

Section 7 - Stanzas 66 - 76

Cresseid, the Lepers and Troilus

Throughout this section there are short questions and activities. Make sure that your answers are written in such a way that you will be able to understand these at a later date when you come to use the notes for either a critical essay or as part of your revision for the exam.

There are two things to notice about these sections; firstly, the rhyme pattern of stanza 66 reverts to the seven-line, rhyme royal and secondly, this is a narrative episode. In many ways, this can be considered the main dramatic action of the poem.

❖ Answer the following questions:

Look at Stanzas 66 and 67

1. In stanza 66, Henryson describes Cresseid's '*drerie destenye*'.
 - i) Give three phrases from the stanza which describe Cresseid's condition.
 - ii) What is the effect of the language used by Henryson in describing Cresseid's condition?
2. The '*lipper lady*' approaches Cresseid. She appears to give Cresseid good counsel. In your own words, write down what she tells Cresseid to do.

Look at Stanzas 68 to 76

3. Stanza 68 signals a change in focus to Troilus.
 - i) Look closely at the language used to describe Troilus in this section of the poem. In what way do the words/phrases used to describe Troilus present us with an indication of his moral standing?
 - ii) What might that moral standing be?
 - iii) Stanza 71 describes the way 'memory' works. Notice how in the previous stanzas the events are presented from Troilus' viewpoint. Why do you think Henryson includes this one-off stanza at this point in the section?

- iv) Look carefully at Stanza 72.
What is Troilus' reaction to seeing Cresseid?

- v) Stanza 73 sees Troilus' leaving Cresseid.
How does the line '*For knightlie pietie and memoriall*' fit in with your earlier ideas of Troilus' moral standards?

- vi) Troilus' actions are steered by powerful emotion.
 - a) What is the effect of the word '*swak*'?

 - b) In what way do his actions here seem contradictory with his emotion in the rest of this section?

- vii) When Cresseid finds out that the generous lord is Troilus, she is beside herself with grief.
Henryson again uses alliteration to describe Cresseid's reaction.
Give three examples and explain the effect of each.

Our Reading of the Character of Troilus

The actions of Troilus can be read on three levels:

1. Troilus' generosity is an indication of his loyalty to the memory of his love for Cresseid.
2. He is a good man and is compassionate. He embodies the 'pietie' of stanza 73.
3. He is used symbolically by Henryson as an illustration of the morals of the poem, that is, 'duty' and 'chivalric virtue'.

- ❖ Which of the above do you find the most convincing? Or can the character of Troilus be all of these?