astrology. As far as it is known, Gower was acquainted with two versions of the story: the Roman de toute Chevalerie and the Latin Historia Alexandri de Preliis. In both the Roman and the Historia Alexander pushes Nectanabus from the tower in exasperation for his pretension to knowledge. This is the feature which Gower selects for amplification. The facts of the story furnish material for moralizing on the inevitability of one's destiny as represented in one's horoscope. In the Historia, Nectanabus is aware of his approaching doom. "My fates threaten me with approaching death at the hands of my son," he exclaims.

The attitude of Gower is not one of admiration for the eternal order of the universe, but one of condemnation of Nectanabus for his magical practices. A more sympathetic nature, either to Nectanabus or to astrology, would say that he had a great deal of "knowleching" about himself and his destiny, but Gower does not conceive Nectanabus's death as part of a casual series over which he had no control. On the contrary, it is the just punishment for a life ill-spent.¹⁶

16. Fox, op.cit., pp. 86-87.

In a long passage in the Mirour de'l Ome, Gower expressly rejects astrological theory and asserts the dependence of all nature on the conduct of man. Nature is examined and acquitted of all responsibility for man's misfortune, and the celestial bodies are included in the review. Believers in astrology like Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas did not deny free will to men. They were at great pains to explain that the two beliefs were compatible, and their explanations are in accord with their ontology and psychology. When Gower attempts to vindicate free will, however, he does it by arguments that are anti-astrological and non-scientific. He insists upon the purely obvious influence of celestial bodies and tacitly denies the occult emanation upon which all astrology is based. Gower gives his most comprehensive expression of astrological doctrine in the following lines:

Benethe upon this Erthe hiere
 Of alle thinges the matiere,
 As tellen ous thei ben lerned,
 Of thing above it stant governed,
 That is to seyn of the Planets,
 The cheles bothe and ek the hetes,
 The chances of the world also,
 That we fortune clepen so,
 Among the mennes nacion
 Al is thurth constellacion,
 Wherof that som man hath the wele,
 And som man hath desoses fele
 In love als wel as othre thinges;
 The stat of realmes and of kinges
 In tyme of pes, in tyme of warre
 It is conceived of the sterre;
 And thus seith the maturien
 Which is an astronomien
 Bot the divin seith otherwise,
 That if men weren goode and wise
 And plesent unto the godhede,
 Thei scholden nocht the sterres drede;
 For o man, if him wel befallle,
 Is more warth than ben thei alle
 Towardes him that woldeth al.
 Bot yit the lawe original,
 Which he hath set in the natures,
 Not worchen in the creatures,
 That therof mai be non obstacle,
 Bot if it stonde upon miracle
 Thurgh preiere of som holy man. 17

17. Macauley, op.cit., pp. 250-251, Book VII, lines 633-663.

These lines contain as strong a case for astrology as Hower
 can make. He introduces a discussion of the science. The case he actual-
 ly puts is this: astronomers say that all sublunary nature is governed by
 the stars; priests say otherwise. He does not take sides but contents him-
 self with saying that man is possessed of a body which operates in accord-
 ance with the "law original." The source of this law is not the stars but

God. In other passages in the Mirour de'l Ome, Gower takes sides strongly with the Divine.¹⁸

18. Fox, op.cit., p. 93.

There are some striking similarities in the personal beliefs of Chaucer and Gower concerning astrology. Although Chaucer's knowledge of astrology is much greater than Gower's, both of them accept a moderate judicial astrology and the system of "elections" as a basis for their stories. They also take sides with the ecclesiastical authority in their hostility toward the practice of magic. While these two poets do use judicial astrology in shaping the fortunes of their characters, they leave the final outcome to the grace of God. Although these men reject astrology in various passages of their works, it can be said that their interest and belief in astrology represent the general attitude of the educated men of the Middle Ages toward astrology.

CHAPTER II

Chaucer makes use of the influences of astrology as a motivating force in his stories much more frequently than does Coeur. The characters in Chaucer's stories seek to understand their misfortunes or to justify their conduct by tracing them back to the determinations of the heavens at their birth. Chaucer uses the supposed influences of the planets Mars and Saturn in the "Knight's Tale." The real conflict behind the surface action of the story is a conflict between these two planets. The kings Lycurgus and Emetreus are, respectively, Saturnian and Martian figures who are introduced to champion the causes of the heroes. Near the beginning of the story Chaucer indicates that there may be a planetary influence working behind the misfortunes of the heroes. Palamon has just been stung to the heart by the sight of "fresshe Emelye" walking in the garden outside of the prison walls, and has cried out in pain; whereupon his fellow prisoner, Arcite, not yet knowing the source of the trouble, advises him to be patient because a wicked planet is causing their misfortune. He says that complaining will not help the situation.

For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
 Our prisoun, for it may non other be;
 Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.
 Sos wikke aspect or disposicioun
 Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun
 Hath yeven us this, although we hadde it sworn;
 So stood the heven whan that we were born; 19
 We moste endure it; this is the short and pleyn.

19. "The Knight's Tale," Robinson, op.cit., pp. 31-32,
 lines 1084-1091.

Chaucer deliberately builds up an astrological influence with which he supplants that of the divinities. He first describes the power of Mars the planet and later in the story he gives a description of the influence of the planet Saturn. He mentions some of the disasters which are caused by the influence of Mars in the following lines:

Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;
 The hunte strangled with wilde beres;
 The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;
 The cook y-scolded, for all his longe ladel,
 Noght was forysten by the infortune of Martes;
 The carter over-riden with his carte,
 Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.
 Ther were also, of Martes divisicoun
 The barbour, and the boucher, and the smith
 And al above, depeynted in a tour,
 Saugh I conquest sittinge in great honour,
 With a sharpe sworde over his head
 Hanging by a sotil twynes thread.²⁰

20. Ibid., p. 43, lines 217-230.

Chaucer is correct in his astrology; in the Middle Ages Mars was supposed to produce just such catastrophes as he mentions in these lines. Mars is a planet by nature hot and dry, fiery, nocturnal, and

violent. He is a destroyer and a conqueror, delighting in slaughter and death, in quarrels, brawls, disputes, and contests. He is stupid, quickly moved to vehement and devastating anger, abandoning himself completely to the execution of whatever he plans and never withdrawing his hand from accomplishing that which he begins. He is instrumental in stirring up seditions; he inspires wars and battles and rules over the ravaging and laying waste of lands, over pillage, plundering, ruin and destruction by land and sea. He rejoices in the outpouring of blood, in afflictions of the miserable, and in all kinds of oppression. The poet is also correct in his enumeration of the classes of men in the professions to which Mars is supposed to be patron. William Lilly gives an extended list as follows: "Generals of Armies, Colonels, Captains, or any Souldiers having Command of Armies, all manner of Souldiers, Physicians, Apothecaries, Chirugions, Alchemists, Gunners, Butchers, Armourers, Watch-makers, Tailors, Tanners, and Carriers." Chaucer selects from "Marte's division" only the barbor, butcher, and the smith who forges swords, though he mentions also the cook and the carter.²¹

21. W.C. Curry, Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences. New York: Oxford University Press, 1926, pp. 123-124.

Saturn, as Chaucer presents him, is entirely the planet except that his being the father of Venus suggests a myth connected with godship. Finding that his daughter Venus, who is more powerful in mat-

ters pertaining to love and peace than war, cannot properly support her warrior Palamon, he ranges himself upon her side and prepares to fight her battle against Mars, the war star. The conflict, therefore, rages until the final catastrophe, between Mars, the supporter of Arcite, and Saturn, the protector of Palamon. Saturn is well equipped for such a conflict according to the lines which follow:

"My dere doghter Venus," quod Saturne,
 "My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,
 Hath more power than wot any man.
 Myn is the drenching in the see so wan;
 Myn is the prison in the derke cote;
 Myn is the strangling and hanging by the throtes;
 The murmurs, and the cherles rebelling,
 The groyning, and the pryves empoysoning;
 I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun,
 Why I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.
 Myn is the ruins of the hye halles,
 The falling of the toures and of the walles
 Up-on the myncour or the carpenter.
 I slow Sampson in shaking the pilers;
 And myne be the maladyes colde,
 The derke treasons, and the castes olde;
 My looking is the fader of pestilence." 22

22. "The Knight's Tale," Robinson, op. cit., p.48, lines 2453-2469.

Saturn's boast of an overwhelming power for evil is well authenticated by the best medieval astrologers. According to some of the medieval astrologers, Saturn is masculine, evil, diurnal, signifying old age if he be in the west and the beginning of old age if he be in the east. He controls a certain heaviness of cold and dry, and from a combination of these qualities under his influence is produced and

fostered the wise man of melancholic complexion. He signifies darkness of counsel, profound silence, and ancient and precious things pertaining to judgments. He is deserving of mistrust and suspicion, moving men to complaints and mutterings. He is old, changeable, and of evil taste; he has power over dirty waters, long wanderings, prisons, chains, slowness of labors, afflictions, and dead men. He is malicious in any position but is most powerful in the fixed signs, especially as Chaucer has him inform Venus, in the sign of the Lion. Guido Bonatus says, "If Saturn be in the fixed signs, he is powerful in producing destitution and death for those born upon the earth. But in Leo he is stronger, hardier, and more persistent than in other signs." Albumasar further remarks: "And if his position be equidistant in Leo, it signifies that infirmities and death will come upon women, that wars and misfortunes of all kinds will transpire, and that bandits will be active. If he be meridional, you might expect the rise of rivers and floods of great waters; if he be retrograde, corruption of air, mortality, and the vehemence of hot, destructive winds; if under the rays of the sun, conflicts, wars, fevers, and other diseases bringing death to men." When in Leo, says William Lilly, he is responsible for "all impediments of the right ear, teeth, all quartan agues proceeding of cold, dry and melancholy distempers, leprosies, rheums, consumptions, palsies, tremblings, vain fears, fantasies, dropsie, the hand and foot-gout, apoplexies, dog-hunger, too much flux of the hemorrhoids and ruptures." He visits one of his most

malignant distempers upon the wounded Arcite.²³

23. Curry, op.cit., pp. 129-130.

It has already been suggested that the imprisonment of Palamon and Arcite was caused by some wicked aspect or disposition of saturn at the time of their birth. Later in the story Palamon specifically states that his imprisonment is caused by Saturn.

But I mot been in prison through Saturna.²⁴

24. "The Knight's Tale," Robinson, op.cit., p. 34, line 1328.

All the dates in the story except May 3 are determined absolutely by the astrological scheme of planetary hours and days which controls the events of the story. The first meeting of Palamon and Arcite is appropriately on Friday, because that is the day of Venus; and at the first hour after sunrise, because that is the day of Saturn, and apparently at the first hour of the day, which is the hour of Saturn. The tournament cannot occur on Sunday, the day of the sun, but since Arcite, who worships Mars, is to be victorious, it must occur on Tuesday, the day of Mars.²⁵

25. Manly, op.cit., p. 551.

On Sunday morning, says Chaucer, apparently after the most careful astrological calculation, when Palamon hears the lark sing, although it is not yet day by two hours, he prepares to make a pilgrimage

to the temple of Venus.

When Palamon the larke herde synge,
 Although it nere nat day by houres two,
 Yet song the larke, and Palamon also
 With hooly herte and with an heigh corage,
 He roos to wonden on his pilgrimage
 Unto the blisful Citherea benigne,
 I mene Venus, honorable and digne.
 And in hir houre he walketh forth a pas
 Unto the lystes ther hire temple was,
 And down he kneleth, and with humble cheers.²⁶

26. "The Knight's Tale," Robinson, op.cit., p. 45, lines 2210-2219.

At the "thridde houre inequal" the sun rises, and Emily goes to pray in the temple of Diane; and "the nexte houre of Mars folwinge this" Arcite goes to do sacrifice to Mars.

The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
 Bigan to Venus temple for to gon,
 Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,
 And to the temple of Dyane gan hye.
 The nexte houre of Mars folwyng this,
 Arcite unto the temple walked is
 Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrifice,
 With all the rytes of his payen wyse.²⁷

27. Ibid., pp. 46, 47, lines 2271-2274, 2267-2370.

"To apply this doctrine of astrological hours to the present case", says Tyrwhitt, "the first hour of the Sunday, reckoning from sunrise, belonged to the sun, the planet of the day; the second to Venus, the third to Mercury, and continuing this method of allotment, we shall find that the twenty-second hour also belonged to the sun, and the twon-

ty-third hour to Venus; so that the hour of Venus was, as Chaucer says, two hours before sunrise of the following day. Accordingly we are told that the third hour after Palamon set out for the temple of Venus, the sun rose, and Emily began to go to the temple of Diane. It is not said that this was the hour of Diane, or the Moon, but it really was; for, as we have seen, the twenty-third hour of Sunday belonging to Venus, the twenty-fourth must belong to Mercury, and the first hour of Monday fell in course to the Moon, the presiding hour of the day. After this, Arcite is described as walking to the temple of Mars, in the next hour of Mars, that is the fourth hour of the day. It is necessary to take these words together, for the next hour would signify the second hour of the day; but that, according to the rule of rotation mentioned above, belonged to Saturn, as the third did to Jupiter. The fourth was the next hour of Mars after the last hour named."²⁸ From this analysis it appears that Chaucer has not confused the gods and the planets but that he is with painstaking accuracy calling attention to the fact that, in the action of this story, they will function as planets alone.

28. Curry, op. cit., pp. 125-126.

With meticulous care and with painstaking accuracy of detail Chaucer has succeeded in transferring the motivating power in this story from the pagan gods, who are to him probably little more than poetic fancies, to the planets of the same name, in order that the unusual ending of the story's action-- victory to each of two knights who fight for the

hand of the same lady--might be made reasonable to the readers of his own day, who believed in astrology but not in the divinity of the ancient gods.

Not only in the "Knight's Tale" but also in the "Legend of Hypermnestra" and in the "Man of Law's Tale," where the incidents of a story are already fixed and the elements of character are largely determined, Chaucer introduces the motivating power of the stars. In these two narratives he attempts to explain to his audience the action of a ready-made story and to rationalize a given character by the process of referring them to astral influence, and by interpolating nativities which seem to govern and direct the prescribed action. He sets up such a nativity, which to some extent explains Hypermnestra's character and hence her unusual actions.

Ypermnistra, yongest of hem alle;
 The whiche child, of hir nativitee,
 To alle gode thewes born was she,
 As lyked to the goddes, or she was born,
 That of the shefe she sholde be the corn;
 The wibes, that we clopen Destinee,
 Hath shapen her that she not nedes be
 Pitouse, sadde, wyse, and trewe as steel.
 For, though that Venus yaf her great beautee,
 With Jupiter compounded so was she
 That conscience, trouthe, and dread of shame,
 And of her wyfhood for to kepe her name,
 This, thoughte her, was felicitee as here.
 And rede Mars was, that tyme of the yere,
 So feble, that his mylice is him raft,
 Repressed hath Venus his cruel craft;
 What with Venus and other oppression
 Of houses, Mars his vanim is adoun,
 That Ypermnistra dar not handle a knyf
 In malyce, thogh she shoulde lose her lyf.
 But natheles, as heven gan the turne,
 To badde aspectes hath she of Saturne,

That made her for to deyen in prison,
As I shall after make mencion.²⁷

29. "The Legend of Good Women," Robinson, op.cit., p. 609,
lines 2575-2599.

In the "Legend of Good Women" we are told that Hypermnestra was "born to all good things" or qualities, and then the various influences of the particular planets are mentioned. The purpose of this astrological passage is plainly to show why Hypermnestra was doomed to die in prison. The qualities given by the planets, as shown by her horoscope, were such that she was unable to violate a wife's duty and kill her husband in order to save her own life. Venus gave her great beauty and was also influential in repressing the influence of Mars, who would have given her fighting qualities if his influence had been strong. The myth of the amour between Venus and Mars, which Chaucer makes the basis of his poem the "Compleynt of Mars", would explain why Venus was able to influence Mars in this way. The feeble influence of Mars at Hypermnestra's nativity is accounted for in another way. His influence is feeble because of the time of year and through the "oppression of houses," both of which amount to the same thing, namely, a position in the zodiac in which his power is at a minimum. Mars' mansions were Aries and Scorpio; his exaltation was called Capricornus; his fall, Libra and Taurus; and his depression Cancer. At the time of Hypermnestra's birth, then, we may suppose that Mars was in Libra, Taurus, or Cancer. If he was in Libra or Taurus, his influence would be suppressed by Venus, as these

signs were in her mansions. The influence of Jupiter was to give Hypermnestra conscience, truth, and wifely loyalty. That of Saturn was evil and the cause of her death in prison.³⁰

30. Florence H. Grimm, Astronomical Lore in Chaucer.
Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1919,
pp. 51-52.

In this manner Chaucer rationalizes the life and character of Hypermnestra. Having provided a horoscope for her, he proceeds to lay great stress upon those elements of her nature which are accounted for in the root of her nativity. She revels through the day of her marriage festivities like a true daughter of Venus and Jupiter; and when evening had come, she prepares to go meekly to the bed of her lord. But her father interrupts her and threatens her with death unless she will carry out his command and slay her husband that night. The fatal knife is produced, from which she shrinks away in terror. However, because of fear, she hides the instrument in her robes and promises that her husband shall not live. The qualities that her stars have bestowed upon her cause her to revolt against the infamous deed. She warns her husband, and he escapes through a window. After he has departed to safety, she calmly awaits her punishment. Her angry father sends her away to prison, where she must die. Chaucer is moved at the pathetic spectacle of Hypermnestra's suffering, but he refers the outcome of the story to the stars.³¹

31. Curry, op. cit., pp. 169-170.

Having satisfied himself that the rationalisation of a given story is made possible through the introduction of astrological material, Chaucer proceeds to place an exceedingly intricate and effective horoscope in the "Man of Law's Tale." He says in the following lines:

O firste mooving cruel firmanent . . .
 Thy crowding set the heven in swich array
 At the beginning of this fiere viage,
 That cruel Mars hath slayn this marriage.
 Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
 Of which the lord is helples falle, allas!
 Out of his angle in-to the darkest hous.
 O Mars, O Ataxir, as in this cast
 O feeble mone, unhappy been thy past
 Thou knittest thee ther thou art nat receyved; ³²

32. "The Man of Law's Tale," Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 78,
 lines 295-307.

The ascendent, tortuous sign which is just rising above the horizon is Aries, one of the mansions of Mars. The lord of this sign, Mars, has just passed from an angle into a succedant house, in this case from Libra into Scorpio, which is his other, darker mansion. Luna, also falling from an angle into a succedant, is found to be in corporal conjunction with Mars without reception in Scorpio. When the horoscope is in Aries, the sign Libra will correspond with the seventh house of the horoscope and Scorpio with the eighth. This is a conjunction of Mars and Luna not only in the sign of Scorpio but also in the eighth house of the horoscope. In order to understand the power of such a nativity upon the life and fortunes of Constance, the following data must be interpreted: the horoscope is in Aries; Mars is discovered in Scorpio, which occupies

the eighth house; luna is also cadent, having passed from a favorable sign-angle, Libra-seventh, into an unfavorable sign-succedant, Scorpio-eighth, where she is in conjunction with Mars. We may be reasonably sure that the horoscope in question represents the conjunction of stars at Constance's birth; this is the "root nativity." Already at the beginning of her life, as any astrologer might have foretold, arzel Mars had slain her marriages, both the first and the second, which were still in the future. Chaucer laments the fact that no election was made in preparation for the journey to the Sultan's country, pointing out that the root of the nativity is known.³³

33. Curry, op. cit., pp. 171,172,175,176.

Of viage is ther noon eleccion,
 Namely to folk of heigh condicioun,
 Nat when the rote is of a birthe y-knowe?
 Allas! we ben to lewed or to slowe.³⁴

34. "The Man Of Law's Tale," Robinson, op. cit., p.78,
 lines 312-315.

The favorable moment for beginning a voyage was one of the points on which it was considered desirable to have an astrologer's opinion. Traveling in Chaucer's time was considered a serious matter. The old astrologers used to alter their predictions almost at pleasure, by stating that their results depended on several causes, which partly counteracted one another. Thus, if the aspect of the planets at the time inquired about appeared to be adverse to a journey, it might still be the

case that such an evil aspect might be overcome by the fortunate aspect of the inquirer's horoscope; or conversely, an ill aspect in the horoscope could be counteracted by a fit election of time for action. Such a horoscope depended on the aspect of the heavens at the time of birth or "nativity," and particularly, upon the "ascendant" at that time. It also depended upon the planets lying nearest to the point of the zodiac which happened, at that moment, to be ascending or just appearing above the horizon. Medieval astrologers, who usually drew figures of the heavens representing horoscopes in all the signs of the zodiac, are agreed that a nativity in Aries predestines for the native a rather checkered and precarious life.³⁵

35. W.W. Skeat, ed., The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chancer.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900, vol. 3, pp. 151-152.

In the case of a horoscope in Aries, it must be observed the "significator" is the sign Scorpio, in this instance located in the eighth house. The casual position of this sign in the eighth house of the nativity produces peculiarly violent and adverse conditions. With regard to the eighth house Haly says: "This house is the significator of death, murder, strangling by suffocation, the destruction of men by fire and poison, of feebleness, infirmity, and the breaking of bodies by poverty, of great fear, dread, anxiety, and human miseries in this world."³⁶ Thus a malignant fortune prepared for Constance is indicated by the nature and position of Scorpio. In Constance's nativity Mars is found to be cadent from

an angle, situated in his darker mansion, Scorpio, occupying the eighth house. This means definite misfortune, for, says Haly, "if the infortunes are posited in the eighth house, they signify the destruction and death of enemies and manifold captivities. Luna is also found to be cadent from an angle, having passed from the seventh-Libra, where Chaucer says she was well situated and therefore powerful in exerting a beneficent influence, into the eighth Scorpio, where she is not only without reception but in conjunction with Mars, the lesser fortune. Any benevolent planet is weakened and debilitated in passing from an angle into a succedant house, or when it is in corporal conjunction with either of the infortunes, Saturn or Mars, without reception, Haly says: When in addition, a debilitated luna is found to be in corporal conjunction with mars in his own mansion where his dominion is supreme and undisputed, the resultant influence is disastrous, particularly in matrimonial matters. Chaucer indicates that, in this conjunction, the resultant influence is all the more virulent because the "feeble" moon is not "received" by the lord of the ascendant, Mars. Since Luna is not well received by the infortune Mars lord of the eighth house and cadent from an angle, he may well cry out, as Constance prepares for her nuptials, that "cruel Mars hath slayn this marriage."³⁷

36. Curry, op.cit., p. 177.

37. Curry, op. cit., pp. 182.

The word Atazir or Atacir is the Spanish spelling of the Arabic of al-tusir, meaning influence. It signifies the influence of a star or planet upon other stars, or upon the fortunes of men. In the present case it is clearly used in a bad sense; it can therefore be translated as "evil influence," the influence of Mars in the house of Scorpio.³⁸

38. Skeat, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

Considering the fact that Aries was just rising in the east at the birth of Constance, it is not surprising that her life is precarious and beset with dangers. She is continually being raised to positions of honor and as often cast down. She is married to the Lord of Syria, but no sooner has she arrived in this pagan country than the wicked Sultanness begins plotting against the happiness and the very life of the young wife. A great feast is prepared, at which both pagans and Christians are entertained; but in the end the Christians and all the pagans who are on the point of betraying their faith are murdered and hewn to pieces. Constance alone escapes the vengeance of the Sultanness, to be set adrift in an open boat, without sails or rudder. She arrives on the shores of England after many terrible hardships. Thus, she escapes the decrees of the stars. Living a devout life in the new country and winning many souls to Christianity, she is entertained by Alla and Hermengild, his wife, with respect and honor. However, she does not remain there in peace very long. A young knight, having conceived an unholy passion for her and having been repulsed, takes his revenge by murdering Hermengild and placing the bloody knife in the hand of sleeping Constance. New Honors are later showered

upon her in the form of marriage with Alla, and she rejoices afresh in the birth of a child. But Mars, cadent from an angle, powerful in Scorpio, and ruling in oppression over Luna, proves malignant to this marriage also. Alla's jealous mother, Donegild, by a skillful interchange of letters works the downfall of the young wife, who is torn from her child and again set adrift upon the sea. In the course of her aimless wanderings she is tortured by hunger, threatened with the lust of men, beset round about with pirates, and broken with grief. Indeed, she is afflicted by fortune. Her marriages are accompanied not only by her personal sorrows but also by wars and the struggles of men in arms, by assassinations, and by misfortunes of whole peoples. Scorpio and the eighth house have taken their toll of the afflicted and the dead; they with Mars have worked destruction. The final happiness of Constance, after all her suffering at the hands of a malignant fortune, is presented as a free and pathetic gift of Christ. Chaucer here stands with the best of medieval astrologers, who recognize, in their darkest prognostications, the fact that certain combinations of stars which seem to foretell inevitable death are subject to the intervening and arbitrary hand of God. By emphasizing this belief Chaucer has made reasonable not only the escapes along the way of Constance's life but also her final happiness.³⁹

39. Curry, op. cit., pp. 187-188, 190-191.

The "Franklin's Tale" falls in the group of tales called by Professor Kittredge the "Marriage Group." If the critics have been right

in placing the "Franklin's Tale" where they do, it was Chaucer's purpose to have the Franklin soothe the ruffled feelings of certain members of the party by telling a tale in which a husband and wife, a squire, and a clerk, all prove themselves capable of truly generous behavior. If the tale was to accomplish its purpose, the clerk must accomplish his magic feat of removing the rocks from the coast of Brittany. He must also in the end generously refuse to accept pay from the squire when the latter had been too magnanimous to profit from his services. Chaucer's most interesting references to the moon are found in the prayer of Aurelius to the sun in the "Franklin's Tale." Dorigon has jestingly promised to have pity on Aurelius as soon as he shall remove all the rocks from along the coast of Brittany, and Aurelius prays to the sun to help him by enlisting the aid of the moon. The sun's sister, Lucina, or the moon, is chief goddess of the sea; and just as she desires to follow the sun and be quickened and illuminated by him, so the sea desires to follow her.⁴⁰

40. Grimm, op.cit., pp. 40, 58.

Your blisful suster, Lucina the shene,
 That of the see is chief goddess and quene,
 Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,
 Yet empress aboven him is she:
 Ye known wel, lord, that right as hir desyr
 Is to be quiked and lighted of your fyr,
 For which she folweth yow ful bisilly,
 Right so the see desyreth naturally
 To folwen hir, as she that is goddesse
 Bothe in the see and rivores more and lesse.⁴¹

41. "The Franklin's Tale," Robinson, op. cit., p. 167,
 lines 1045-1054.

In calling Lucina chief goddess of the sea and speaking of the sea's desire to follow her, Chaucer is alluding to the moon's effect upon the tides. Instead of leaving it to the sun-god to find a way of removing the rocks for him, Aurelius proceeds to give explicit instructions as to how this may be accomplished. As the highest tides occur when the moon in opposition to, or in conjunction with the sun, if the moon could only be kept in either of these positions with regard to the sun for long enough time, so great a flood would be produced, Aurelius thinks, that the rocks would be washed away. So he prays Phebus to induce the moon to slacken her speed at her next opposition in Leo and for two years to traverse her sphere with the same velocity as that of the sun so as to remain in opposition with him.⁴²

42. Grimm, op. cit., p. 41.

Wherfore, lord Phebus this is my requeste--
 Do this miracle, or do myn herte breste--
 That now, next at this opposition,
 Which in the signe shal be of the Leoun,
 As prayeth hir so greet a flood to bringe,
 That fyve fadme at the leaste it overspringe
 The hyoste rokke in Amorik Briteyne;
 And let this endure yeres twayne;

 Preye hir she go no faster cours than ye,
 I seye, prayeth your suster that she go
 No faster cours than ye thise yeres two.
 Than shal she be evene atte fulle alway, 43
 And spring-flood laste both night and day.

43. "The Franklin's Tale," Robinson, op. cit., p. 167,
 lines 1055-1062, 1066-1070.

In May, the sun is in Taurus, and the moon, when in opposition, would be in the opposite sign, which is Scorpio. However, the text means at the next opposition that takes place with the sun in Leo; not at the very next opposition, with the sun in Taurus; nor yet after that, with the sun in Gemini or Cancer. The reason for the delay is astrological. Leo is the mansion of the sun, and the sun's power is greater in that sign, besides the fact that the sign Leo greatly increases a planet's influence.

The sun's declination changes from day to day, and with it the solar power and in the ecliptic causes his meridian altitude to be high or low. If says Aurelius, the sun and moon could always remain in opposition, by moving at the same rate of speed, the moon would always be full, and the spring-flood would last all the while.⁴⁴

44. Skeat, op. cit., pp. 390-391.

Chaucer describes the astrological knowledge of the clerk in the "Franklin's Tale" in the following lines:

His tables Tolletanes forth he brought,
 Ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked naught,
 Neither his collect ne his expans yearis,
 Ne his rootes ne his othere geeris,
 As been his centris and his argumentz
 And his proporcioneles convenientz
 For his equacions in every thyng,
 And by his eighte speers in his wirking
 He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shove
 Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above,
 That in the ninthe spear considered is;
 Ful subtilly he kalkuled al this.
 Whan he hadde founde his first mansioun,
 He knew the remenaunt by proporcoun,

And knew the arising of his moone weel,
 And in whos face, and terme, and everydeal;
 And knew ful weel the moones mansioun
 Accordaunt to his operacioun,
 And knew also his othere obseruaunces
 For swiche illusiouns and swiche meschaunces
 As hethen folk used in thilke dayes;
 But through his magik; for a wyke or tweye,⁴⁵
 It seemed that alle the rokkes were awaye.

45. "The Franklin's Tale," Robinson, op. cit., p. 170,
 lines 1273-1296.

The most widely used astronomical tables of the Middle Ages were those originally calculated for the latitude of Toledo. According to the "Treatise on the Astrolabe," if the time for which the change in a planet's position is being reckoned is more than twenty years, the years from one to twenty must be considered as "expanse years" and those from twenty to three thousand must be considered as "collect years." The changes in position of the various planets were obtained from these tables. The quantities denoting the amount of a planet's motion during round periods of years, such as twenty, forty, or sixty years, were entered in a table headed "collect years." Similar quantities for lesser periods, from one year up to twenty, were entered under the headings one, two, three, and such years were called "expanse," meaning single or separate years. The "root" is the tabulated quantity belonging to a given fixed date or era, from which corresponding quantities can be calculated by addition or subtraction. Thus the longitude of a planet at a given date is the "root"; and its longitude at another date, for example, twenty-three years later, can be obtained from the teleton tables. This can

be done by adding its change of latitude in twenty years, as given in this table of "expanse years."⁴⁶ "Centre" is a technical name for the end of the small ball projection of the rete of an astrolabe which denotes the position of a fixed star, usually of the first magnitude. "Argument" is an astronomical term which is still in use, and means the angle, arc, or other mathematical quantity from which another required quantity may be deduced. The proportionals convenient, or fitting proportionals refer to a table of "proportional parts," by which fractional parts of a year can be taken into consideration, in calculating the motions of the planets. Equations are probably used here in the sense of "exact quantities." Thus the "exact quantity" of a planet's motion during a given time can be obtained by adding together the motion during the "collect years" and the "expanse years." In old astronomy there were nine imaginary spheres. Seven of the spheres were of the seven planets; the eighth was the sphere of the fixed stars and was supposed to have a slow motion from west to east about the poles of the zodiac, to account for the precession of the equinoxes. The ninth sphere or primum mobile had a diurnal motion from east to west carrying everything with it.⁴⁷

46. Skeat, op. cit., p. 394.

47. Manly, op. cit., pp. 136-137.

"Alnath" is still the name for the bright star Arctis, of the first magnitude, which necessarily was situated in the eighth sphere, but the head of the fixed Aries, or the true equinoctial point, was in

the ninth sphere above it. The exact amount of the procession of the equinoxes, which is what Chaucer alludes to here, could be ascertained by observing from time to time the distance between the true equinoctial point and the star Alnath, which was conveniently situated for the purpose, being in the head of Aries. In the time of Hipparchus, 150 B.C., the distance of Alnath from the true equinoctial point was but a few degrees; but at the present time it is "shove," in longitude, some thirty-five degrees from the same. Chaucer says that the clerk knew in whose face the moon arose, and in what term and all about it. Each sign of the zodiac, containing thirty degrees, was divided into three equal parts of ten degrees each, called faces in the astrological jargon of the time. Not only each sign, but each face, was assigned to some particular planet. Besides the equal divisions of the signs, there are unequal divisions called terms. One of the signs, considered as a whole, is called the mansion of a planet. This assignment of terms and faces was first imposed by arbitrary authority and afterwards kept up by tradition. Chaucer's explanation of the process of this astrologer is accurate enough but was probably no more intelligible to the ordinary fourteenth century reader than to one of today.⁴⁸

48. Skeat, op. cit., p. 395.

In writing the story of "Troilus And Crisoyde," Chaucer has drawn on his very considerable knowledge of astronomy and astrology. The sun's progress through the signs of the zodiac marks out for the poem

the seasons of the year. The passage of the moon from Aries to the end of Leo is to measure the period of Criseyde's return to Troilus. A conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn, and the crescent moon in the sign Cancer causes the heavy downpour of rain which makes impossible Criseyde's departure from the house of Pandarus. Without exception these references to astronomy and astrology are accurately in accord with the best scientific knowledge of Chaucer's day.⁴⁹

49. Robert K. Root, ed., The Book Of Troilus And Criseyde.
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945, p.57.

Troilus undertakes scarcely a single act without first imploring some one of the celestial powers for help. When he has confessed his love to Pandarus and the latter has promised to help him, Troilus prays to Venus.

Now blisful Venus holpe, or that I starve,⁵⁰
Of thee, Pandare, I may som thank deserve.

50. "Troilus And Criseyde," Robinson, op. cit., p.467,
lines 1014-1015.

Pandarus goes to his niece Criseyde to plead for Troilus at a time when the moon is favorably situated in the heavens.

And gan to calle, and dresse him up to ryse,
Rememberinge him his erand was to done
From Troilus, and eek his greet emprise;
And caste and knez in good plyt was the mone--
Un-to his neces paleys ther bi-syde.⁵¹

51. Ibid., p. 469, lines 71-76.

In the matter of journeys, the "plight," or condition, of the moon was of primary importance. A complete magician, such as Calchas, would have constructed a figure of the heavens, with the moon and other planets accurately disposed according to the zodiac. Pandarus was probably content to calculate the day of the lunar month and then to consult a Lunarium, or "moon-book" as to whether the day was propitious for his undertaking.⁵²

52. Robert K. Root, op. cit., p. 438.

Chaucer says that Pandarus had suspected that there was to be a rain the day before it actually happened. He based his opinion on the condition of the moon.

Right soon upon the chaunging of the mone,
 When lightles is the world a night or tweyne,
 And that the welken shoop him for to reyne,
 He streight a-sorwe un-to his nece wente.⁵³

53. "Troilus and Criseyde," Robinson, op. cit., p.499,
 lines 549-552.

Pandarus tries to help Troilus by going to see Criseyde and arranging for him to meet her. He invites Criseyde to have supper with him, telling her that Troilus is out of town. In order for this meeting to take place, a very heavy rainstorm is necessary so that it will be impossible for Criseyde to go home after supper. This rainstorm is caused by certain planetary influences which are described in the following lines:

The bente mone with hir hornes pale,
 Saturne, and Iove, in Cancro loyned were,
 That swich a rayn from hevone gan avale,
 That every maner woman that was there 54
 Hadde of that smokey rayn a verrar fere.

54. Ibid., p. 500, lines 624-628.

In these lines Chaucer has set up a conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn, and the crescent moon in the sign Cancer. Conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn take place at intervals of approximately two hundred years; but the periodicity of these conjunctions is of such nature that there are periods of over six hundred years during which the conjunction never occurs in that sign. Chaucer's life fell at the very end of one of these six-hundred-year periods during which Jupiter and Saturn are not conjoined in the sign Cancer. Such a conjunction had not occurred since the year A.D. 769. The conjunction which Chaucer supposes involves not only Jupiter and Saturn, but the crescent moon also. In order that the moon shall appear as a thin crescent, "with hire hornes pale," in the sign Cancer, the sun must be in, or approaching, the next preceding sign, Gemini, and the time of the year must be May or early June. According to Chaucer's calendar, the sun entered Gemini on or about the twelfth of May.

An approximate calculation, based on Newcomb's planetary tables, shows that on April 13, 1385, Jupiter and Saturn were in exact astronomical conjunction in latitude of $86^{\circ} 3'$; that is, near the end of the sign Gemini, only three and a half degrees from the beginning of Can-

cer. It is not necessary that the conjunction be exact because the astrologer would regard Jupiter and Saturn as being in "platic" conjunction when they were not more than nine degrees of longitude apart. In 1385 Jupiter entered Cancer on May first, and Saturn entered Cancer on May fourteenth. On the latter date both planets were in the sign of Cancer, two and a half degrees of longitude apart, and hence still in "platic" conjunction. The moon was new on or about May tenth; and on or about May thirteenth the pale horns of the crescent moon were visible very close to Jupiter and Saturn. This is the very disposition which Chaucer has represented in his poem, and one previous to 1385 had not occurred for more than six hundred years. Astrologically the "platic" conjunction in Cancer, which began on May fourteenth, was much more significant than the exact astronomical conjunction of the preceding month, since it involved what the astrologers called a "permutation of triplicities," that is, a change in the zodiacal place of major conjunctions from the "triplicity" of Gemini, Aquarius, and Libra to the "triplicity" of Cancer, Pisces, and Scorpio. Among the astrological results of this particular change should be floods and heavy rains, precisely the influence which Chaucer has supposed in this passage.⁵⁵

55. Root, op. cit., pp. xvii-xviii.

It is now necessary to consider the astrological implications of this conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter, and the crescent moon in the sign of Cancer. Chaucer has himself said that its effect was to cause a vio-

lent "smoky rain," which terrified Criseyde and her attendant ladies. This also was accompanied by thunder. The moon alone in Cancer should be favorable to wet weather; for the moon is "watery" as a planet and Cancer belongs, together with Pisces and Scorpio, to the "watery triplicity." Also, Cancer is the "house" of the moon, that is, the zodiacal sign in which her influence is most powerful. If Chaucer has transferred to his Troilus, as it seems clear, an astronomical event of May 1385, he has given to it an astrological import which must have been the subject of much talk. As he and his readers saw Jupiter and Saturn in the western sky less than three degrees apart in the sign of Cancer, where they had not been conjoined for many centuries, they must have asked themselves with some anxiety what commotions of kingdoms, and what inundations of waters were in store. In Chaucer's poem the immediate effect of the conjunction is a storm of rain and thunder of terrifying violence.⁵⁶

56. R.K. Root and H.M. Russel, "A Planetary Date for Chaucer's Troilus," Publication Of The Modern Language Association Of America, XXXIX, March 1924, pp. 48-63.

Chaucer says that the ability of Troilus to win the love of Criseyde in the beginning was due to the influence of Venus at his nativity and also to the position of Venus.

And also blisful Venus, wel arrayed,
 Sat in hire seventhe hour of hevene tho,
 Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed,
 To helpe sely Troilus of his woo.

And soth to seyne, she was not al a foo
 To Troilus in his nativites.⁵⁷

57. "Troilus And Criseyde," Robinson, op. cit., p. 477,
 lines 680-685.

Venus is the most beneficent of the planets; therefore he refers to this planet as "blisful." She was well placed in her "seventh house." The term "house" has two different astrological senses. It may mean the sign of the zodiac in which a given planet exerts its greatest influence. In this sense of the term, the sign Libra is the "house" of Venus. In "heary" astrology, however, a "house" denotes a one-twelfth section of the heavens, as seen from the point of observation. The whole sphere of the skies is cut in two equal portions by the circle of the horizon, half being above, and half below. These hemispheres are again divided in half by a great circle, passing from the north to the south points of the horizon and through the zenith. Each of these quarters is trisected by other great circles, passing through the north and south points of the horizon. The twelve "houses" are numbered consecutively, beginning with the "house" immediately below the eastern horizon, and ending with the "house" immediately above the eastern horizon. The "seventh house of hev-ene" is, therefore, the portion of the heavens just above the western horizon. The astrologer will inquire what planets are at the moment in the seventh house, which "gives judgment of marriage and all manner of love-questions." A malefic planet, such as Saturn or Mars, in the seventh house causes ill fortune in love. Venus is a benefic planet, and especially con-

cerned with the affairs of love. At the time when Criseyde is making up her mind, Venus is in her seventh house and is also "with aspects payed," that is, other planets stood in favorable aspects to her. Moreover, Venus, favorably placed at the present moment, had also not been entirely hostile, "not al a foe" to Troilus at his nativity.⁵⁸

58. Root, op. cit., p. 446.

When Troilus is about to undertake a step that will either win or lose Criseyde, he prays to all the planetary gods, but especially to Venus, begging her to overcome by her aid whatever evil influence the planets exercised over him at his birth:

Yit blisful Venus, this night thou me enspyre;
 Quod Troilus, "as wis as I thee serve,
 And ever bet and bet shal, til I starve.
 And if I hadde, O Venus ful of karthe,
 Aspects badde of Mars or of Saturne,
 Or thou combust or let were in my birthe,
 Thy fader prey al thilke harm disturne."⁵⁹

59. "Troilus And Criseyde," Robinson, op. cit., p. 501,
 lines 712-718.

When Criseyde learns that she is to be sent to the Greeks in exchange for Antenor, she attributes her misfortune to the stars:

Alas! quod she, "out of this regioun
 I, woeful wrecche and infortuned wight,
 And born in corsed constellacioun,
 Not goon, and thus departen fro my knight."⁶⁰

60. "Troilus And Criseyde," Robinson, op. cit., p. 527,
 lines 743-746.

She is overwhelmed with sorrow and concludes that she must have been born "in an evil constellation," that is, when the planets were in unfavorable "houses" and in unfavorable "aspects one to another." There is no doubt that Chaucer feels the tragedy of the story as he writes. Throughout the poem he disclaims responsibility for what he narrates, saying that he is simply following his author and that, once begun, somehow he must keep on.⁶¹

61. Grimm, op. cit., p. 76.

Although Gower uses astrology as a motivating force for writing stories much less than Chaucer, there are a few astrological references in his works which have been used for this purpose. In the discussion of the Gorgons, Gower attributes their malformations to celestial influences:

Bet upon here nativite
 Such was the constellacion,
 That out of nannes nacion
 Fro kynde thei be so miswent,⁶²

62. Macaulay, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 46, Book 1, lines 391-394.

The principal source here is Ovid's "Metamorphoses," but certain details of rendering have led Macaulay to conjecture another source. There is no reason to suppose, however, that the explanation is not Gower's. In the tale of Florent, the wise men of the realm are unable to solve the problem on which Florent's life depends:

Such a thing comne thoi nocht finde
Be constellacion ne kinde.⁶³

63. Ibid., p. 77, Book I, lines 1505-1506.

The introduction of the tun mounted for astronomical observations in the story of Alexander's visit to Diogenes appears to be an original contribution of the part of Gower.

(Diogenes)duelte at how in such a wise,
That nyh his hous he let devise
Endlong upon an axeltre
To settle a tonne in such degre,
That he it mihte torne abcute;
Whereof on hed was taken oute,
For he therinne sitte scholde
And turns himself so as he wolde,
To take their and se the hevene
And deme of the planetes sevne,
As to which cowthe mochel what.⁶⁴

64. Ibid., p. 259, Book III, lines 1207-1217.

On two occasions in the dialogues between the Lover and the Confessor, the Lover's lack of success is attributed to planetary influence. The Confessor says:

Per cas the revolucion
Of hevne and thi condicion
Ne be nocht yit of on acord.⁶⁵

65. Ibid., p. 349, Book IV, lines 1783-1785.

In the eighth book the Lover says:

Ovide ek seith that love to perform
 Stant in the hand of Venus the goddess,
 Bot whan sche takith hir counseil with Satorne
 Ther is no grace, and in that time, I guesse 66
 Began mi love

66. Ibid., p. 447, Book VIII, lines 2273-2277.

The prayer of Cephalus to the sun and moon, which seems to be of Gower's invention, shows certain astronomical knowledge. Cephalus prays to the sun

And in the Signe of Capricorn,
 The hous appropred to Satorne,
 I preie that thou wolt sojourns,
 Wher ben the nihtes derke and longe: 67

67. Ibid., p. 388, Book IV, lines 3222-3225.

As the sun enters the sign of Capricorn at the winter solstice, the appropriateness of the prayer is apparent, however startling the request. To make sure that the nights be dark and long, Cephalus further implores the sun

That thou thi swifte hors restreigne
 Lowe under Erthe in Occident,
 That thei towards Orient
 Be cercle go the longe weie. 68

68. Ibid., p. 388, Book IV, lines 3233-3236.

He prays to the moon with a different intent.

And in Cancro thin oghne hous
 Ayein Phebus in opposit
 Stond al this time, and of delit
 Behold Venus with a glad yhe.
 For thanne upon astronomie
 Of due constellacion
 Thou makst proliferacion,
 And dost that children ben gegete.⁶⁹

69. Ibid., p. 388, Book IV, lines 3242-3249.

This configuration would be favorable for the begetting of children. In the tale of Achilles and Deidomia the need of Achilles in the siege of Troy is discovered by astrology.

That Proteus of his record
 Which was an astronomien
 And ek a gret magician
 Scholde of his calculacion
 Seche after constellacion,
 How thei the cite mihten gete.⁷⁰

70. Ibid., p. 31, Book V, lines 3082-3087.

There are two illusions to the identification of an evildoer by "calculacion," but the technical process is not described. The Greeks discover the cause of pestilence in this manner,

Thei soghten thanne here evidence
 And maden calculacion,
 To knowe in what condicion
 This deth cam in so sodainly.⁷¹

71. Ibid., p. 124, Book V, lines 6458-6461.

When the Romans discovered the theft of the ring, mantle, and
beard from the statue of Apollo,

Thei soughten help upon the nede
And maden calculacioun,
whereof be demonstracioun
The man was foundewith the good.⁷²

72. Ibid., p. 143, Book V, lines 7162-7165.

There are several astrological allusions in the "Mirour de l'Omme." Adultery is caused by the planet Saturn or the "planet of pestilence" which brings men to evil. The virtue of Prowess is more untiring than the sun, which in one day runs through all the "cercles et degres" of the sky. The effect of luxury on a man is compared to the effect of the sun on the star known as "cuer du lion" (Regulus), which, although cold by nature, goes so near the sun in its orbit that it kindles from the sun's warmth. Although there is a possibility of some allusions being explained in reference to their sources, there is a residuum that can be interpreted only as Gower's voluntary and independent use of astrological material.⁷³

73. Fox, op. cit., pp. 90-91.

Both of these poets have used astrological influences as motivating forces in their stories. The conflict between Palamon and Arcite in the "Knight's Tale" is actually a conflict between the planets Saturn and Mars. Through the use of astrology Chaucer brings victory to both

these knights in the end. In the "Legend of Hypermnestra" and the "Man of Law's Tale," he attempts to explain to his audience the action of a ready-made story through the use of astrological influences. Hypermnestra is unable to kill her husband because of the influences of the various planets upon her character; therefore she is sent to prison where she must die. In the "Man of Law's Tale," Chaucer sets up a horoscope that will bring about misfortune in all Constance's marriages. She finally has her life spared and reaches a state of happiness, however, through the grace of God. Chaucer also makes use of astrology in the "Franklin's Tale" and "Troilus And Criseyde." Some of his most interesting references to the moon are made in the "Franklin's Tale." In "Troilus And Criseyde" the sun's progress through the signs of the zodiac marks the seasons of the year. Chaucer also sets up a conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn, and the crescent moon in the sign Cancer that causes a down-pour of rain which makes impossible the departure of Criseyde from the house of Pandarus.

In the discussion of the Gorgons, Gower attributes their malformations to celestial influence. In the "Confessio Amantis" the Lover's lack of success is attributed to planetary influence. There are also several prayers to the moon and sun in the "Confessio Amantis" which have been cited as evidence of Gower's use of astrological influences as motivating forces in his stories. While Chaucer has set up intricate horoscopes for some of the characters in his stories, Gower has not gone into as much detail in the use of astrology as a motivating force.

CHAPTER III

While Chaucer was at one with the educated men of his century in his attitude toward astrology and with them had a strong distaste for certain aspects of judicial astrology, nevertheless he made wide use of the greater faith of the majority of people of his time in portraying character in his poetry. He knew very well that men's ideas and beliefs constitute a very important part of their character. Men believed that whatever happened to them, whether fortunate or unfortunate, could in some way be traced to the influence of the stars, the agents and instruments of destiny. The configuration of the heavens at the moment of one's birth was considered especially important, since the positions and interrelations of the different celestial bodies at this time could determine the most momentous events of one's life. These ideas are frequently expressed in Chaucer, when the characters are seeking to understand their misfortune or to justify their conduct by tracing them back to the determinations of the heavens at their birth.⁷⁴

74. Grimm, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

In the "Knight's Tale," Chaucer provides his heroes with one champion each; with Palamon comes Lycurgus, King of Thrace, and with Ar-cite appears Emetreus, king of India. These two champions are personal representatives of Saturn and Mars, and they are described as products of the influences of these two planets. Emetreus is described in the following lines:

His criske heer lyk ringes was yronne,
 And that was yellow, and glytered as the sonne.
 His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,
 His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn;
 A fewe frakenes in his face yspreynd,
 Bitwixen yellow and somdel blak ymaynd;
 And as a leon he his lookyng caste,
 His berd was wel bigonne for to sprynge;
 His voys was as a trompe thonderynge.⁷⁵

75. "The Knight's Tale," Robinson, op. cit., p. 44, lines 2165-2174.

A man born under the influence of Mars in a sanguine nativity will be very well featured, round faced, flaxen-haired, green eyed, bold of speech and very proud and menacing. The martial man's hair varies in shades of color according to circumstances from dark brown to chestnut, reddish, red, yellow, sandy, or whitish flaxen, and it is crisp or curling; Chaucer says that "his crisp hair, curling in rings, was yellow and glittered in the sun." His complexion is a fine mixture of white and deep red, usually tanned as if by exposure to the sun; Chaucer merely says that "his face was sanguine." His face is full and round, which Chaucer suggests, when he speaks of the "lippes rounde," His sanguine complexion

is darkened, not only as if by a sun tan but by the appearance of a few freckles. Chaucer says, "He had a few freckles sprinkled in his face, in color somewhat between yellow and black." His eyes vary in color from hazel to yellow or light green, and Chaucer selects bright citron. His voice is firm and strong or, as Chaucer has it, "as a troupe thunderinge." His countenance is fierce, proud, bold, and menacing, with sparkling piercing eyes or, as Chaucer says, "as a leoun he his looking caste." These are the characteristics of a man born under the influence of Mars and Chaucer's description of Emetreus seems to fit a person born under this planet.

76

76. Curry, op. cit., pp. 131-134.

Lycurgus, king of Thrace, is in physical appearance striking and magnificent:

Black was his berd, and manly was his face,
 The cercles of his eyen in his heed
 They gloweden betwixe yelow and reed;
 And lik a grifphon looked he aboute;
 With kempe heres on his browes stouter
 His lymes grete, his browes harde and stronge,
 His shuldres brude, his armes rounde and longes;
 * * * * *
 His longe heer was kembed bihynde his bak,
 As any ravones fether it sheen for blak.⁷⁷

77. "The Knight's Tale," Robinson, op. cit., pp. 44, lines 2131-2136, 2143-2144.

These are some of the characteristics of a man born under the influence of Saturn in various positions. His hair, on the head and elsewhere, is always a deep black, sometimes coarse, crisp, or curling. In the case of the royal sanguine nature it is softer and hangs down straighter. As Chaucer says, "his beard was black, and his long hair, black as a raven's feather, was combed behind his back." His complexion is usually swarthy or perhaps honey-colored, a mixture of black and yellow as if from a touch of black and yellow jaundice, or in case of the sanguine temperament the color of a ripe olive. His eyes are sometimes large, sometimes small, but always deep set in the head, in color red like those of a cat, or in sanguine natures, red with bloody spots in them. Chaucer does not say that the eyes are yellow and red, but that the "circles of his eyes in his head glowed between yellow and red." The effect is produced when the "red eyes with bloody spots in them" of a sanguine Saturnalian man are set deep in a dark yellowish complexion; the red eyes have yellowish circles about them. His eyebrows are exceedingly thick, rugged, joined over the nose, and hang lowering over the eyes. Chaucer remarks that, "lyk a griffon he looked stoute, with keape hares on his browes stoute." Although his body is of medium stature, it is well formed with broad shoulders and a slender waist. Chaucer describes him by saying, "his limbs are great, his muscles are broad and strong, his shoulders are broad, and his legs are long and round." Such is the man born under the influence of Saturn; and it seems that Lycurgus, king of Thrace fits this pattern.

78

Chaucer also makes use of astrological material in building up the character and personality of the Wife of Bath in the "Wife of Bath's Prologue." She attributes the two principal qualities of her disposition, amorosness and pugnaciousness, to the planets Venus and Mars:

Gat-tothed I was, and that bicam me weel:
 I hadde the pronte of Seynt Venus seel.
 As help me god, I was a lusty con,
 And feire and riche, and yong, and wel bigoon;

 For certes, I am al Venerien
 In felinge, and myn herte is Marcien.
 Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse,
 And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardinesse.
 Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars therinne.
 Allas! allas! that ever love was sinne!
 I felwed ay myn inclinacioun
 By vertu of my constellacioun:
 That made me I coude noight withdrawe
 My chambre of Venus from a good felawe,
 Yet have I Martes mark up-on my face,
 And also in another prives place.

79. "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," Robinson, op. cit.,
 p. 98, lines 603-606, 609-620.

From this passage it appears that the cause of the Wife of Bath's peculiarly contradictory character lies not so much in herself as in her stars; possibly she is not to be held morally responsible for all her actions. For at her birth the sign Taurus, one of the "houses" or "mansions" of Venus, is said to have been in the ascendent over the horizon, here being what the exponents of natural astrology would call "the horoscope in Taurus." Her dominant star or ruling planet is Venus--she speaks proudly of the wisdom taught her by "my dame," the love star--

which, being posited and at home in its own house Taurus, may be considered "well-dignified" or particularly beneficent in aspect toward the "native." Most unfortunately, however, the combined good influence of the ascendent sign and the dominant star is vitiated by the presence in perhaps plastic conjunction of Mars, one of the most "malefic" and evil of planets. Both Mars and Venus and the sign Taurus have left their "marke" upon her body as well as upon her character.⁸⁰

80. Curry, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

Instead of having the naturally beautiful and well-proportioned figure--stately and tall, plump but never stout, graceful, with white skin touched delicately to pink--which might have been hers under the free, benevolent influence of Venus, she is endowed with a stocky build, more or less ungraceful, and a buxom form of medium height. In place of the attractive face--round but not too large, with finely chiseled features, black eyes and arched eyebrows, and with a lovely peachbloom complexion set off by thick, curling hair of a dark shade, which Venus might have given, she had inflicted upon her by the malignancy of Mars a slightly heavy face inclined to fatness, and characterized by coarsened features and by a suspiciously red or florid complexion, which indicates that the woman is immodest, loquacious, and given to drunkenness. Her voice, which should have been sweet, low and well-modulated, is harsh, strident, and raised continually. Such a voice is especially significant in its betrayal of the wife's voluptuous and luxurious nature. Mars is responsible for the long

spike-like teeth, set far apart with gaps between, which she possesses.

Not less remarkable than this distortion of the Wife of Bath's body is the warping of her character which results from the Mars-Venus conjunction in Taurus. Worst of all, Mars has given her a "sturdy hardnesse" and a body so full of "ragerye" that even at the age of forty she is still "faire and yong and well bigoon." The Wife of Bath appears in the Prologue to her tale: a fair Venerien figure and character imposed upon and oppressed, distorted in some measure and warped by the power of Mars.⁸¹

81. Ibid., pp. 108-113.

A little later in her Prologue the Wife contrasts the influences of Mercury and Venus. As a jibe at the Clerk who was in the company of Canterbury pilgrims, she has just said that clerks cannot possibly speak well of wives, and that women could tell tales of clerks if they would. She upholds her statement thus: Wives are the children of Venus, Clerks of Mercury, two planets which work contrary to each other. Venus has her exaltation in the sign in which Mercury has his depression. Therefore the two signs have opposite virtues and influences, and the children of one can see little good in the children of the other.⁸²

82. Grimm, op. cit., p. 64.

Chaucer says in the following lines:

The children of Mercurie and of Venus
 Been in hir wirking ful contrarious;
 Mercurie loveth wisdom and science,
 And Venus loveth ryot and dispence.
 And, for hir diverse disposicioun,
 Ech falleth in othere exaltacioun;
 And thus, got woot! Mercurie is desolat
 In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltat;
 And Venus falleth ther Mercurie is reysed;⁸³
 Therefore no woman of no clerk is preyed.

83. "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," Robinson, op. cit.,
 p. 99, lines 696-706.

It has been pointed out earlier on page 22 in this study that in his story of Hypermestra, Chaucer attempts to rationalize a given character through the process of referring to astral influence, and by interpolating nativities which seem to govern and direct the prescribed action. He used the nativity which he builds up in explaining to his audience the character and unusual actions of Hypermestra.

Although Gower, too, saw artistic possibilities in the astrological learning of his day, and made prompt use of these in the retelling of the Alexander legend, most of his astrological references are mere statements of facts and theories. Gower does make use of the supposed influence of astrology, however, in his tale of Nectanabus. According to the story, Nectanabus, as previously stated on page 10 predicts the birth of Alexander the Great through the use of astrology and magic. He scans the heavens in order to learn when the stars will be in a favorable position to cause the birth of a mighty emperor, and this time he allows

Olympias to give birth to Alexander the Great.⁸⁴ Gower also tells us the story of how Alexander pushes Nectanabus from a tower because of his pretensions to knowledge. Gower makes use of the facts in this story for moralizing on the inevitability of one's destiny as indicated in one's horoscope. His attitude toward Nectanabus is one of condemnation. He says that his death is caused by the result of a life ill spent.⁸⁵

84. Fox, op. cit., p. 85.

85. Fox, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

To summarize, both Chaucer and Gower have used astrology in explaining the actions and appearances of the characters in their stories. In the "Knight's Tale" the planets Saturn and Mars have personal representatives who are described as products of the influence of these two planets. The character and personality of the Wife of Bath are explained as the result of the influence of the planets Mars and Venus at her birth.

In the "Legend of Hypermnestra" Chaucer has set up a nativity which helps to explain Hypermnestra's character and actions. Although Gower confines himself, for the most part, to a bold rehearsal of facts and theories, he does make use of astral influence in the tale of Nectanabus. It can be said, however, that Chaucer has used astrology more frequently than Gower in building the characters in his stories.

CHAPTER IV

The terms "astrology" and "astronomy" meant practically the same thing to the average man in the Middle Ages. Astrology, though resembling a science in that it makes use of observations and seeks to establish laws governing its data, is in reality a faith or a creed. It had its beginnings, so tradition tells us, in the faith of the ancient Babylonians in certain astral deities who exerted an influence upon terrestrial events and human life. The basis of this faith was not altogether illogical and contained a germ of truth.

Of all the heavenly bodies, the sun exerted the most obvious effect upon the earth bringing day and night, summer and winter. His rays lured growing things from the earth and so gave sustenance to mankind. To the ancient peoples of the Orient the sun was also often a baneful power; he could destroy as well as give life. The ancients, therefore, came to look upon the sun as a great and powerful god to be worshipped and propitiated by man. If the sun was so powerful, it was natural for them to believe that all the other bright orbs of the sky were lesser divinities who exercised more limited powers on earth. From

this beginning man extended more and more the powers of these sidereal divinities, attributing to their volition and influence all the most insignificant as well as the most important terrestrial events. If the heavenly bodies, by revolving about the earth in ceaseless harmony, effected the recurrence of day and night and of the seasons, and if their configurations were responsible for the minutest events in nature, it was natural to suppose that, besides affecting man thus indirectly, they also influenced him directly and were responsible for his conduct and for the very qualities of his mind and soul.

86

86. Grimm, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

On its philosophical side astrology was a system of astral theology developed, not by popular thought but by careful observations and speculations of learned priests and scholars. It was a purely Eastern science which came into being on the Chaldean plains and in the Nile Valley. As far as it is known, it was entirely unknown to any of the primitive Aryan races, from Hindostan to Scandinavia. Astrology as a system of divination never gained a foothold in Greece during the brightest period of her intellectual life. However, the dogma of astral divinity was zealously maintained by the greatest of Greek philosophers. Plato called the stars "visible Gods" and ranked them just below the supreme eternal being. Plato thought that these celestial gods were infinitely superior to the anthropomorphic gods of the popular religion, who resembled men in their passions and were superior to them only in beauty of form and in

power. Aristotle defended with no less zeal the doctrine of the divinity of the stars, seeing in them eternal substances, principles of movements, and therefore divine beings. In the Hellenistic period, Zeno the Stoic and his followers proclaimed the supremacy of the sidereal divinities even more than the schools of Plato and Aristotle had done. The stoics developed the doctrine of fatalism, which is the inevitable outcome of faith in stellar influences on human life. Yet they proved by facts that fatalism is not incompatible with active and virtuous living. By the end of the Roman Imperial period astrology had transferred paganism, replacing the old society of immortals, who were scarcely superior to mortals except in being exempted from old age and death, by faith in the eternal beings whose power, regulated by unvarying celestial motions, extended over all the earth and determined the destiny of the whole human race. Astrology, as a science and a system of divination, exerted a profound influence over the medieval mind. No court was without its practicing astrologer and the universities all had their professors of astrology.⁸⁷

87. Ibid., pp. 53-54.

The practice of astrology was an essential part of the physician's profession, and before prescribing for a patient it was thought quite as important to determine the positions of the planets as the nature of the disease. There is an interesting example of this fact in the "Prologue to the Canterbury Tales" where Chaucer speaks of the Doctor's

knowledge and use of astrology as if it were his chief excellence as a
physicians:

In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
For he was grounded in astronomeye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del
In houres, by his magik naturel.
Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images for his pacient.⁸⁸

88. "The Prologue to Canterbury Tales," Robinson, op. cit.,
p. 23, lines 412-418.

In medieval times, astrology was one of the vital interests of men. The ordinary man of the Middle Ages knew much more than do most men today about the phenomena of the heavens. The conveniences that we have such as clocks, almanacs, and charts representing celestial phenomena were rare. Therefore the direct observation of the heavenly bodies was necessary for the regulation of man's daily occupations. The belief in a geocentric system of the universe, which in Chaucer's century was almost universally accepted, was one of vast significance in man's way of thinking. According to this view, all the heavenly bodies seemed to have been created for the sole benefit of man, who inhabited the central position in the universe; their movements, always with reference to the earth as a center brought to man light, heat, changes of season--all the conditions that made human life possible on earth. Not only did the man of the Middle Ages see in the regular movements of the celestial spheres the instruments in which God granted him physical existence, but in the various as-

pects of the heavenly phenomena he saw the governing principles of his moral life. The arrangement of the heavenly bodies with regard to one another at various times was supposed to exert undoubted power over the course of terrestrial events. Each planet was thought to have special attributes and a special power or influence over men's lives. The planet's influence was believed to vary greatly according to its position in the heavens, so that in order to determine a man's destiny accurately it was necessary to consider the aspect of the whole heavens, especially at the moment of his birth, but also at other times. This was called "casting the horoscope" and was regarded as of great importance in enabling a man to guard against threatening perils or bad tendencies, and to make the best use of favorable opportunities. It is not surprising then, that the great movements of literature in the medieval times and even much later are filled with astrological allusions, for these are but reflections of the vital human interests of the times.⁸⁹

89. Grimm, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

The pseudo-astronomical science of astrology, which was called "judicial astrology" was pursued during the Roman Empire and throughout the Middle Ages with much greater zeal than theoretical astronomy. While the interest in astrology did encourage the study of observational astronomy because the "casting of horoscopes" required that the heavenly bodies be observed and methods of calculating their positions at any time or place be known, there was no desire to inquire into the underlying laws

of the celestial motions or to investigate the real nature of the heavenly phenomena.⁹⁰

90. Ibid., p. 6.

The contact of Europe with Arab culture through the crusades, the Saracens in Sicily and the Moors in Spain, results in an increased sense of the importance of astronomy and astrology. While the scholars of the Christian world had been devising allegorical representations of the world based on sacred literature, the Arabian scholars had been delving into Greek science, translating Ptolemy and Aristotle, and trying to make improvements upon Ptolemaic astronomy. The real revival of Greek astronomy took place in the fourteenth century when scholars began to realize that new work in astronomy must be preceded by a thorough knowledge of the astronomy of the Alexandrian school. It was then that Greek and Latin manuscripts of works on astronomy began to be eagerly sought for and deciphered, and a firm foundation constructed for the revival of theoretical astronomy. It was in the fourteenth century that Chaucer lived and worked; therefore, it is not surprising that his stories contain a considerable amount of astronomical lore. Although the theories of astronomy current in Chaucer's century have been made obsolete by the De Revolutionibus Orbium of Copernicus, and by Kepler's discovery of the laws of planetary motion; although the inaccurate and unsatisfactory methods of astronomical investigation then in use have been supplanted by better methods made possible through Galileo's invention of the tele-

scope and through the modern use of spectrum analysis; yet, of all scientific subjects, the astronomy of that period could most nearly lay claim to the name of science according to the present meaning of the term. The study of observational astronomy, which resulted from the interest in astrology, furnished the science with a basis of fact and observation which far surpassed in detail and accuracy that of any other subject. Practically all of Chaucer's writings contain some reference to the movements and relative positions of the heavenly bodies, and to their influence on human and mundane affairs, and in some of his works, especially in the "Treatise On The Astrolabe," a very technical and detailed knowledge of astronomical and astrological lore is displayed. There is every reason to believe that, so far as it satisfied his purposes, Chaucer made himself familiar with the whole literature of astronomical science.⁹¹

91. Ibid., pp. 9-10.

John Gower is sometimes credited with having re-established the distinction between astronomy and astrology, made by Isidore of Seville, in the seventh century, and commonly obscured through the intervening time. Ever since the introduction of Arabian science, the distinction between astrology and astronomy had become hopelessly confused; William of Conches and Roger Bacon had even inverted the accepted usage. It is interesting to find the old Isidorean definitions reappearing in Gower. Probably for the first time in English, astronomy and astrology are defined according to the denotations which the words bear today.⁹²

92. Wedel, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

Although Gower defines astronomy and astrology according to the modern usage in his Confessio Amantis, this distinction is verbal only and represents no difference in his actual thinking. He defines astronomy in the following lines:

Astronomie is the science
 Of wisdom and of hih connynges,
 Which makith a man have knowlechinges
 Of sterres in the firmament,
 Figure, cercle and moevement
 Of ech of hem in sondri place,
 And what between is of space
 Hou so thei moove or stonde faste,
 Al this it telleth to the laste.⁹³

93. Macaulay, op. cit., p. 251, Book VII, lines 670-678.

Gower's definition of astrology as taken from his Confessio Amantis appears in the following lines:

Assembled with astronomie
 Is ek that ilke astrologie,
 The which in jugmentz amonteth,
 And hou thei causen many a wonder⁹⁴
 To the climatz that stonde hem under.

94. Ibid., p. 251, Book VII, lines 679-684.

By the fourteenth century the acceptance of astrology in the western civilization was widespread. Gower is aware of the opposition to divination by dreams and to magic, but astrology is the science without which all knowledge is in vain. He says in the following lines:

The science of astronomie
 I thinke forte specefie,
 Withoute which, to telle plain,

All othre science is in vain
 Toward the scale of erthli thinges:
 For as an Eghe with his winges
 Fleth above alle that men finde 95
 So doth this science in his kinde.

95. Ibid., p. 250, Book VII, lines 625-632.

During the Middle Ages, the terms astrology and astronomy meant practically the same thing. The study of astrology brought about the study of the heavens known as astronomy. There are numerous references to both astrology and astronomy in the works of Chaucer; however the distinction between the two terms was not very clear to men of Chaucer's day. Gower re-established the definitions of astrology and astronomy according to the modern usage; however, he continued to think of both these terms as meaning practically the same thing. Both these poets thought of astology and astronomy as interchangeable terms.

CHAPTER V

The chief sources and causes of influence in astrology are the seven planets, singly or in combination; the north and south points in which the moon crosses the ecliptic, technically called the Dragon's Head or the Dragon's Tail; the signs of the zodiac, with various subdivisions of them; and certain fixed segments of the heavens, independently of their relations to the zodiac. To each of the planets are ascribed particular qualities and the capacity for various influences upon the characters and fortunes of men under certain favorable and unfavorable circumstances. Each of the planets is said to govern certain parts of the body and regions of the earth, and to exert especial influence upon certain diseases.⁹⁶

96. Manly, op.cit., pp.137-138.

Instead of presenting the planets with their various influences in an orderly fashion as they are presented by Gower, Chaucer elaborates on the influences of the various planets in writing his stories. As we have seen earlier in this study, Chaucer has built up the astrological influences of the planets Saturn and Mars in the

"Knight's Tale." The planet Mars is by nature hot and dry, fiery, nocturnal, and violent. Anyone born when the influence of Mars is predominant will have a strong, well-set body which will be short, lean, bony and muscular. If Mars is well situated with reference to other heavenly bodies, the person will be fond of war and contention, but in other respects prudent, rational, and even generous and magnanimous. If, on the other hand, Mars is ill situated, the person will be wholly destitute of any virtue. The planet Saturn is by nature masculine, evil and diurnal, signifying old age if he be in the west and the beginning of old age if he be in the east. This planet is malicious in any position, but in the fixed signs it is capable of producing death and destitution for those born upon the earth. According to Chaucer, the planet Saturn causes many evil plagues to come upon men.⁹⁷

97. Curry, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

The planet Venus is described as hot and moist, feminine, nocturnal and temperate. Those born under her influence are said to be elegantly formed and extremely beautiful. They will have sparkling hazel or black eyes, a round smooth face, light or chestnut hair, dimples in the cheek or chin, a sweet voice, and a very engaging address. If Venus is well dignified, the person born under her influence will be even tempered, kind, and sweet, very merry and cheerful; neat and a lover of dress. He will be fond of music and very elegant amusement, very prone to love, yet truly virtuous and much inclined to be jealous. If Venus

is ill defined, the native will be lowly, profligate, shameless, and wholly abandoned and inclined to every species of lust and depravity.⁹⁸

98. Manly, op. cit., p. 138.

A good example of the way in which Chaucer used astrological influences in building his characters is his presentation of the character of the Wife of Bath. In this passage the good qualities of the wife's character are attributed to the influence of Venus and the evil qualities in her character are attributed to the influence of Mars. She says that both Mars and Venus and the sign Taurus have left their marks upon her body as well as her character. In other passages which have been cited earlier in this study, page 22, Chaucer makes further use of the influences of astrology in his explanation of the actions of Hypernestra in the "Legend of Good Women," the feat of magic which was performed by Aurelius in the "Franklin's Tale," and the heavy rain which occurs in the story of "Troilus and Criseyde." In each of these stories we learn something about Chaucer's idea of the influences of the various planets. According to Chaucer, the planet Mars causes people to be warlike and very large in physical appearance. Venus causes people to be very handsome in appearance and governs one's love affairs. The planet Jupiter influences a person to be very prudent and to be of good conscience. The influences of the planet Saturn are very evil. Saturn is capable of producing death and destitution for those born under his influence. The moon causes the tides to rise and fall and is very influential in the matter of long journeys. The sun rules

over the growing things of the earth.⁹⁹

99. Gurry, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

Gower discusses the influences of each of the seven planets in their correct Ptolemaic order in the seventh book of his Confessio Amantis. He begins his discussion with an explanation of the movements of the various planets, which appears in the following lines:

The more that thei stonden lowe,
The more ben the cercles lasse;
That causeth why that some passe
Here due cours before an other.¹⁰⁰

100. Macaulay, op. cit., p. 252, Book VII, lines 706-709.

According to these lines, the nearer the planet is to the earth, the shorter is its orbit. The moon is nearest to the earth and controls the tides of the sea. The moon also controls all shellfish, which thrive or waste away in accordance with its phases. The light of the moon is unique among the stars in that it is reflected from the sun. In regard to the influence of the moon upon men, Gower describes travel as the lot of those under its power. The influences of the moon are particularly strong in Germany and England. Although the moon is not treated as a planet today, it was treated as one of the planets in Gower's day. Because the moon is nearest to the earth, Gower describes the influence of this planet first.

Benethe alle othre stant the mone,
 The which hath with the See to done:
 Of flodes hihe and ebbes lowe
 Upon his change it schal be knowe;
 And every fish which hath a schelle
 Not in his governance duelle,
 To waxe and wane in his degre,
 As be the Mone a man mai so;
 And at that stant upon the grounde
 Of his moisture it not be founde.
 Alle othre sterres, as men finde,
 Be schyende of here oghne kinde
 Outake only the monelyht,
 Which is noight of himselve bright,
 Bot as he takth it of the Sonne.
 And yit he hath al fulwonne
 His lyht, that he nys somdiel derk;
 But what the lette is of that wark
 In the Almageste it telleth this:
 The Mone's cercle so lowe is,
 Whereof the Sonne out of his stage
 Ne seeth him noight with full visage,
 For he is with the ground bescheded,
 So that the Mone is somdiel faded
 And may noight fully schyne cler.
 Bot what man under his power
 Is bore, he schal his places change
 And seche manye londes strange:
 And as of this condicion
 The Mone's disposicion
 Upon the lond of Alemaigne,
 Is set, and ek upon Bretaine,
 Which nou is cleped Englonde;
 For thei travaille in every lond. 101

101. Ibid., p. 252-253, Book VII, lines 721-754.

The second planet, Mercury, influences men to be studious
 and loving of ease and money. The influence of this planet is strongest
 in Burgundy and France.

Of the Planetes the secunde
 Above the Mone hath take his bounde,
 Mercurie, and his nature is this,
 That under him who that bore is,
 In boke he schal be studious
 And in wrytinge curious,
 And slowe and lusttes to travaile
 In thing which elles myghte availe:
 He loveth esse, he loveth reste,
 So is he nocht the worthieste;
 Bot yit with somdiel businesse
 His herte is set upon richesse.
 And as in this condicion,
 The effect and disposicion
 Of this Planete and of his change 102
 Is most in Burgaigne and in France.

102. Ibid., pp. 253-254, Book VII, lines 755-770.

The third planet, Venus, "governeth al the nacion of lovers," and is soft and sweet. The unfortunate thing about Venus is that in matters of sex, it loses all sense of right and wrong, and its influence is powerless to deny the demands of love. The power of Venus is prevalent in Lombardy.

Next to Mercurie, as wol befall,
 Stant that Planete which men calle
 Venus, whos constellation
 Governeth al the nacion
 Of lovers, whar thei spiede or non,
 Of whiche I trowe thou be en:
 Bot widerward this happes wende,
 Schal this planete schewe at ende,
 As it hath do to many so,
 To some wel, to some wo.
 And natheles of this Planete
 The moste part is softes and swetes;
 For who that therof takth his berth,
 He schal desire joie and merte,
 Gentil, courteis and debonaire,
 To spake his wordes softes and faire,

Such schal he be weis of kinde,
 And overal wher he may finde
 Plesance of love, his herte bloweth
 With al his myht and there he woveth.
 He is so ferforth amorous,
 He not what thing is vicious
 Touchende love, for that lawe
 Ther mai no maner man withdrawe,
 The which venerien is bore
 Be weis of kinde, and therefore
 Venus of love the goddessse
 Is cleped; bot of wantounesse
 The climat of hir lecherie
 Is most commyn in Lombardia. ¹⁰²

103. Ibid., pp. 254-255, lines 771-800.

The next planet is the sun, giver of light and increase of the earth. According to Fox, Gower describes the sun as riding in a car of gold and wearing on his head a golden crown set with precious stones. The sun's chariot is drawn by four horses: Eriheus, Acteos, Iampos, and Philogeus. The sun is the chief planet and from the middle place rules the other six. The man who is born under the influence of the sun will be of good will, liberal, subtle of wit, able in goldsmithing, and clever in financial affairs. Greece is the country most under the sun's influence. ¹⁰⁴

104. Fox, op. cit., p. 64.

The fifth planet is Mars, the "planete battailous," and affects those born under him with fierce martial spirit. His influence is most felt in the Holy Land.

Mars the Planete bataillous
 Next to the Sonne glorious
 Above stant, and doth mervniles
 Upon the fortune of batailes.
 The conquerours bo daica olde
 Were unto this planete holde:
 Bot who that his nativite
 Hath tak upon the propreie
 Of Martes disposicioun
 Be wile of constellacioun
 He schal be fiers and folhostif
 And desirous of warre and strif.
 Bot forte telle redely
 In what climat most comunly
 That this planete hath his effect,
 Seid, is that he hath his aspect
 Upon the holi lond cast,
 That there is no pes stedefast.¹⁰⁵

105. *Ibid.*, p. 257, Book VII, lines 888-906.

Jupiter makes men meek and patient, fortunate in business,
 and "lusti to delicacie." Egypt comes under the influence of this plan-
 et. Gower describes the influence of this planet in the following lines,
 previously quoted on page 5 of this study:

The sixte Planet of the sevene,
 Stant Jupiter the delicat,
 Which causeth pes and no debat.
 For he is cleped that Planete
 Which of his kinde softe and swete
 Attempreth al that to him longeth;
 And whom this planete underfongeth
 To stonk upon his regiment,
 He schal be meke and pacient
 And fortunat to Marchandie
 And lusti to delicacie
 In every thing which he schal do.
 This Jupiter is cause also
 Of the science of lyhte werkes,
 And in this wise letten clerkes
 He is the planete of delicias.

Bot in Egipte of his offices
 He regneth most in special;
 For ther he lustes overal
 Of al that to this lif befalleth;
 For ther no stormy weder falleth,
 Which myhte grieve man or beste,
 And ek the lond is so honeste
 That it is plenteuous and plein,
 Ther is non ydel ground in vein;
 And upon such felicite
 Stant Jupiter in his degre.¹⁰⁶

106. *Ibid.*, pp. 257-258, Book VII, lines 907-934.

The highest planet is Saturn, cold of complexion. His influence makes men cruel and malicious, and his domain is in the Orient. The influences of the planet Saturn are described in the lines which follow:

The heyeste and aboven alle
 Stant that planete which man calle
 Saturnus, whos complexion
 Is cold, and his condition
 Causeth malice and cruelte
 To him the whos nativite
 Is set under his governaunce.
 For alle hise werkes ben grevance
 And enemy to mannes hole,
 In what degre that he schal dele,
 His climat is in orient,
 Wher that he is most violent.¹⁰⁷

107. *Ibid.*, p. 258, Book VII, lines 935-946.

While Chaucer does not present the supposed influences of the seven planets in order as they are presented in the works of Gower, he does present them in his stories. The influence of the various planets

as they are presented by these poets are generally the same. The planet Mars is very influential in matters of war, while Saturn causes many evil plagues to come upon men. The planet Venus has power over affairs of love, and the moon is influential in matters of travel and over the tides. The planet Jupiter causes people to be very patient and businesslike, and Mercury causes people to be rich and easygoing. The sun causes men to be of good will, subtle of wit, and clever in financial affairs. Since these poets lived in the same period, it is not surprising that they have presented the planets as having the same influences and powers.

CHAPTER VI

In writing stories for his medieval audience, Chaucer found it necessary to discard much of the ancient mythological machinery and to substitute as a motivating force that formative and impelling influence of the stars in which his age believed. In order to substitute such a motivating force for the final stages of action, he has skillfully gone about transferring the power of the ancient gods of his sources to the astrological planets of the same name.¹⁰⁸

108. Curry, op. cit., pp. 119-120.

To thinkers of the middle Ages, myths about the ancient gods were merely figments of the poetic imagination or creations of the philosophic mind put forward to express an esoteric meaning. As early as the twelfth century Albericus, philosophus, arranges the gods whose persons he is describing in their astronomical order and indicates that they are to be considered as planets and not as gods. He says, for example, that "Venus holds the fifth place among the planets, and on that account she is described as fifthly."¹⁰⁹

109. Ibid., pp. 149-150.

Although Chaucer does not confuse the planets with the ancient deities, there are some examples of the "carry-overs" from the ancient gods to the planets in his stories. In the "Knight's Tale," Saturn is presented as the planet except for the fact that his being the father of Venus suggests a myth connected with godship. Finding that his daughter Venus, who is more powerful in matters pertaining to love and peace than war, cannot properly support her warrior Palamon, he ranges himself upon her side and prepares to fight her battles against Mars, the war star. The conflict, therefore, rages until the final catastrophe, between Mars, the supporter of Arcite, and Saturn, the protector of Palamon. Saturn addresses Venus telling her that he is well equipped for such a conflict.

"My dere doghter Venus," quod Saturn,
 "My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,
 Hath more power than wot any man--110

110. "The Knight's Tale," Robinson, op. cit., p. 48, lines 2453-2455.

Chaucer has his characters to go to the temples to pray to the various planets, which suggests again, the relationship of the planets to the ancient deities. All the dates in the story except May 3 are determined absolutely by the astrological scheme of planetary hours and days which controls the events of the story. The first meeting of Palamon and Arcite is appropriately on Friday, because that is the day of Venus; and at the first hour after sunrise, because that is the hour of Venus. The interrupted combat occurs on the next day, because that is the day of Saturn, and apparently at the first hour of the day, which is the hour of

Saturn. The tournament cannot occur on Sunday, the day of the sun, but since Arcite, who worships Mars, is to be victorious, it must occur on Tuesday the day of Mars.¹¹¹

111. Manly, op. cit., p. 551.

On Sunday morning, says Chaucer, apparently after the most careful astrological calculation, when Palamon hears the lark sing, although it is not yet day by two hours, he prepares to make a pilgrimage to the temple of Venus.

When Palamon the larke herde synge,
 Although it nere nat day by houres two,
 Yet song the larke, and Palamon also
 With hooly herte and with an heigh corage,
 He roos to wenden on his pilgrimage
 Unto the blisful Citherea benigne,
 I mene Venus, honourable and digne.
 And in hir houre he walketh forth a pas
 Unto the lystes ther hire temple was,
 And down he kneleth, and with humble cheere

112

112. "The Knight's Tale," Robinson, op. cit., p. 45,
 lines 2210-2219.

At the "thridde houre inequal" the sun rises, and Emily goes to pray in the temple of Diane; and "the nexte houre of Mars folwinge this" Arcite goes to do sacrifice to Mars.

The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
 Bigan to Venus temple for to gon,
 Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,
 And to the temple of Dyane gan hys.

 The nexte houre of Mars folwyng this,
 Arcite unto the temple walked is

Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrifice,¹¹³
With alle the rytes of his payen wyse.

113. Ibid., pp. 46, 47, lines 2270-2370.

Another example of the "carry-overs" from the ancient deities to the seven planets as they appear in Chaucer's works can be seen in the following passage from the "Franklin's Tale."

Your blisful suster, Lucina the shene,
That of the see is chief goddes and quene,
Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,
Yet empress aboven him is she;
Ye known wel, lord, that right as hir desyr
Is to be quiked and lighted of your fyr,
For which she folweth yow ful bisily,
Right so the see desyreth naturally
To folwen hir, as she that is goddosse 114
Bothe in the see and riveres more and lesse.

114. "The Franklin's Tale," Robinson, op. cit., p. 167,
lines 1045-1054.

Aurelius prays to the sun to help him to remove the rocks from the coast of Brittany by enlisting the aid of the moon.

Wherfore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste--
Do this miracle, or do my herte breste--
That now, next at this opposicioun,
Which in the signe shal be of the Leon,
As preyeth hir so greet a flood to bringe,
That fyve fadme at the leeste it overspringe
The hyeste rokke in Amerik Briteyne;
And let this endure yeres tweyne;
.....
Freye hir she go no faster course than ye,
I seye, preyeth your suster that she go
No faster cours than ye thise yeres two.

Than shal she been evens atte fulls alway,¹¹⁵
 And spring-flood lasts both night and day.

115. "The Franklin's Tale," Robinson, op. cit., p. 167,
 lines 1052-1055, 1070.

In the story of "Troilus and Criseyde," Troilus undertakes scarcely a single act without first imploring some one of the celestial powers for help. When he has confessed his love to Pandarus and the latter has promised to help him, Troilus prays to Venus.

Now blisful Venus helps, or that I sterve,¹¹⁶
 Of thee, Pandare, I may som thank deserve.

116. "Troilus and Criseyde," Robinson, op. cit., p. 467,
 lines 1014-1015.

When Troilus is about to undertake a step that will either win or lose Criseyde he prays to all the planetary gods, but especially to Venus, begging her to overcome by her aid whatever evil influence the planets exercised over him in his birth:

Yit blisful Venus, this night thou me enspyre;
 quod Troilus, "as wis as I thee serve,
 And ever bet and bet shal, til I sterve.
 And if I hadde, O Venus ful of murthe,
 Aspects badde of Mars or of Saturne,
 Or thou combust or let were in my birthe,
 Thy fador prey al thilke harm disturne."¹¹⁷

117. "Troilus and Criseyde," Robinson, op. cit., p. 501,
 lines 712-718.

Chaucer has not confused the planets and ancient deities; however, he has suggested a vague relationship between the deities and the planets as he presents them by having his characters offer prayers to the various planets asking them for help in their problems.

John Gower does not confuse the planets with the ancient deities in his works; however, he like Chaucer, has his characters offer prayers to the various planets. The prayer of Cephalus to the sun and moon, which seems to be of Gower's invention, is an example of this.

Cephalus prays to the sun

And in the Signe of Capricorn,
The house approped to Satorne,
I preie that thou wolt sojourne,
Wher ben the nihtes derke and longe: 118

118. Macaulay, op. cit., p. 388, Book IV, lines 3222-3223.

As the sun enters the sign of Capricorn at the winter solstice, the appropriateness of the prayer is apparent, however startling the request. To make sure that the nights be dark and long, Cephalus further implores the sun

That thou thi swifte hors restreigne
Lowe under Erthe in Occident,
That thei towards Orient 119
Be cercle go the longe weie.

119. Ibid., p. 388, Book IV, lines 3233-3236.

He prays to the moon with a different intent.

And in Cancro thin oghne hous
 Ayein Phebus in opposit
 Stond al this time, and of delit
 Behold Venus with a glad yhe.
 For thanne upon astronomie
 Of due constellacion
 Thou makst prolificacion,
 And dost that children ben gegetes: 120

120. Ibid., p. 388, Book IV, 3242-3249.

Although Chaucer and Gower do not confuse the seven planets with the ancient deities of the same names, the planets in their stories do possess some "carry-overs" from the ancient deities. In the "Knight's Tale, Palamon and Arcite pray to the planets for victory. Chaucer has Aurelius to pray to the sun in the "Franklin's Tale," In the story of "Troilus And Criseyde," Troilus undertakes scarcely a single act without first imploring some one of the celestial powers for help. John Gower does not confuse the planets with the ancient deities in his works, but he does have his characters to offer prayers to the various planets. It can be said that these two poets, do present the seven planets in such a way that they remind us somewhat of the ancient deities whose names they bear.

SUMMARY

Since these two poets lived and wrote during the Middle Ages, it is not surprising to learn that their attitudes and beliefs concerning the theory and practice of astrology are very similar. Both of them have used astrology in various ways throughout their works and it has been the purpose of this study to point out some of the similarities in their uses of astrology.

Although both of these poets made use of the influences of astrology in writing for their medieval audience, they did not believe in fatalism. They took sides with the Church in their belief that God has the power to save a man regardless of the nature of his horoscope. The general attitude of these poets toward astrology represents that of the educated man living in medieval times. It can be said that Chaucer and Gower were very much interested in astrology and its supposed influences upon human life; however, both of them expressed an attitude of condemnation toward the practice of astrological magic.

The use of the influences of astrology as a motivating force is very prominent in the works of these two poets. The "Knight's Tale," which is actually built around the conflict between the planets Saturn and

Mars, is an example of Chaucer's use of astrology as a motivating force in his stories. Gower made use of astrology as a motivating force in his "Tale of Nectanabus" when he has Nectanabus to consult the heavens for a suitable time for the birth of Alexander the Great.

Chaucer's presentation of the supposed influences of the seven planets is much the same as Gower's; however, Chaucer presents the planets with their various influences in his stories, while Gower lists the seven planets together with their supposed influence as they might appear in a scientific dictionary. The seven planets, as they are presented by these two poets, are very similar to the planets of modern astrology.

These poets also used astrology in the creation of their characters as it has been pointed out previously in this study. The Wife of Bath is an example of a character created by Chaucer through the use of the influences of astrology. Her total personality and actions are influenced by the configuration of planets at the moment of her birth. Gower has used astrology in the creation of the character of a great emperor in his tale of Nectanabus. Although Chaucer made use of astrology in creating and portraying character more frequently than Gower, both of these poets capitalized on the greater faith of the majority of people of their time in the influence of astrology upon human life.

In the Middle Ages, the terms "astrology" and "astronomy" denoted practically the same thing. Actually astronomy, or the study of the heavens, grew out of men's interest in the heavenly bodies which was

caused by his belief in the influence of these bodies upon his life, or astrology. Therefore, these terms meant the same thing to Chaucer and Gower. There are numerous references to astrology and astronomy in the works of Chaucer; however, his primary interest in the heavenly bodies seems to be centered in their astrological influences upon human life rather than in the study of astronomy as we know it today. Although Gower is sometimes given the credit for re-establishing the distinction between the terms of astrology and astronomy as we know them, he, like Chaucer, actually made no difference in these two terms in his own thinking.

While Chaucer and Gower do not confuse the planets with the ancient deities of the same names, their planets do have some of the "carry-overs" from the ancient deities whose names they bear. As it has been pointed out in this study, both of these poets have their characters to pray to the planets. This suggests the relationship of the planets to the ancient deities, although the people of the Middle Ages no longer believed in the ancient deities. However, the seven planets as they have been presented by these poets have not been confused with the ancient deities.

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