Chaucer does not often refer to costume in his poetry, but he occasionally does use it as a means of characterization, of advancing a plot, or of further describing the setting of a story. For the most part, critics have ignored these references because costume is considered to be a peripheral aspect of any artistic work. However, the costume and other social customs of late fourteenth-century England are implicit in Chaucer's fictions. If we ignore this social milieu, we may assume that the fourteenth century adhered to the social attitudes of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, even if the realm of social customs is narrowed to a study of the costume of Chaucerian women, a researcher can discover very little to contribute directly to Chaucerian scholarship at this time. We must know the fashions of Chaucer's world and the values attached to them before we can understand fully the meanings of the references which Chaucer makes to costume. But current fashion histories describe costume in very general terms, make
little effort to place the garments in their social and moral climate, and seldom document the facts they do present. This inadequate scholarship is not caused by a lack of primary sources, but by a too shallow use of these sources.

If we turn from external sources to an internal comparison of the costumes of Chaucer's ladies and his common women, we find that the physical appearance and moral righteousness of a lady are described, but her costume seldom is; the physical appearance and costume of a common woman are described, but her moral laxity is shown by her actions. The comparison of ladies and commoners has been made in an effort to discover if Criseyde's costume could contribute toward solving the problem of whether Chaucer intended her as a victim or an accomplice in her love tangles. The problem remains unsolved because the answers to questions such as the appropriateness of the dress that she wears when she makes her plea to Hector (TC 1.106-126) cannot be answered until more thorough historical research of fourteenth-century costume has been completed.
PROBLEMS IN DETERMINING
CHAUCER'S USE OF COSTUME

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of English
Emporia State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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PREFACE

When I began my study of costume references in Chaucer I hoped to be able to offer at its end an analysis of at least one Chaucerian character based on that character's costume. Instead, I can offer only questions for further investigation because the information currently available on costume of the fourteenth century is insufficient for a thorough study of the costume of any Chaucerian character. During my research, I learned that Chaucerian criticism has almost completely neglected Chaucer's literary use of costume as well as his literary use of other social conventions of his time. This neglect is regrettable because unless we understand the social conventions of a story we will miss some of its meaning. Thus, although I have not offered any definite conclusions in the following discussion regarding Chaucerian costume, I have tried to offer proof that the social conventions on which Chaucer's poetry is based merit more thorough and more serious investigation than they have so far received. My proofs may remain unconvincing to someone who does not yet quite accept that the social milieu of a writer directly
influences his work. I will be able to give such proof only when I have had time for research sufficient to produce a paper which conclusively shows a direct link between an author's work and the social practices of his time.

I would like to express my grateful thanks for their help, interest, and patience throughout this project to Dr. Melvin Storm and Dr. William Cogswell. Thanks also are due to my friend Olaf Bexhoeft who translated an article discussing the miniatures in British Museum manuscript Harleien 4431 from German to English for me. A final thanks goes to my husband, Frederic, who supplied me with encouragement and support through all my research, writing, and revising.

M.L.S.
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Introduction

In his introduction to Rene König's book discussing the social psychology of fashion, Thomas Wolfe notes that novelists have used fashion "as an essential ingredient of realistic narration . . . a symbolic vocabulary that offers a sub-rational but instant and very brilliant illumination of the characters of individuals. . . ."¹ He notes, too, that while novelists have viewed fashion as essential, most scholars have treated it as "comic relief," separating discussion of it from the rest of the discussion.² Wolfe cites Richardson and Fielding as the first novelists who used fashion as part of their narrations. However, Wolfe need not have stopped at Richardson and Fielding. Authors before the eighteenth century were using costume as a means of characterization. Chaucer was among these authors and, as they have done for others, scholars have ignored almost completely his references to fashion. This study, through an examination of late-fourteenth century fashions and the manner in which Chaucer referred to these fashions in his tales, demonstrates that this aspect of Chaucer should not be ignored.
A storyteller cannot compose a tale which is independent of his culture. Implicit in anything he writes are his social and moral standards, standards which he has absorbed, often subconsciously, since childhood. The implicit nature of these standards does not hinder his contemporary audience from understanding his meaning, because they have absorbed similar standards. However, this implicitness can hinder the understanding of a later audience, because it has absorbed different standards. This problem of understanding is present when a modern audience reads Chaucer, who wrote for a fourteenth-century English audience whose life centered around the king's court, an audience whose modes of life and habits of thought were different from the modes and habits of modern life. If a modern reader wants to appreciate fully Chaucer's poetry and prose, he must reconstruct this fourteenth-century world. Much reconstruction already has been done on medieval life and thought, but most studies in reconstruction approach the problem from a strictly historical viewpoint. For example, McKisack discusses the political events of the entire fourteenth century, Steele concentrates on the political events of the reign of Richard II. Coulton discusses the social life of the century, Powers concentrates on life in the convents. Some studies in reconstruction trace the influence on Chaucer of a particular aspect
of medieval life. Muscatine explores the influence of French literature, Robertson emphasizes the influence of Christian doctrine, Curry points out the influence of the sciences. Most of the studies that trace influences on Chaucer are based on the objective that Curry expresses as follows:

Chaucer's poetical and dramatic conceptions were inevitably determined in some measure by the mediaeval outlook upon life, and his artistic execution of them was consummated with a fourteenth century audience in mind. Consequently, if the modern reader would understand Chaucer's work at its best, he must learn to think in terms of mediaeval customs and manners, mediaeval philosophy, religion, and science; these are the outward trappings of an inward reality.

Of course, not every critic agrees that medieval society must be reconstructed in order to understand Chaucer. Some critics declare that modern interpretations of Chaucer are sufficient, especially since we can never hope to understand Chaucer's works as his original audience did. It is true that we cannot reconstruct totally the medieval way of living and thinking, but to say, for that reason, that we should not try the reconstruction at all is to limit unnecessarily what we can learn about both Chaucer's world and ours. In addition, not even these critics can avoid some reconstruction, for they must recreate at least enough of medieval thought to understand Chaucer's English. My present study, based on Curry's objective,
approaches the reconstruction by way of a question which has not been explored adequately, the question of Chaucer's use of fashion (or costume) in his tales. \textsuperscript{12} Costume, as used throughout this study, is defined as the total appearance of a person, including his hairstyle, makeup, garments, accessories, and physical shape and features. The discussion occasionally steps into the area of mannerisms, which reinforce costume in creating a character. The study begins with the assumption that Chaucer obviously did not mention costume details as a handy reference for future reconstructions of his era. Like any other author, he included details of costume to add to a characterization or to further the story's plot, basing the details on the costumes worn in his society. Unfortunately, most fashion and social historians have used Chaucer as if he wrote as a historian rather than a poet. They also have claimed that Chaucer's works provide a finely detailed picture of medieval garments and mannerisms when, in fact, he provides very few details. In her study of English domestic life as recorded by Chaucer, Whitmore makes a claim which is typical of these historians's conviction of Chaucer's detailed accuracy. She claims that "Chaucer's portraits appear as clearly as those of the illuminations in old manuscripts, having the finish which only a master artist can obtain."\textsuperscript{13} Perhaps it is a
proof of Chaucer's mastery that when we have read one of his descriptions we are convinced that we have been given a detailed picture when we have not. The descriptions do contain details — very vivid details — but the picture is not complete. Working solely from an illumination in an old manuscript, I could reconstruct any of the garments shown, although the tailoring techniques would probably differ from the techniques of a medieval tailor. Working solely from one of Chaucer's descriptions, I could not reconstruct any garment, not even the Prioress's wimple. To discover its style, or even that it is a garment rather than a hairstyle or part of her horse's harness, I must go to another source. In fact, I must refer to an outside source to reconstruct any costume to which Chaucer referred, a fact which belies the assertions of Chaucer's completely detailed accuracy. Apparently, then, Chaucer did not include costume details to provide a fashion show. The reasons he did include these details are the subject of this study.

To learn why Chaucer included certain costume details, we first must learn what costumes were worn by Chaucer and his contemporaries, because these styles are the ones on which Chaucer based his costume descriptions. Learning about these styles includes more than learning what shapes they had and how they
were trimmed. Styles influence values. For example, was a given style considered the proper style for a man, or for a woman to wear? If it was considered suitable for a man, was a man who wore it viewed as a dandy or was he viewed as a conservative dresser? Styles influence movement, also. For example, if I am wearing high-heeled shoes, my stride will be short and running will be very difficult. If I am wearing tennis shoes, my stride can be much longer and running will be much easier. However, moral values become attached to movements just as they do to styles. Short steps are considered proper for a lady, so even wearing tennis shoes I will keep my stride short if I want to appear ladylike. All of these values attached to costume are tools which an author can use in bringing a character to life. Chaucer mentioned certain details of costume and his audience understood, but his meaning may not be so clear to us. Even if we think we understand a reference, we must be sure we are not reading our values of dress back into an age which held other values. An example is the Wife of Bath's Sunday hat (Gen Prol 453-455). Chaucer may have been pointing to its shape and mocking its style, a target which seems obvious to us; but, on the other hand, he may have been pointing out its extravagant amount of delicate, expensive material, mocking the Wife's pretensions to wealth and gentle breeding, giving no thought to the style.
To understand Chaucer, we must go back to an England where both courtiers and their ladies wore skirts and both courtiers and ladies wore bright colors and moved through gilded rooms. Almost all garments were lined in a contrasting fabric or fur. Men and women who could afford them wore gemstones on their fingers, embroidered on their purses and gowns, and set in the hilts of their knives. But these gemstones were not faceted, and the bright colors and gilded ceilings were lit by sunlight or candlelight. Such details seem insignificant until we remember that it is faceting that gives gems their fire, until we consider the difference in effect between a gilded ceiling glaring in modern electric lighting or dimly glimmering in candlelight. The world to which we are returning recognized class distinctions and expected each person to dress in a costume appropriate to his class. However, the world I have just described did not include all of medieval England; it was only a small segment, composed of the nobility living in the courts of Edward III and of Richard II. Other segments of society did not agree that a person should dress in a manner defined as appropriate by the nobility. Many of these people (enough, at least, to cause the nobility to pass sumptuary laws in an attempt to enforce their ideas of appropriate costume) preferred garments and fabrics assigned to classes
above their own. The sumptuary laws are evidence that the members of the court accepted costume as a manifestation of social status. The flouting of these laws attests that members of the lower classes also believed that fine clothing was indicative of social position although factors such as comfort and a preference for decorated garments over plain ones probably contributed to the breaking of the laws, also.

Garments could relay messages other than the message of social rank. The devices of heraldry on garments and shields, as most people today know, identified the family heritages and marriage affiliations of the nobility and, on the battlefield, identified ally and foe. In addition to family heritage, details on garments could identify occupation. When the Canon joins the Canterbury pilgrims, the narrator determines this man's occupation by the way his hood is sewn onto his cloak:

```plaintext
And in myn herte wondren I bigan
What that he was, til that I understood
How that his cloke was sowed to his hood;
For which, when I hadde longe avysed me,
I demed him som chanoun for to be.
(CYT 569-573)
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Finally, garment details could contribute to one person's moral judgement of another person. For example, at least one early fourteenth-century man thought that only unchaste women wore sleeves fastened with buttons; chaste women fastened their sleeves
with needle and thread.  

Fourteenth-century England was not the only society to identify a person's social rank and moral standing by his costume. The process has continued through the centuries. In each era, fiction writers have used these rules of costume as one method of characterization. Unfortunately, a discussion of how any author uses costume to portray character can become confusingly nebulous because such a discussion deals with social mores, subjective and constantly changing rules known by everyone in a particular culture but seldom written down. Because these rules change, leaving no record of previous usage, the significance of a hairstyle or shoe style is the element of a literary work least likely to transcend time. The loss of the meaning of a costume reference usually is not noticed because the hairstyle or shoe included by the author is ignored by the critics, partly because the daily use of costume as a manifestation of character and social status is so subconscious that these critics are not aware of it. The subconscious association of character and costume is, however, only part of the reason that literary criticism in general has ignored costume in fiction. Another factor is the conscious rejection of the idea that a person should be judged by something so changeable, so apparently peripheral to his character.
Occasionally, however, an author details costume in a manner which insists that these details be noticed, as Chaucer did in his Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*. Critics usually approach these instances with the assumption that the values placed on costume have not changed over the centuries. The discussion about the Wife of Bath's Sunday hat is representative of this approach; debate has been concerned so far only with whether the style of this hat was of the latest fashion or was outdated. This emphasis on style appears to be based on the assumption that the style of a garment was the main criterion by which Chaucer and his audience evaluated a person's costume because style is the main criterion we use today. Unfortunately, the standards by which costume is evaluated have changed, and we should consider whether Chaucer had in mind other factors than the style of the hat. Chaucer's statement that the Wife's "coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground" (Gen Prol 453) suggests that he may have been pointing to the fabric of which the hat was made rather than or in addition to its style. The idea that Chaucer was referring to the fabric gains support from the frequent references he made elsewhere in his works to the fabrics of which garments were made. The type of fabric appears to have been an item of major importance rather than the minor detail it is today. That they "ful fyne weren of ground" could mean that
the coverchiefs had been made of a delicate, sheer fabric, which, in Chaucer's opinion, was too elegant and expensive to be worn by a woman of low rank. This conjecture gains support from the sumptuary laws of the last half of the fourteenth century, which emphasize the type of fabric (rather than the style of garment) suitable for each rank of the social hierarchy. However, even though the fabric of the hat may be one item included in its censure, and even though the sumptuary laws indicate that the condemnation may have been directed toward the extravagance of that material, we cannot conclude yet that the Wife's extravagance was being condemned. The poet further stated his certainty that these coverchiefs weighed ten pounds. This weight may or may not be an exaggeration, but it does suggest another reading of "ful fyne weren of ground." Perhaps Chaucer intended his audience to understand the opposite meaning, that the coverchiefs, of which the Wife seems so proud, were actually made of a fabric which was coarse and heavy in comparison with that used by the aristocracy, a meaning which would have caused more laughter than condemnation. The possibility that the Prologue was intended to be heard rather than, or in addition to, being read by its audience lends some support to this idea. The poet would have had no need to write a clearer indication of opposite meaning
into the text, relying on his tone to convey this meaning as he read the poem aloud. There may be other possible answers to the riddle of the Wife of Bath's Sunday coverchiefs. I have mentioned the problem not to offer a solution but to demonstrate the fact that we must beware of unthinkingly assuming that modern standards are the same as the standards of past eras.

The assumption that rules of costume as well as other social rules have remained unchanged is incorrect but common, so common, in fact, that it itself is the one ever-present, never-changing social rule. The people of all cultures have considered their dress and their manners to be the proper expressions of natural laws. Each generation learns the current rules, holds these rules to be natural and immutable, and judges what it sees, hears, and reads by these rules, assuming that all peoples, of all eras and cultures, have held the same values. Are these rules not natural rules, each generation reasons, and therefore the only possible rules? This assumption of immutable social rules is reinforced in historical research by the recurring complaints of the moralists. Their complaints of moral degeneration repeat the same words generation after generation because they name only the social values being eroded and the names of the values have not changed. What has changed is the behavior that calls forth these names. In
interpreting the complaints of moralists, we must first learn what the common practice was at the time the complaint was written. Only then can we begin to know what action was meant by labels such as "immodest" or "effeminate." We must remember, also, that moralists usually have decried every new fashion that has appeared, whether the fashion has been in costume or in other areas. The following two examples, one from eleventh-century Italy and one from eighteenth-century England, amply demonstrate the range of their denunciations. The first example concerns the table fork, a dining tool not used by medieval Europeans. In the eleventh century, a Byzantine princess, betrothed to the future Doge of Venice, traveled to Venice to celebrate the event. At one of the many feasts, she carried her meat to her mouth with a golden fork, an act that shocked her fellow diners, who were using their fingers, as overly fastidious and resulted in a diatribe by one of the clergy attending the feast. The second example concerns the umbrella, a convenient article introduced into English life in the eighteenth century, imported from the Far East. Moralists of the time were appalled to see everyone carrying this device to ward off the rain. Such a practice, they reasoned, thwarted God's purpose, for did the Bible not say that the rain was to fall on the just and unjust alike? Yet in their corrupt age, both the just
and unjust were circumventing this purpose under the protection of these devilish umbrellas. 22

Two other problems which appear repeatedly in discussions of social practices must be noted in relation to this study of Chaucer's use of costume. The first problem applies to all areas of cultural study and can be acknowledged only, not corrected. The second problem applies to the study of the practical arts. Unlike the first, this one can be avoided with a little effort on the part of any researcher.

The first problem is our inability to recreate totally the social rules of a past era. This problem is tangled in the social rules which we learn so thoroughly and accept as so normal that we often do not consider that other lifestyles are based on different premises. Even when we recognize and make every effort to understand the differences, our best efforts inevitably are colored at least slightly by our standards. The television series LaVerne and Shirley, which started its run in the mid-nineteen seventies, demonstrates the disparity between the actual attitudes of an era and the attitudes portrayed in a later, artistic recreation of that era. This show recreates the nineteen fifties, a time within the memories of the actors, writers, and many of the viewers of the show. Yet a comparison of this show with a show actually filmed in the nineteen fifties
reveals a rather surprising area of change. The women in the nineteen fifties films move with a stiff primness which contrasts sharply with the more relaxed movements of the actresses in *LaVerne and Shirley*. I have mentioned that styles can influence movement, but in this instance the change does not result from different styles because the costumes of *LaVerne and Shirley* are duplicates of the styles of the nineteen fifties. Instead, the change is a result of changing attitudes about the conduct of respectable women.\(^{23}\) Social rules are continually in a process of modification, usually by stages so small that we do not notice them. Because of these continual, minute changes, contemporary attitudes are often discernable in even the most painstaking of recreations. The problem cannot be eliminated, but it should not be forgotten; an awareness of this limitation is one guard against falling back on the assumption that social rules have never changed.

The second problem is much less complex and subjective. In studying materials concerning a practical art, many researchers appear to believe that everything about anything can be learned from books, eliminating any need for practical experience. This notion is erroneous. Books can describe a practical art, such as goldsmithing or tailoring, only in general terms, perhaps made slightly more
specific by diagrams or photographs. However, only experience in working gold or fabric or any other medium can teach a person the limitations as well as the potentials of the medium, enabling him to assess with greater accuracy any information written about that practical art. The couching stitch used in medieval embroideries is one example of how practice can disprove theory. By mentally reconstructing the working of this particular stitch, some researchers concluded that it was so intricate that a team of two was required to work it. But one researcher, also an embroiderer, sat down at her embroidery frame to reconstruct the actual stitch and discovered that working the stitch required only one person. This particular example is of a small detail that probably does not much affect our concept of life in medieval England. But a researcher's lack of practical knowledge can drastically alter our view of that England. I take for an example Mead's English Medieval Feasts, which is the secondary source most often cited in discussions of medieval food. After examining several fifteenth-century cookbooks, Mead concluded, among other things, that many medieval dishes contained unpalatable, highly-spiced mixtures of ingredients, an opinion which has found common acceptance. Mead may have been a scholar, but he was not a cook, a regrettable lack which several scholars who are also
cooks make very clear. Working from their knowledge of how modern food is prepared, these women demonstrate that the medieval recipes were not the unpalatable, highly-spiced mixtures of Mead's fancy. In fact, they totally alter Mead's viewpoint, demonstrating the difference that practical as well as abstract knowledge can make in learning how another era lived. Learning a craft for ourselves is not always possible or practical, but at the very least we should ask questions of people who practice that craft.

With the preceding limitations in mind, we can turn our attention to discovering why Chaucer described the costumes of various characters. The first step, as I mentioned earlier, is to discover what the English wore during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II. This reconstruction should be made as independently of medieval romances and other fictional sources as possible. Social history and the history of costume cannot be reconstructed accurately from fiction, although many such attempts have been made. Further, reconstruction based on fiction followed by criticism based on that reconstruction cannot be anything but circular. A novelist mentions a costume detail in order to focus attention on it; it is something that is in some way unusual and therefore stands out from all the unrecorded ordinary details of a character's costume. Definitions of ordinary and extraordinary
are based, of course, on the costumes of the novelist's era. If the women of his day wear floor-length skirts and his characters wear floor-length skirts, he probably will not mention this detail because it is an ordinary detail which his contemporary audience will take for granted. If, however, the women of his day wear knee-length skirts and his characters wear floor-length skirts, he will mention this detail because it is extraordinary in comparison to his audience's experience. Since we should not rely on fiction for historical reconstruction, we must study other documents of the time, such as household accounts, wills, and handbooks of manners. The visual arts such as sculpture and painting can be useful, also, although here, as with fiction, we cannot assume automatically that every picture represents the costumes and practices of the era in which it was painted. In addition, comparisons should be made among the fictional works of various authors to discover how each portrays character through dress and manners. For an author not only draws from the life around him, he borrows also from literary tradition, continuing stereotypes which may bear little resemblance to actual people but which his audience will recognize because they know the same literary tradition. Here again, art works aid in relearning the literary tradition, for, as several scholars have demonstrated, 28
medieval literature as well as actual life influenced the sculptor and painter in their works. A total reconstruction of all the costumes, including armor, of late fourteenth-century English life is outside the scope of this discussion. My purpose here is to reconstruct, as far as possible, the civilian costume of the aristocracy of England from 1350-1400 and then to examine how Chaucer made use of this costume in his poetry. The examination of Chaucer's use of costume begins with the question of what we can learn about Criseyde's character by comparing her costume with the costumes of other Chaucerian women. The discussion presented in the next several chapters is not conclusive, for reasons explained in the next chapter. It is, rather, an exploration, suggestive of the possibilities for further study concerning Chaucer's use of costume.
Before analyzing why Chaucer included certain costume details in his stories, we must learn about the styles on which these details were based. A knowledge of fourteenth-century costume is necessary to a modern researcher even if Chaucer was endeavoring to recreate the atmosphere of an earlier court in some of his tales, because the garments that Chaucer's audience accepted as fashionable determined what garments they would have judged as either old-fashioned or avant-garde. A complete study of Chaucer's use of costume would require reconstruction of the costumes of both rich and poor people in medieval England. Since costume, like literature, is influenced by other countries, the study ideally should include comparisons of English and European costumes and perhaps Oriental costumes, also.¹ The current study, limited both by time and by the fact that, to my knowledge, a reliable history of costume has yet to be published, is confined to the costumes worn by the aristocracy in the English court in the last half of the fourteenth century. But the aim of any costume study, limited or not, should be to know the costumes of an era as the people who
wore them did. How many garments were worn at one time? How did the garments restrict movement? How did a garment move and reflect the light as its wearer walked or danced? Among the many costume styles worn, which ones were considered fashionable and which were worn by the people who ignored fashion? Early in the twentieth century, Dion Calthrop witnessed an English pageant in which an attempt was made to dress the actors in authentic medieval costumes. Considering the attempt to be "perfectly successful," Calthrop described the visual effect in his history of English costume. His description summarizes the necessity of recreating any garment as totally as possible (the quotation is divided into the paragraphs given in the original):

Until the performance of the Sherborne Pageant, I had never had the opportunity of seeing a mass of people, under proper, open-air conditions, dressed in the peasant costume of Early England. For once traditional stage notions of costume were cast aside, and an attempt was made, which was perfectly successful, to dress people in the colours of their time.

The mass of simple colours—bright reds, blues, and greens—was a perfect expression of the date, giving, as nothing else could give, an appearance of an illuminated book come to life.

One might imagine that such a primary-coloured crowd would have appeared un-English, and too Oriental or Italian; but with the background of trees and stone walls, the English summer sky distressed with clouds, the moving cloud shadows and the velvet grass, these fierce hard colours looked distinctly English, undoubtedly of their
date, and gave the spirit of the ages, from a clothes point of view, as no other colours could have done. In doing this they attested to the historical truth of the play.

It was interesting to see the difference made to this crowd by the advent of a number of monks in uniform black or brown, and to see the setting in which these jewel-like peasants shone—the play of brilliant hues amid the more sombre browns and blacks, the shifting of the blues and reds, the strong notes of emerald green—all, like the symmetrical accidents of the kaleidoscope, settling into their places in perfect harmony.

The entire scene bore the impress of the spirit of historical truth, and it is by such pageants that we can imagine coloured pictures of an England of the past.

Again, we could observe the effect of the light-reflecting armour, cold, shimmering steel, coming in a play of colour against the background of peasants, and thereby one could note the exact appearance of an ordinary English day of such a date as this of which I now write, the end of the thirteenth century.²

My reconstruction of the costumes of late fourteenth-century English courtiers and their ladies begins with a study of fashion histories in order to discover the general outlines as well as the details of these costumes. The fashion histories I have relied on for the following descriptions are the Handbook of English Mediaeval Costume, written by C. Willett and Phillis Cunnington and the Cyclopaedia of Costume, written by J. R. Planché.³ According to these histories, the courtier wore a hat, a closely-fitted, hip-length jacket, hose, and pointed shoes (figure 1). This body-revealing costume was worn in the courts of both Edward III and Richard II. A second style,
introduced during Richard's reign, contrasted sharply with the first. This style replaced the hip-length jacket with a loose gown, knee-length or longer, belted at the waist (figure 2). The court lady wore a gown which was fitted to the hips and flared into a skirt that swept the floor. This gown might be worn under another gown either fashioned like the first (figure 3), or else resembling a modern jumper with very large armholes (figure 4). Her hair, bound in front of her ears, was covered with a more or less elaborate combination of veils and goldsmith's work. A researcher could use such general descriptions with their accompanying illustrations to construct copies of the garments in order to study fabric drapery, restriction of movement, and any other effects that a given style would have had on a person either wearing the garment or seeing it worn. Making and wearing one or more of these garments would teach us about the visual effect of fourteenth-century English costume but could tell us little about the values attached to the garments Chaucer mentions in his tales.4

For an analysis of the connotations of the garments worn by Chaucerian characters we need details other than the visual and physical effect of a garment. These details include such things as what style was identified by a particular garment name in fourteenth-century England, what accessories were considered
appropriate to each style, and what styles were considered appropriate for various social functions. For example, in the Miller's Tale, Alison wears the equivalent of the modern belt, an accessory first identified as a "ceinte" (MillT 3235) and later as a "girdle" (3250). Karuth and Kuhn, in their Middle English Dictionary, gloss these terms as synonyms, but Chaucer's use of two different terms implies that there is at least a small difference in meaning. Is a ceinte a particular style of girdle as today a shirt is a particular style of blouse? Or do ceinte and girdle refer to two distinct styles, both adorning Alison's waist? The general costume descriptions I provided in the preceding paragraph obviously do not contain the details necessary for answering such questions and, unfortunately, the fashion histories from which I derived the descriptions do not contain such details either. The descriptions given in Cunnington's Handbook and Planché's Cyclopaedia are representative of the kinds of descriptions provided by other histories of costume, also. Fashion historians describe the general outlines of fourteenth-century English garments, but offer little information about colors, fabrics, and trims, and even less about the occasions for which a garment or accessory was appropriate. The details which are provided differ from fashion history to fashion history and seldom are
documented adequately. The lack of details in fashion histories, the disagreement over the details which are provided, and the lack of documentation which would enable a researcher to trace disagreements to their sources prevent me, at the present time, from making a thorough analysis of Chaucer's use of costume. Therefore, it is necessary for me to present these problems in greater detail. Since Criseyde is the character I am most concerned with in my discussion of Chaucer's use of costume, I will use her also as the starting point for my examination of the fashion histories currently available. My discussion begins with the incident which contains the first reference in *Troilus and Criseyde* to Criseyde's costume - her visit to the Trojan court (*TC* 1.106-126).

When Criseyde finds that her father's treason has turned the townspeople against her, she dresses herself in a "widewes habit large of samyt broun" (*TC* 1.109) and hurries to Hector to plead for mercy. On reading this line, one may immediately ask why Chaucer dressed a widow in brown instead of black. To answer this question, we first must learn what widows were expected to wear in the late fourteenth century. Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas begin their discussion with medieval customs of mourning in their *Costume for Births, Marriages, and Deaths*, so it appears that this book will describe the garments
worn by widows in the Middle Ages. However, Cunnington and Lucas provide only a few details about the proper garments for a widow. According to them, a pleated throat covering called a barbe (figure 5) became formalized as the prerogative of a widow in the fifteenth century. Regarding the rest of a widow's costume, they say only that widows usually wore old-fashioned styles. Whether these styles were outdated by ten or by one hundred years, the authors do not say. They claim that fourteenth-century custom had not obliged widows to wear black yet, but they cite as evidence, unfortunately, the source of our original question: the brown dress which Criseyde wears to court, compared with the black one she wears to the temple (TC 1.170). Using this last piece of evidence obviously would make circular any argument concerning Chaucer's intent. As Cunnington and Lucas provide only a small part of the answer we are seeking, we must turn to histories that deal with everyday costumes as well as costumes for special occasions. But a study of these fashion histories shows that most ignore the question of color completely, mentioning widow's wear only in connection with the barbe, a garment whose various definitions exemplify the confusion existing in fashion research. The disagreement exists, of course, from one fashion historian to another, but,
unfortunately, a fashion historian sometimes disagrees with himself, also, as Herbert Norris's *Costume and Fashion* illustrates.⁹

In the second volume of his work, Norris says that by the thirteenth century the barbe was the distinctive garment of a widow and that, until the end of the fourteenth century, this throat covering was referred to as either a wimple (figure 6) or a barbe (p. 191). Sometime in the fifteenth century, the widow's barbe (or wimple) was transformed into the pleated version described by Cunnington and Lucas, lost its name of wimple, and was referred to only as a barbe. However, Norris continues, wimples in the form of unpleated throat coverings were worn throughout the reign of Henry V by "matrons and elderly women" (p. 439). This information contradicts the information given by Cunnington and Lucas about the century in which the barbe became widow's wear, a problem compounded by the fact that Norris contradicts himself, also. The wimple, he claims, was introduced at the end of the twelfth century to fill in the scandalously low necklines of women's gowns (pp. 120, 231).¹⁰

To fashion this decorous garment, a woman draped a piece of linen under her chin and across her neck and pinned the ends to her hair. She then draped a veil over her head, covering both her hair and the ends of the wimple. Norris claims that this garment,
worn through the reign of Henry V, was not always high fashion. In the reign of Richard I (1189-1199) it was the fashion (p. 98). By the reign of Henry III (1216-1272), wimples and veils were no longer fashionable but were worn occasionally (p. 162). (Presumably, widows wore them on all occasions.) In the reign of Edward I (1272-1307), the wimple returned to high fashion (p. 168). Norris does not explain how, during the reign of Edward I, the wimple, synonymous with the barbe, could be both a high-fashion garment and a garment which characterized a widow. However, he does say that the newest headdress in Edward's reign was the gorget, which was a wimple worn without a veil (figure 7 [pp. 169, 180]). This definition adds another unmatching piece to the puzzle. If a throat covering worn without a veil was called a gorget and the same throat covering worn with a veil was a wimple, does the term wimple mean only the throat covering or does it mean the throat covering plus the veil? The definition of gorget implies that wimple includes both throat covering and veil, but Norris does not use wimple without saying veil, also. He complicates things further by stating that "a detail worth remembering is that the gorget or wimple was always worn tucked inside the neck of the dress. The GUIMPE hung outside the top of the gown" (p. 269). However, as an illustration for an earlier discussion,
Norris includes a figure of a woman whose throat covering, hanging outside the neckline of her gown, Norris calls a wimple: "The elaborate headdress is described on p. 268, and as is usual with this type of wimple it is worn outside the cyclas" (p. 215). This statement implies that wimple was the general term for a throat covering and that gorget and guimpe were specific wimple styles, but such a conclusion is guesswork because Norris never clearly defines the terms he uses. The practice of failing to define the terms they use is followed by most fashion historians.

Although Norris and Cunnington and Lucas disagree on dates, the authors of both books use the mourning etiquette instituted by Margaret Beaufort during the reign of her son Henry VII as evidence that the barbe was worn as a sign of widowhood. But Cunnington and Lucas cite the document containing this etiquette as evidence for their claim that the barbe was not a distinctive widow's garment until the fifteenth century. Norris cites this document in order to furnish additional details about a widow's headdress and mentions no evidence supporting his claim that from the beginning of the thirteenth century the barbe was a distinctive garment for widows. Margaret's rules of mourning detail the weeds of a widow at the end of the fifteenth century and do not allow the
inference apparently taken by Norris that for many years widows had worn the garments it decrees. For example, the rules prescribe that a surcoat was to be worn by specified gentlewomen of the king's household and by widows of knights and of men of all higher ranks, but the surcoat was a garment so old-fashioned that Margaret was obliged to describe it.

Norris does not offer any other evidence for his statements concerning widow's weeds and wimples, gorgets, and guimpes. But, as noted earlier, Cunnington and Lucas do, offering the quotation from Chaucer as proof that black was not mandatory for widows in the fourteenth century. In other words, these historians rest their case solely on a literary work, assuming that clothing descriptions in medieval literature are the equivalent of those in modern fashion magazines. They assume, also, that Chaucer is describing the costumes as well as the customs of his day, a view shared by some critics of Chaucer. However, Chaucer, like most authors, directed his words to his contemporary audience, not a possible future one, mentioning details of clothing to deepen the audience's understanding of a character or to further the plot, not to accommodate future curiosity. In the instance of Criseyde's dress, four possible interpretations suggest themselves.

The first possibility is suggested in the apology
Chaucer offers at the beginning of Book II:

Ye knowe ek that in forme of speche is chaunge
Withinne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
That hadden pris, now wonder nyce and strangue
Us thinketh hem, and yet thei spake hem so,
And spedde as wel in love as men now do;
Ek for to wynnen love in sondry ages,
In sondry londes, sondry ben usages.

(TC 2.22-28)

This stanza implies that Chaucer may have seen himself as recreating the customs of an older court. The failure of both critics and fashion historians to consider the possibility that Chaucer, in writing of olden times, is describing customs and costumes of a century earlier than the fourteenth seems, so far, to have been based on a common twentieth-century belief that people in medieval times had no concept of history. Medieval ideas of Trojan customs may have differed from our ideas of these customs, but a disagreement about the evidence supporting a concept does not imply that one of the parties has no notion of the concept. And it does seem odd that Chaucer would have apologized for the strange customs in his story if he were presenting the customs practiced by his original audience. If the setting is historical, the brown worn by Criseyde may be a historical touch, a contrasting of old practices with new ones.

Of the remaining three possibilities, any one could be true whether or not the setting is intended to be historical. If custom (either old or new)
dictated that brown was the proper color for a widow to wear when appearing at court, Chaucer could be demonstrating Criseyde's tendency to conform, a tendency directly stated in lines 127-133 of Book 1. On the other hand, if black was required for all occasions, Chaucer could be indicating early in his tale that Criseyde does not always conform to social customs, preparing his audience for her later, more blameworthy, disregard for social rules. The final possibility is that "broun" is intended to mean simply "of a dark color,"¹⁴ a medieval usage that is no longer current. Chaucer's original audience would have known, based on customary practice, which dark color was meant.

None of these suggestions is offered as a proven interpretation of line 109, Book 1. Rather, they are all evidence of the fallacy of accepting literature as straightforward historical reporting, a practice which becomes more than a nuisance to someone studying fourteenth-century English costume. Primary sources for this period are few and, to fill the gap, many fashion historians use Chaucer, turning any study of Chaucer's costume references into the circle demonstrated by the comments on Criseyde's brown and black dresses. Fashion historians tighten the circle by refusing to elaborate on the portions of Chaucer which they quote, quotations which sometimes are modernized
in spelling and syntax and usually have no notation concerning which edition of Chaucer has been used. But after reading the quotations from Chaucer presented by historians as clear pictures of fourteenth-century fashions, I am no less puzzled than before over such things as how stockings can be "[f]ul streite yteyd" (Gen Prol 457). Since we cannot learn the shapes and details of fourteenth-century costume from secondary sources, we must search for them in primary sources.

The primary sources available for learning about fourteenth-century costume include (among other things) sculptures, paintings (including manuscript miniatures), wills, letters, legal records, and wardrobe accounts. Each of these sources requires that the researcher have background knowledge in different fields in order to use it intelligently. Some of these fields are obvious. Studying medieval wills, for example, requires knowledge of medieval Latin, French, and English as well as of the legal meanings of the words used in wills. Less obvious fields which can affect interpretation include a study of modern wills, of modern and medieval economics, and of the positions in society of the testators of the wills being examined. I do not yet know exactly how such knowledge would influence the interpretation of clothing bequests in medieval wills because I have not had either the time
or the resources to make such a study. However, fashion and social historians do not appear to have considered economics, social position, or equivalent modern wills when they cite wills as evidence. For example, a frequent assertion is that garments were much more expensive in the Middle Ages than they are today. Gervase Mathew, in his study of the social life of the court of Richard II, goes so far as to claim that clothing was so expensive that it was viewed as portable capital.18 Such claims rest in part on the fact that garments were frequent bequests in wills, the implication being that people do not make bequests of clothing today, and therefore, clothing was more valuable then. This claim may or may not be true, but proof would require more evidence than the fact that garments were frequent bequests. First we must determine the social position of the testator and then study equivalent modern wills to see if the types of bequests actually do differ. For example, a modern equivalent to the will of John of Gaunt probably would be the will of Nelson Rockefeller. The will of a blue collar worker would not be. Once we have determined a medieval person's social position and its modern equivalent, we can study the economics governing the bequests in equivalent medieval and modern wills. How did the medieval price of clothing compare with that of other goods? How does the modern price of
clothing compare with that of other goods? In such a comparison, social status, again, must be considered. The price of the clothing of John of Gaunt's wife cannot be compared to the price of modern ready-made garments which can be bought in department stores such as J. C. Penney or Macy's. Rather, the price should be compared with its modern-day equivalent, that of the *haute couture* houses of Paris.

The various factors that the researcher must consider when using a will for evidence in a study of costume are typical of the wide range of knowledge necessary for using each primary source. The time necessary for me to acquire such knowledge has forced me to push a direct study of Chaucer's use of costume into some indefinite future time. The example of Criseyde's dress typifies the lack of useful information provided by fashion histories, but I have included a few more examples in the following paragraphs to prove that this case is not an isolated one, to show more fully why the final chapter of my discussion is not more conclusive, and to alert others to the inadequacy of the authorities they are relying on when they attempt to determine the significance Chaucer attached to a detail of costume. Much has been written, especially in regard to the Canterbury pilgrims, about the import of Chaucerian costume. But the conclusions reached, based on the very questionable
authority of current scholarship on fashion, can be regarded only as questionable themselves. The fashion histories I will use for these examples are *Historical Costumes of England from the Eleventh to the Twentieth Century* by Nancy Bradfield, *Fashion in History* by Marybelle Bigelow, *English Costume of the Late Middle Ages* by Iris Brooke, the *Handbook* by the Cunningtons, *English Costume from the Second Century B.C. to 1967* by Doreen Yarwood, and *Costume and Fashion* by Herbert Norris.

Bradfield's history demonstrates the format generally used by fashion historians. Bradfield's book is a slim volume whose "Foreward" and "Preface" promise careful, detailed scholarship. In the "Foreward," James Laver, himself the author of several fashion histories, praises the book's "accuracy, its grasp of fundamental lines, and its clear and logical arrangement." In her "Preface," Bradfield observes that research on fashion requires that the researcher study both the social and political histories of a nation in order to comprehend its fashions. She points out, also, that the researcher must study primary as well as secondary sources. Unfortunately, the text following this preface shows little evidence of the three points commended by Laver or of much study regarding England's social or political history. Nor does the bibliography list primary sources older
than the seventeenth century.

Segmenting fashion periods to coincide with the reigns of the English monarchs, Bradfield discusses in four brief pages what people wore during the reign of Richard II. These four pages, subdivided neatly into men's fashions and women's fashions, consist of a left-hand page of text and a right-hand page of line drawings for each sub-division. The promise of the first sentences describing men's fashions is not fulfilled:

Though the fashions of the preceding reign were still worn, great changes took place between 1380-90 when there was a new eccentric cut of men's garments with a definite German influence. There were also Franco-Burgundian novelties of folly-bells and jewelled collars.26

A description of this new, eccentric cut and of its development should follow, along with details of the folly-bells and jewelled collars. However, neither subject is continued. The text abruptly picks up another fashion and continues, granting only a sentence or two to each garment or accessory mentioned. The result is a dictionary arranged in short paragraphs with no documentation except a very brief bibliography to verify the facts presented. No effort at all is made to put the fashions in their political and social contexts.

This pattern of a paragraphed dictionary of
undocumented claims is followed in the works of most fashion historians. They briefly mention many styles without discussing the styles in relation to each other or to the social contexts in which they were worn. Each style described usually is mentioned only once in a fashion history (depicted, presumably, as it was at the time it was worn as high fashion) and is described as if, for a period, no one wore any other style. The impression given is that fashion existed in a vacuum in which every twenty-five or fifty years one style, worn as a sort of uniform by everyone, whether rich, poor, young, or old, was discarded and a different style was adopted as a uniform. The social and political contexts can be found in other sources, but the economic and moral values attached to a style of garment cannot be found elsewhere. Because fashion historians do not define clearly the terms that they use, the information provided in their books is of little value for learning facts such as the name given to a particular style by the people who wore it, the evolution of a particular style, and what other styles were worn at the time it was fashionable. This problem was demonstrated above by the example of the wimple, guimpe, and gorget. I will offer a further example, based on a garment called a houppelande, to demonstrate that eliminating this problem would be relatively simple.27
Fashion historians agree on the general shape of the houppelande, describing it as a long-sleeved, unfitted dress, gathered to the body with a belt (figure 2). Differences between men's and women's houppelandes were slight. A woman fastened her belt directly under her breasts; a man fastened his at his waist. A woman's collar could be high or form a low V; a man's collar was always high, sometimes reaching to his ear lobes. A woman's skirts were always floor-length; a man's might reach only to mid-thigh or might be knee- or floor-length. When a researcher attempts to learn further details from histories of fashion concerning the houppelande, he finds either contradictions or else a total lack of information about the detail under investigation. For example, although most fashion historians consider the years in which the garment was worn, the dates they assign to it vary widely. Six of the answers about when the houppelande was worn are summarized below.

Bigelow, whose *Fashion in History* begins with ancient Egyptian and ends with twentieth century European fashions, says that the houppelandes was worn in Western Europe, by both men and women, from the beginning of the fourteenth century. Historians concentrating on the fashions of England disagree with this dating, but fail to agree on another. Brooke says that men and women began wearing
houppelandes in the 1380's. According to the Cunningtons, men appeared in houppelandes in the 1350s or 1360s; women did not adopt this garment until 1400 or shortly thereafter. Yarwood agrees, approximately, with the Cunningtons, asserting that houppelandes were introduced for men shortly after Richard II became king and for women shortly before Richard II ceased being king. Bradfield, on the other hand, supports either Brooke or Yarwood, depending on which page of her history one reads. On page 43 of Historical Costume, Bradfield claims that the newest fashion for both men and women in the 1380s was the houppelande; two pages later she claims that women did not wear this garment until 1399. And finally, Norris suggests a reason for the disagreement regarding dates. Although he claims that English women did not wear houppelandes until the second decade of the fifteenth century, Norris includes an illustration of a woman, identified as a contemporary of Richard II, who is clad in a long, full, high-collared gown resembling an unbelted houppelande. According to Norris, the woman is wearing "a gown cut on the old style" to which a fashionable high collar has been added. Citing the high collar as one of the marks identifying a houppelande, other historians probably would classify this garment as a houppelande. In other words, perhaps the confusion over dates and
about details arises from how each historian chooses to define a garment. But unscrambling the confusion is impossible because not one of the six historians explains why he or she called the garment a houppelande or cites even one source to verify his or her dating. Norris fails even to say where his drawing originated. The failure of most fashion historians to provide proof to support their claims is the main hindrance to an investigation into Chaucer's use of costume. Because of the lack of documentation, a researcher has no method, other than faith, of deciding whether or not a fashion history is reliable.

Primary sources used for a study of fashion are subject to differing interpretations, based on the knowledge of the fashion historian using them. But primary sources are subject, also, to modifications, sometimes deliberate, sometimes unconscious, made by the fashion historian using them. Yarwood is an example of a historian who has deliberately modified a primary source without indicating that she has done so. Yarwood provides clearly detailed drawings throughout her book. She was the artist for all of them, but if one compares the slightly dumpy figures she presents wearing modern costume with the slender figures wearing fourteenth-century costume, it becomes evident that both sets cannot be original drawings by Yarwood. The extremely slender lines of the fourteenth-
century figures suggest that they have been copied from medieval illuminations and paintings. This possibility cannot be verified because Yarwood gives no hint, either in the caption to each drawing or in the text, of what source she was copying or even that any of her figures is a copy. A glance at the bibliography section devoted to "Principal Sources of Illustrations" is no more helpful. Two entries from this section illustrate the type of information supplied. The first one at least limits the researcher to one building. The second dooms him to wander over two countries:

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM Actual costumes, fashion plates, miniatures, embroideries, jewellry, pottery, sculpture and reliefs.

Sculpture, carving, monumental brasses, effigies, stained glass and mosaic work from Churches and Cathedrals in England and France. Fashion plates, drawings and magazines, Oil paintings, miniatures and drawings.

Neither entry provides the source of a specific drawing or the source of the date that Yarwood attributes to that drawing, but the source is needed in order for a researcher to understand how Yarwood interpreted its details. A comparison of any original with a copy of it will show some alterations in the copy, even though the copy may have been intended as an exact duplicate. These alterations may be subtle; nevertheless, they modify the original intention.
On the basis of the one drawing among them that I recognized, I suspect that in her copies Yarwood made little effort toward exact replication. The drawing is of Richard II (figure 8), copied from his portrait in Westminster Abbey (figure 9). In the original painting Richard is seated; in Yarwood's copy he is standing, a change in his position that erases the prerogative of a king to sit in the presence of any of his subjects although they must remain standing. The original painter represented this hierarchy because it was a part of the painter's daily life. Further, in the original painting even details as large as general garment shapes are not clear, yet Yarwood has transformed the painting into a clearly-detailed drawing, dressing Richard in a loose-fitting gown. Yet she gives no indication that she has copied from an original or has changed that original in any way. Her detailing may or may not be accurate, but neither possibility can be explored because she does not explain the deduction which led her to include these details. The comment of another historian, who states that, in the Westminster portrait, Richard is wearing "a long tight-fitting deep-blue gown which is embroidered all over with a pattern in gold," shows that more than one interpretation of these details is possible.\(^{35}\)

Some of the many fashion histories are better
than the rest. But even among the best there is a lack of adequate documentation. At times the author does not give even a bibliography and frequently the bibliography given is acknowledged to be incomplete. An example of one of these better histories is the Handbook of English Mediaeval Costume by Phillis and Willett Cunnington.

In their "Preface," the Cunningtons make the claim that "no positive fact has been stated which has not been confirmed from authentic sources." Whether or not they adhered to this admirable intent I do not know, because they fail to identify the authentic sources which yielded the bulk of their positive facts, such as the following description of men's sleeves from 1350-1400:

New Variations
(a) Sleeves, usually extending to the knuckles, expanding into a funnel shape.
(b) The 'grande assiette,' a form of sleeve much rarer in England than (a). This was cut so that the sleeve was inserted with a circular seam overlapping the front and back of the bodice, plate-wise.

The Cunningtons cite no primary sources to verify these claims.

Although they usually do not provide much evidence for their claims in the text, the Cunningtons do provide a source listing for the numerous line drawings they provide. Unfortunately, the list is incomplete,
giving only the museum which houses the manuscript from which a drawing was copied and the manuscript's identification number in that museum. The date of the text and of the illustrations and the country in which both were done should have been listed, also. A rough date, of course, is indicated by the section in the text in which any drawing appears, but the rest of the information is not available in this book. The "Preface" states that "some foreign sources have been preferred to English ones where they provided clearer illustrations of identical fashions." The implication is that most of the sources were of English origin, but no method is provided for separating the English from the foreign sources. If the foreign examples used actually are identical to English fashions in every detail, the Handbook has avoided the assumption that all styles were international. Found in most fashion histories, this assumption is that, for any century through the fifteenth, any example from any country represents a fashion that was worn throughout Europe and the British Isles. This assumption is not based on reality. In studying medieval manuscript miniatures and other artworks, one quickly becomes aware that some costumes are more elaborate than others. In some paintings, for example, the upper edges of the headbands of thirteenth-century women resemble the fluted edging of a pie
crust. Other headbands are severely straight. Further, fluted and straight seem never to mingle in one picture. Depiction of elaborate costume usually seems to have been of Germanic origin: that is, the artwork originated in Austria, Hungary, or one of the other German duchies. Depiction of plainer costume, on the other hand, is of English or French origin. These conclusions are only tentative because I have studied far too few paintings and have only begun to study schools of painting, another factor in the elaborateness of the costume depicted. But Millard Meiss, an art historian, believes that the lack of national characteristics through the fifteenth century is apparent rather than real because it is based on a too-scanty knowledge of medieval art. Verification that national characteristics of costume existed can be found in various medieval written sources. For example, around 1345, the author of The Brut complained that the English were foolishly copying the clothing of foreigners; around 1365 John of Reading took up the same theme; around 1371 a father advised his daughters not to copy the "new fashions and guises of array of women of strange countries."

In addition to listing the sources of their illustrations, the Cunningtons also include an occasional source reference within the text or in a
footnote. Such references, however, often weaken rather than strengthen one's already too fragile confidence in the reliability of the author, a circumstance confirmed in the following examples:

(a) Plumes began to appear, mostly of dyed ostrich or peacock feathers. One or two fixed upright in front or behind, being attached to the base of the crown by a brooch or jewelled ornament. 'In none of the old romances, replete as they are with descriptions of dress and armour, is there any allusion to feathers earlier than the middle of the fourteenth century' (Planché's Cyclopaedia of Costume).\textsuperscript{44}

Jewellery very abundant. 'I saw a woman . . . her head was adorned with so rich a crown that even the King has not a better. On all her fyv fyngers fuly richely she rynged' (Vision of Piers Plowman, 1362).\textsuperscript{45}

In both instances the Cunningtons have cited an authority to support their claim, but in each case, one cannot accept without question the authority cited.

The first source quoted is a late nineteenth-century fashion history. Although Planché is one of the more reliable historians, providing both adequately reasoned arguments and source listings for many of his statements, his authority is used here in a strange manner. The quotation does not provide evidence of the types of feathers worn or of how they were worn; rather, it supports the unstated claim of why the Cunningtons have listed feathers as
accessories worn at the end of the fourteenth century. As in this example, historians often quote other fashion historians in support of a claim. Sometimes the other historian is given credit, sometimes he is not; but some sources, such as Planché, Brooke, the Cunningtons, and James Laver, appear with astonishing regularity in fashion bibliographies. After a time, one can recognize, even if no mention of the source is made, which historian an author chose to agree with and which he chose to ignore. The use of such sources does not lend credibility to the author's claims of reliability when we remember that most of the secondary sources being used are documented inadequately themselves and therefore we ought not to fully trust them without further study.

The second quotation from the Cunningtons's Handbook goes back to the fourteenth century for evidence, even if the authors do not cite the edition of Langland (with its strange mixture of modern and archaic spelling) from which they took the quotation. The quotation is excerpted from Langland's description of Luxury, and, as in the instance of Criseyde's brown and black dresses, this source is literary, and hence, is unacceptable as straight fashion reporting. Even a historian should sense that the description of Luxury could not have been intended as a description of a typical woman. Langland's
Luxury is as far from typical as Shakespeare's Cleopatra reclining in her barge rigged with purple sails. Fashion researchers cannot use the costumes of fictional characters as representative of garments that were actually worn during a historical period because authors seldom describe typical garments. Their fictional characters usually wear clothing which either is exaggerated from the typical or else is incorrect for the situation in which it is worn.

It should be noted that fashion historians are not the only ones who speak authoritatively about past styles without presenting enough evidence to warrant our acceptance of their authority. Costume (and social history in general) seems to be an area in which most researchers assume that the facts are such common knowledge that they do not need to present supporting sources. For example, in her study of costume in relation to the Renaissance theater, Stella Newton makes continual comparisons of theater costumes to the everyday costumes of the time, but never describes these ordinary costumes or supplies the reader with a source for finding them described.

Lucie Schaeffer, in her study of the miniatures of British Museum manuscript Harleien 4431, makes many claims that the miniatures represent the manners and costumes contemporary with the time the miniatures were painted, but makes no reference to sources
substantiating these claims. With reference to both fashion histories and to other works which consider fashion, I do not present this lack of documentation as proof that these claims are incorrect; rather, I present it to show that there is no way of determining whether they are correct. Therefore, in a study of costume, we must begin at the beginning and form an idea of the styles of the fourteenth century (or of any century) solely from the primary sources; we cannot build on previous research. Research supplying the silhouettes and details of ordinary costume is necessary before we can hope to determine the significance in Chaucer of such things as the Wife of Bath's Sunday hat, or her wimple, or the black and white color scheme in which the wife in the Miller's Tale is presented (MillT 3233-3270).

The primary sources which a student of costume must examine are too numerous for one or two people to study adequately. References to costume are scattered through all the remnants which have survived from a past age. A single work cannot be a complete study, but it should be a base on which others can build. If the majority of fashion historians had followed this plan, we would have fashion histories which list all the primary sources used. The student of costume could then study the secondary sources and, when he turned to the primary sources, he would
be able to examine some new ones, thus adding to our information about historical costume. Instead, fashion historians have been content to repeat the same general descriptions of costume and, for the most part, have not bothered to document their sources. Often they do list a few sources, offering some form of the excuse given by Max Wykes-Joyce as the reason that their bibliography is not more complete:

A bibliography in the normal sense would be quite out of place here. For it is evident from the range of volumes listed, that scraps of information about cosmetic habits and customs may be culled from many sources.\textsuperscript{48}

Admittedly, complete lists of the sources for any fashion history would be lengthy, but without such lists a researcher cannot check the reliability of an author nor can he know what sources have been studied so that he can investigate at least a few new ones. Fashion history should not be exempt from the scholarly obligation to provide sources which substantiate the assertions made even though it is tedious to keep track of the many sources consulted.

The fashion historian traces the general rather than the specific, a fact which makes documentation even more difficult because a researcher must cite more than one source to prove that an accessory or sleeve style was the rule rather than the exception.
A few scholars have proven that such documentation of general trends is not impossible. For example, in tracing the various schools in his studies of French and Italian art, Meiss does not neglect to list several of the specific paintings which led to each conclusion.\(^49\) In books such as *English Art, 1307-1461*,\(^50\) and *A History of Jewellery: 1100-1870*,\(^51\) Joan Evans presents her reader with an almost overwhelming number of details, all clearly connected to their sources. Planché proves that even in fashion history such accuracy can be accomplished. For example, in the discussion following the entry "headdress" in his *Cyclopaedia*, he writes a careful argument in support of his position in the controversy over whether women donned tall headdresses (sometimes called hennin) before the mid-fifteenth century. Not only does Planché explain why and from where he concludes that these headdresses were not worn before the mid-fifteenth century, he gives the opposing view also, and explains where the evidence has been misinterpreted.\(^52\) If Dion Calthrop had listed his sources, the following quotation, from his description of costume between 1307 and 1327, would add another piece toward solving the puzzle of the hennin. Instead, it stands as a summary for all the frustration experienced by the person who ventures into fashion research:
Very rarely a tall, steeple head-dress was worn over the wimple, with a hanging veil; but this was not common, and indeed, it is not a mark of the time, but belongs more properly to a later date. However, I have seen such a head-dress drawn at or about this time, so must include it. 53

And he left not a footnote even as general as "Sherborne Pageant" to help rediscover this treasure!
Interpreting Primary Sources for Fashion Research

Since fashion histories provide only a general impression of late fourteenth-century costume and are thus not complete enough to be used in literary analysis, the next step in my study of Chaucerian fashion was to examine some of the available primary sources to learn what details they could provide toward learning why Chaucer mentions a particular costume in one of his poems. During this part of the study, I concentrated on medieval paintings and manuscript miniatures, first noting the details of the costumes as well as who is wearing each style, and then comparing costumes from the various artworks. Because of the time limit on this particular study, I further narrowed my study of medieval paintings to concentrate first on the representation throughout the fourteenth century of one woman and then on the contents of a single, early fourteenth-century, English manuscript. As with all research, the tedium of listing country of origin, artist, character's name, sleeve lengths, skirt length and width, collar height, and the shape of the bodice ultimately is rewarded, providing evidence which indicates that further study would yield a more substantive view
than we have at present of how Chaucer and his audience expected their heroes and heroines to dress and of why Chaucer mentions a particular costume at a particular place in a tale. The following hypothesis, starting from a look at the miniatures in a fifteenth-century French manuscript and ending with the description of the dress Criseyde wore when she asked for Hector's protection, can serve as a model for this process.

The manuscript, Harleian 4431, housed in the British Museum, contains the collected works of Christine de Pisan, bound in two large volumes. The first volume begins with a dedication to Queen Isabel of Bavaria, accompanied by a miniature in which Christine presents her book to the queen, in the presence of several other women, presumably ladies-in-waiting to the queen (folio 3r).¹ In this picture, Christine wears a dress with a fitted bodice and elbow-length sleeves over another dress with long, tight sleeves (figure 10). With one exception, she wears these two dresses in all the miniatures in which she appears throughout the manuscript. The exception is a miniature in which she offers a written prayer to the Virgin and Child (folio 265r). In this miniature she wears a houppelande, the style worn by the queen and the other women in the first miniature and by many of the other men and women
pictured throughout the manuscript. Since the queen and her ladies-in-waiting would have been members of the aristocracy, we will assume (for the sake of this argument) that the other people shown wearing houppelandes were intended to represent members of the aristocracy, also. Christine, being an author rather than an aristocratic woman, would have had a lower social status and much less wealth. Based on this evidence, we might surmise that the houppelande was one of the newest fashions, worn only by people wealthy enough to afford the latest styles. In the fifteenth century this group would have consisted largely of the richer members of the aristocracy. Further, as the sumptuary laws of the time indicate, the aristocrats considered themselves the only class which had the right to spend much money on clothing. As such, they would be the only people (ideally) to appear in the newest styles, and their choice of dress would thus transform the newest style—in this instance the houppelande—into a mark of high rank. Since Christine was not of the highest rank, she is portrayed throughout the manuscript (with the one exception) wearing a somewhat old-fashioned costume whose style dates back to the mid-fourteenth century.² In addition, in the first miniature, Christine, asking that her book be accepted, is presented as a suitor, a position in which she would
have been expected to dress more humbly than the person from whom she was asking the favor. The queen and her ladies-in-waiting, on the other hand, wear new-style garments, a clear mark of their superior dignity and rank, a distinction emphasized by the fact that they remain seated while Christine kneels. In the one miniature in which Christine wears a houppelande, she is a suitor still, but wears the newer, more dignified garment because her suit is to a divine rather than a temporal power. The Virgin is crowned and wears a gown and cloak similar to the one shown in figure 16. Although this costume was fashionable at the beginning of the fourteenth century, any connotations of low rank which its old-fashioned style might carry are erased by the fact that its wearer is the Virgin, Queen of Heaven. In this instance, the suitor's dress, no matter what its style, is automatically more humble than the clothing of the Virgin. However, the suitor's costume must be the one worn by people of the highest temporal rank or its wearing would be insulting to the Virgin. In other words, part of the dress code represented by the miniaturist required that a petitioner dress with a humility suitable to the person he was petitioning. (Obviously, the evidence presented is far too slight for such a conclusion, but the demonstration, as noted, is hypothetical.) If we
proceed to one further conjecture, we can apply this fragment of dress code to Criseyde.

Let us conjecture, then, that the fashions and postulated dress code of Harleien 4431 and of the court of Richard II were the same. In such circumstances, when Criseyde hurries to plead with Hector (TC 1.106-112), she should be wearing a conservative costume in keeping with her status as a suitor. Chaucer describes the dress she wears as a "widewes habit large," which could mean either that it is very wide or else very long. A houppelande certainly fits the first definition because it was a garment cut in a wide tent shape which must have used many yards of fabric. If Chaucer is using "large" in the sense of "wide," perhaps he means that Criseyde is wearing this newest style, an ostentatious costume at variance with her humble position before Hector. The image of ostentation may be enhanced by the fabric of the dress, which is of "samyte," a silk fabric which often had gold threads woven into it. One fashion historian adds that samite was used in secular clothing when a person wished to put on a "more than ordinary display of pomp." If such an interpretation is accurate, Chaucer has provided us with an early glimpse of a pride which may have contributed to Criseyde's downfall. Of course, conclusions about the meaning of a literary passage
cannot be derived from such slight evidence in a single source. For one thing, the social positions of Christine and Criseyde, whatever they were, would have to be considered: a garment acceptable on a lady may not have been acceptable on a woman of lower rank in the same circumstances. We would have to consider, also, whether Chaucer may have intended "large" to mean "long" rather than "wide." If the sense of "large" is "long," Chaucer's meaning may not be a comment on Criseyde's character. If her skirt is being described as being longer than was fashionable at the end of the fourteenth century, it may be a historical touch mentioning an old-fashioned style. The reference to samite may contribute to the historical nature of the scene, being an indication by Chaucer that the ancient Trojan court was more elaborate than the fourteenth-century English court. To verify this conjecture, of course, we would have to learn what garments were considered old-fashioned in late fourteenth-century England and what was its opinion of the riches of ancient Troy. We do not yet have enough evidence to reach any conclusion, but, if we had sufficient information about the costumes and social practices and beliefs of medieval England, we could determine why Chaucer thought it necessary to mention Criseyde's dress on this occasion.

As the example based on British Museum manuscript
Harleien 4431 has demonstrated, the aim of fashion research in relation to a study of an author's works is to understand why he included certain fashion details and excluded others. In relation to this aim, I should note that often, when critics mention Chaucerian fashion, they note that the details which Chaucer includes in a particular poem are included, also, in one or more of his written sources. There they let the matter rest, as if a faithful rendition of his originals were the only motive Chaucer could have had. But the matter should be pursued further with questions such as why the original author included the costume details and why Chaucer considered these details important enough to include in his retelling. For, as these critics also show through their comparisons, Chaucer did not always include every detail which he read in his original sources.

Before we can learn why Chaucer or that original author mentioned a character's costume, we must learn about the costume styles on which he based his descriptions. As I mentioned in chapter 2, learning about the costumes worn in fourteenth-century England requires that the researcher study written documents, such as wills, and graphic representations, such as sculpture and painting. As I also pointed out, interpreting the fashion evidence supplied by any primary source requires that the researcher acquire
background knowledge about each source. If one's final aim is to learn the meaning of a costume reference in a poem, the acquisition of background knowledge can appear to lead one far from one's literary source. Much of the background knowledge is not directly applicable to the literary interpretation being sought; that is, one may use a piece of information to interpret a primary source and then may use the interpretation of the primary source to learn about the costumes actually worn in late fourteenth-century England and finally, may apply the knowledge gained about costume to learn the meaning of a literary reference, but one cannot use the original piece of information for a direct literary interpretation. Obviously, however, the original piece of information, being a means to an end, is a necessary part of the process of explicating a literary source.

The process of learning background material so that, eventually, one can work with literary sources is analogous to what scientists call "pure research." Pure research must precede applied research, although the researcher is not always certain to what application the pure research will lead. At present in my study of Chaucerian fashion, I am still in the area of pure research. As chapter 2 demonstrated, current histories of costume are unreliable guides
for interpreting Chaucer. Therefore, I have been forced to begin my study of Chaucer's costume references by learning how to use the various primary sources available for fashion research. At the beginning of this chapter I demonstrated, using Harleian 4431, how a knowledge of costume history could be used to interpret the meaning of one costume reference in *Troilus and Criseyde*. In the rest of the chapter I will demonstrate how one type of primary source available for fashion research could be used to gain a more thorough knowledge than we now have of the costumes worn in medieval England and of the social and moral connotations attached to these costumes.

Before proceeding to my discussion of the costume of one medieval woman and of the drawings in a fourteenth-century English manuscript, I should note that the remainder of this chapter is primarily a study directly applicable to fashion history. I do not often refer to Chaucer's poetry and where I do mention his works it is in the form of suggestions for future studies whose final importance to Chaucerian scholarship I have no way of determining at present. It may be that, although we can learn much more about fourteenth-century costume than currently has been recorded by fashion historians, we cannot learn enough to reach definite conclusions about why Chaucer
mentioned various costumes in his works. I do not think so, but at present do not have enough knowledge of fourteenth-century fashion to offer definite proof that the meanings of at least some of Chaucer's costume references can be discovered eventually.

As I mentioned in the opening paragraph of this chapter, my study of primary sources for this discussion has been narrowed to two items: an examination of the costume of one woman during the course of a century and an examination of the contents of one manuscript. For my study of the woman, I concentrated on manuscript miniatures and, as a result, had to learn how to interpret the costume evidence presented in these miniatures. Most fourteenth-century painters stylized their representations of costumes as well as of scenery. Their paintings lack perspective so that everything, including costumes, appears flat. The flatness is accompanied by a disregard for light reflection so that a red costume, for example, is painted in an unvarying shade of red, rather than containing the lights and shadows which must have appeared in an actual garment. The painters also ignored construction details, such as seams, in the garments they represented. Because fourteenth-century painters chose to stylize the costumes in their paintings, we must remember several facts when studying these paintings in order to learn about
fourteenth-century costume. First, garments are shaped, by assorted seams, from flat fabric, which is a fluid, not a rigid, substance. Second costume, especially fashionable costume, is concerned with the total look, not the precise method used to construct that look. Third, people accommodate their movements to meet the requirements of current styles. Because this chapter discusses the use of sources and, therefore, is concerned at least as much with methods as with conclusions, I will discuss these guidelines in greater detail. Such guidelines are important because the fashion historian seeks to learn the appearance of actual garments. If a painter chose to stylize part or all of a costume in a painting, we must learn to recognize the stylized elements so that our reconstruction of the garment from which he worked will not be a false reconstruction.

Perhaps the first consideration appears too obvious to need comment. As a matter of necessity, all garments start as a flat fabric, which then is cut and seamed to make it conform to the curves of the human body. However, artists before the late fourteenth century seldom included details of garment construction, painting garments that appear to have been cast from molds, with no plackets and closures to aid in donning or removing these garments, an omission which may make us wonder how the ladies of
Richard's court wriggled into and out of their fitted dresses. Medieval painters also ignored the less-than-incidental fact that fabric moves with its wearer and in accordance with gravitational laws. One easily can overlook the painter's practice of ignoring the movement of fabric until one encounters a particularly jarring example. Maseo's "Miracle of St. Sylvester" is one such example. Among the figures populating the picture two men in the center foreground lie dead, their toes upturned, their bearded chins jutting skyward, their skirts arranged in tidy folds around their ankles, as if they were toppled statues instead of human bodies. Inevitably, Chaucer's Lucrece comes to mind, who, as she falls mortally wounded, keeps her skirts tucked modestly around her feet (LGW 1854-1860). It would be interesting to know if there is a link between the literary description and the artistic convention. Details of construction and of the effects that the movements of its wearer have on a garment usually are directly applicable to a study of tailoring or painting rather than to a literature. But such information can lead indirectly to a better understanding of an author's works. For example, the narrator identifies the occupation of the canon who joins the Canterbury Pilgrims by the seam joining his cloak and hood (CYT 571). Discovering the technique used in making
this seam would increase our knowledge of Chaucer's everyday world, but it probably would not add any additional information about the character of the canon, for we know already from Chaucer's comment that this churchman conforms to the church's rules at least in matters of dress. Once we have noticed this costume detail, however, it might suggest a comparison of the costumes worn by all of Chaucer's clergy, a study that probably would add to our understanding of Chaucer's art.

The second point we must remember when studying the costumes represented in medieval paintings is that, as a rule, the total effect of a costume is more important than its details. Few paintings and other artifacts have survived from early periods, and these show us only a few costume variations. In their discussions, fashion historians treat these surviving variations as if they were the only ones that existed during these periods. But, considering the scarcity of surviving evidence from the Middle Ages, it is unrealistic to assume that all the details of medieval costume have, somehow, survived. People conform to fashion by wearing an accepted, general style; they mark their individuality by varying the details within that style. These details change fairly rapidly, some remaining for only a month, others for one or more years. The general styles of
costume, however, change much more slowly. The rapid change in details adorning the more stable general shape is confirmed by Waugh in his study of the construction of women's garments:

Each century, with short transition periods between, has produced its own distinctive style, the fundamental cut remaining constant over a number of years. Changes in details, such as trimmings, draping, accessories, etc., followed one another incessantly. They were used to emphasize the fashion line and to give variety, and they reflected personal taste and the social and artistic background of the period. Changes in cut were much slower, each one evolving from the previous style, and were influenced to a great extent by new textures in materials.7

A study of nineteenth century fashion, with its many surviving details, or a study of current changes in fashion would confirm this method of change, also. For the fourteenth century, only some of the styles and fewer still of the details remain for us to examine. But the changing details and various styles must have been there, or costume would have remained static and everyone would still be wearing aprons like the ones God made for Adam and Eve. Furthermore, given a total uniformity in dress, Chaucer would have had no reason to mention an item such as the Wife of Bath's Sunday hat because the hat would not have been the extraordinary creation it obviously was.

That it is the general shape of costume that is important rather than the minute details of the
shape's construction also can be verified if we compare several representations of a particular medieval style of sleeve. One method by which women of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries might vary a style and yet still follow it can be seen in a comparison of the sleeves in figures 11 through 15. In all the figures, the sleeve is fitted tightly around the wearer's forearm. In other words, the general style included the natural shape of the forearm. But figure 11 shows the sleeve outlining this shape by means of a row of fourteen, closely-spaced buttons and buttonholes, figure 12 by means of lacing on the wrist band and one button further up the forearm. The sleeve in figure 13 is fastened in some manner only at the wrist and its total opening is shorter than the openings in the first two sleeves. The sleeve in figure 14 employs two sets of buttons. In all four, the sleeve of the chemise worn under the gown can be seen through the opening, a detail which became more prominent throughout the fifteenth century until it became a required part of the general style. The sleeve in figure 15, however, shows no trace of the chemise. This sleeve shows only the slim outline of a forearm, with no indication of the opening which allowed it to go over the wrist or of the fastenings which then smoothed it snugly around the forearm. This sleeve was sewn closed at the
wrist after the garment was on and removed by cutting the stitches. 8

The final point to be remembered in studying the costumes represented in medieval paintings is that people accommodate their movements to whatever style is in fashion. Moreover, the movements dictated by these styles are accepted at the time as being properly natural and graceful. The paintings which provide much of our data about fourteenth-century fashion are, as I have pointed out, stylized in some respects. Unless we remember that people learn how to move in whatever garments they choose to cumber themselves, we are likely to dismiss as stylized exaggerations some details which are represented realistically. For example, we might view the long points on the men's shoes in the fourteenth century as an exaggeration, thinking that walking in such shoes would be impossible. However, modern circus clowns move easily, albeit ungracefully by our standards, wearing shoes of a similar style. An example of how people learn new forms of "graceful" movement to accommodate each new fashion is given in the following excerpt, written by a nineteenth-century woman learning to cope with hoops:

About this time the hoopskirt began to be seen above the horizon. On it came, like the nightcap and the hair oil, again disgusting my father. Well, then, all the
women had them. San Francisco and the other towns were quite small then and everybody knew everybody else. The women had to solve the problem of how to seat themselves gracefully with the hoops. They learned by dear experience that if they sat down too suddenly the hoops would fly up. Woman's ingenuity came to the rescue. She sat down sidewise, as she did so giving a delicate little hitch up behind. Hoops ever afterwards were manageable in that respect, but they developed an unpleasant tendency in a new direction. They would occasionally come in contact with the lighter furniture, tipping stands over. But constant use overcame all this; a scarcely perceptible swing and hitch here and there protected most gracefully all intervening obstacles.

A similar tale of mastery undoubtedly could have been told in the late fourteenth century as women learned not to stumble over their long skirts and men learned not to trip over their pointed shoes.

As the guidelines discussed in the preceding paragraphs show, we must interpret the costume evidence provided by medieval artworks in a realistic manner if we wish to know the actual appearance of fourteenth-century costume. First, although medieval painters chose, usually, to represent garments as if they had been made of a rigid substance, we must remember that actual garments were constructed from cloth, which would have behaved in a manner quite different from the artistic representation of it. Second, although medieval painters included some stylized features in their paintings, we cannot assume that every feature is a stylization. The styles
represented (as distinct from the behavior and light-reflecting qualities of the fabric of which they are made), no matter how fantastic they appear, are probably realistic representations of actual garments. Finally, we must remember that the surviving evidence is not a complete record of the costumes worn; each person in the Middle Ages would have added his own details to the prevailing style just as each modern person does. With these guidelines in mind, we can begin to study medieval artworks in order to fill in some of the details of fourteenth-century English costume.

Because using the same example should make my discussion easier to follow and because the question intrigues me, I will begin this search once again with the question of when the wimple became a required part of a widow's costume. This time we will examine the Wife of Bath, who jounces along to Canterbury, her face "ywympled wel" (Gen Prol 470). Is her wimple mentioned as a sign that she is a widow or as an indication of her vanity? That is, is she on the pilgrimage to find her sixth husband or has she almost covered her face to protect her delicate skin from the dust and sun of travel? Perhaps both reasons apply? The first step in solving why she wears the wimple is to determine what women actually were wearing at the time the Prologue was written, because,
as I have pointed out in a previous chapter, we cannot
know what was improper until we know what was proper.

One way to reconstruct what was proper is to
study the clothing of a particular woman as she was
depicted over a number of years and then to compare
her costume with that of other women over the same
time span. For the following study using this method,
the initial woman I chose was the Virgin, because,
quite simply, she is the one woman who can be counted
on to appear and reappear through the centuries.
Concentrating mainly on manuscript miniatures, I
traced her appearance through, roughly, the first
years of the fourteenth century to the first years
of the fifteenth century. I then compared her costume
with the costumes worn by other women, both in the
manuscript miniatures and in the descriptions offered
by fashion historians.\textsuperscript{10}

In the course of the study, I discovered that,
although styles changed during the fourteenth century,
the number of garments worn one over the other remained
constant. To avoid the confusion that arises when
garments are defined by style only, rather than by
function and style both, I have defined the garment
layers in the following manner. The innermost garment
was a long-sleeved, unfitted dress, which I have
called a chemise, the medieval equivalent of the
modern slip. Until the early years of the fifteenth
century, this garment was invisible once a woman was completely dressed. The second garment, which I have called an inner gown, was, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, a loose, floor-length dress, which changed to a fitted dress by the beginning of the fifteenth century. Both styles had long sleeves. How much of the inner gown was visible depended on the style of the third garment, worn over the inner gown, which I have called an outer gown. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the outer gown usually was a cloak; by the beginning of the fifteenth century, it might be one of the several styles, including the houppelande or the jumper-like style shown in figure 4.

Throughout the century under study, the Virgin usually is depicted wearing a costume that varies little in style. Her inner gown has a high, round neckline, long sleeves that are full from shoulder to elbow and tightly fitted on the forearm, and a skirt which trails on the floor. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the body of the inner gown is unfitted and bloused at the waist (figure 16). As the century progresses, the bodice becomes fitted and the sleeves lose their top fullness, but the neckline and skirt length remain constant. The Virgin's outer gown is a cloak, which partially, sometimes wholly, covers her inner gown and, at times,
also covers the veil draped over her hair. Although it is seldom totally uncovered, her hair appears to be always unbound, because the veil hangs smoothly on each side of her face rather than bulging out to accommodate bound hair, as the veilings worn by other women sometimes do (compare figure 16 with figure 17). Her feet are seldom visible; when seen, they are never visible above the instep and always are shod.

When this costume is compared with the costumes of other women from the fourteenth century, the differences are greater than the similarities. In addition, as we approach the year 1400, the differences increase in number. For example, the Virgin seldom wears a wimple until the fifteenth century, although other women in the early fourteenth century covered their necks with wimples. The exceptional cases in which the Virgin was depicted wearing a wimple before the fifteenth century were rendered, usually, by Italian painters, who also depicted other costume details which differ from the details depicted by French and English artists. Nevertheless, even the Italians seldom show a wimpled Virgin before the fifteenth century, when, for a number of years, a wimple was added to the Virgin's costume although it had not returned as a fashionable garment in everyday wear. The late addition of the wimple to the Virgin's costume strongly suggests that the
artists added what was by then an old-fashioned widow's garment to satisfy some perception of historicity or perhaps, when the scene is the Crucifixion, to suggest a sort of widowhood. The addition of a wimple to the Virgin's costume long after it had passed out of fashion also suggests that, when wimples were fashionable, the Virgin did not wear one because, in her humility, she would not have adopted the latest fashions, wearing instead the older, already accepted styles that, by common consent, are always considered more modest.

The other variances between the Virgin's costume and the costumes of other women should be mentioned. The Virgin's unbound hair covered only with a veil remains while the headdresses of other women, with their bound hair, jewelled ornaments, and veilings, are the parts of their costumes that appear to have changed the most rapidly. Again, the Virgin keeps her cloak: at the Nativity it serves as a blanket; at the Crucifixion she pulls it around her in mourning; at the other times it serves as the outergown that all women wore, at least for formal occasions. But while the Virgin's outergown remains a cloak, the outergowns of other women change. They discard the cloak for a sideless gown (figure 4), and then discard this garment, except for very formal occasions, such as a court appearance, for a fitted
one (figure 3) or for a houppelande. All of these changes would have marked the newest fashion. Women probably had two or more styles in their wardrobes; which style they wore depended on the occasion and on their desire to impress their peers. The neckline of the fashionable outergown was cut ever lower as the fourteenth century progressed. The necklines of the innergown and the chemise were hidden by the outergown until, roughly, the second quarter of the fifteenth century. The neckline of the Virgin's innergown, as has been noted, remained high. Sleeves are sometimes shown extending to the knuckles or turned back into a cuff; the Virgin's sleeves always end at her wrists. The fit and length are the only details in the Virgin's costume that seem to have changed with fashionable styles. By the early fifteenth century even this fashionable concession is doubtful, for she is sometimes dressed in a fashionable, fitted innergown which is bloused, unfashionably, at the waist, as if the artists were trying to evoke an earlier style.

My study of the Virgin's costume is not complete, but even at this early stage, the results question the assumption implicit in fashion histories that artists dressed all their characters only in contemporary styles. Whether the Virgin's relatively static clothes were the result of conscious historicism,
the inertia of copying coupled with reverence for the subject, or some other reason, only further study can determine. My study has also demonstrated some of the major style changes, especially the differing styles of the outergown, but it has given no indication of who could wear these styles or of the occasions on which a particular style was acceptable. To get this information, one must compare the details of the costumes depicted in various manuscripts and paintings. This comparison can be bewildering in the variety of details which appear in the garments, but the examination of even one manuscript shows how much can, with patience, be learned. The manuscript I studied is the Holkham Bible Picture Book, drawn in England around 1325 or 1330 by an East Anglian. The styles this artist drew are not necessarily representative of those worn elsewhere in England, but the differentiation of regional variations is far outside the limits of this study and, for a comparison of styles within one manuscript, exactly where the styles were worn need not be considered. The conclusions given here, I cannot stress strongly enough, are tentative; one example is not proof. But the results from this one example indicate that more specific information on fashion than is yet contained in secondary sources can be sifted from the available primary sources.
The Picture Book contains thirty-nine folio-sized sheets with, usually, two or four pictures on each page, showing various Biblical stories beginning with the Creation and ending with the Last Judgement. The women represented are few in number, especially in comparison with the number of men. Several of the women, such as the Virgin, Elizabeth, and Herodias, appear several times. In most cases in which a woman appears more than once, she is dressed in the same costume each time, a practice which provides us with another factor to consider when we are reconstructing actual garments from manuscript representations. Because medieval manuscripts were illustrated for a society that did not take literacy for granted, the characters drawn had to be identifiable without recourse to the text. Therefore, a given character was dressed in a uniform, as it were, throughout a manuscript. The practice appears to have been carried out, to a limited extent, between manuscripts, also. Quite obviously, this practice would have limited the number of styles and amount of detail depicted, but it should not be taken as evidence that variety did not exist.

In the Holkham Bible Picture Book, the innergown worn by all the women is of the same style as the innergown worn by the Virgin Mary in manuscripts from the beginning of the fourteenth century (figure 16).
It has a modestly high (by the standards of the 1980s) and rounded neckline, is unfitted, and has sleeves that are full at the top and fitted from the elbow to the wrist. The fullness at the waist is gathered in with some kind of belting, the style of which is always hidden by the blousing. Aristocratic women's skirts trail on the ground; the skirts of the poorer classes stop at their ankles. The shorter length may have been the result of using less material in fashioning the garment, or it may have been the result of the wearer's pulling a wide fold of material over her belt to free her feet, thereby making movement easier as she worked.

With only a few exceptions, the women wear outergowns, also. The exceptions are women engaged in some fairly strenuous activity, such as the Virgin doing the family laundry (folio 15v), Salome dancing before Herod (folio 21v), and the women selling doves in the temple (folio 26r).

Perhaps in these instances the outergown was laid aside because it hindered the woman as she worked. Two other possibilities suggest themselves, also. First, women such as the sellers at the temple may have been unable to afford outergowns, although this conjecture is weakened by the fact that the widow with the mite (folio 26r) and the woman with the bloody issue (folio 25r) both wear outergowns in spite
of their poverty. But eliminating poverty as a reason suggests the second possibility: that the outergown was required for modesty. With the exception of the temple sellers, the women dressed only in innergowns are inside their homes, a place where one can be informal because no strangers are present. In such a place, less formal dress, even partial undress, is permissible. Outside the home, a properly modest woman would have worn the requisite outergown, innergown, and chemise, no matter how poor she was or how patched the garments. Such reasoning does not account for the temple sellers, unless the painter thought of them as prostitutes as well as dove vendors. As prostitutes, the women would have had sufficient reason to dress immodestly. If this assessment of wearing layered garments to indicate modesty is correct, a rereading of the description of the carpenter's wife (MillT 3233-3270) suggests that Chaucer does not describe more than one garment because Alisoun does not have on an outergown. In fact, the description rather sounds as if she wore only her chemise, additional confirmation of her immodesty and an example of how the description of the clothing can reinforce a characterization.

Having learned from the Picture Book when an outergown is not worn, we can now examine the style of the outergown when it is worn. The outergown is
much more diverse in style than the innergown. The Virgin and Elizabeth always wear floor-length cloaks. The shape of the cloak and how a woman secured it on her shoulders is never clear.\textsuperscript{17} Herodias (folios 16v, 17r, 21r, 21v) and Salome, when she presents John's head to Herodias (folio 21v) wear sleeveless outergowns (figure 17). Some of the poorer women, such as Anastace (folio 12v), wear outergowns whose sleeves end about midforearm (figure 18). The outergown of the widow with the mite has sleeves which end in short trains at her elbows (as shown on Christine's outergown, figure 10). Openings other than the sleeves and necklines are not visible on the outergowns, except for buttons that extend halfway up the side of the outergown of the woman of Samaria (folio 24v). The outergowns of the poor women are shorter than their innergowns; those of the rich completely cover the skirts of their innergowns. This difference in length may have been governed by the amount of material each woman could afford to buy or it may have been dictated by the amount of work each woman had to do. The shorter length would have given more freedom to the movements of a worker. With so many styles on so few women, it is impossible even to speculate about whether a given style was worn exclusively by aristocratic or by lower-class women. But the combination of the reputation of
Herodias and the fact that the banquet shown is a court banquet suggests that her sleeveless outergown was one of the newest styles known to the painter.

The coiffures of the women are more varied than their outergowns and so offer even less chance for any general conclusions. However, although the manuscript offers too much variety for me to make any generalizations, a comparative study of the hairstyle and headdress on each woman in the Picture Book with the feminine hairstyles and headdresses pictured in other manuscripts might eventually show the significance of the braid bound with gold that falls down Criseyde's back (TC 5.809-812). Was it the newest fashion at court, thereby emphasizing her inconstancy, her willingness to adopt what was newest at hand? Or was it a style no longer worn, which Chaucer had seen on a statue or in a painting and included to add a touch of history to his story? Was it, perhaps, the hairstyle sported by London streetwalkers?

I began my discussion of the Virgin's costume and of the costumes depicted in the Holkham Bible Picture Book with the question of why the Wife of Bath wears a wimple on her pilgrimage and have ended with a question about Criseyde's hairstyle. Neither question can be answered with the evidence currently available for the history of costume. However, the brief study that I have been able to carry out and
have discussed in my description of the costumes in the Picture Book indicates that patient research may lead to the answers to these questions. In this chapter I have been concerned only with sources external to Chaucer's works. My next chapter will discuss how we can use internal evidence from these works to learn part of the meaning behind his costume references. In using clothing as an indicator of character, an author often uses the same garment to carry the same connotations throughout his work. Perhaps a comparison of the garments worn by different Chaucerian women would add something to our knowledge of Chaucer's use of costume. I will explore such a comparison in the next chapter, using the character of Criseyde as the center of the comparison.
The Costumes of Chaucerian Women

Among the women in Chaucer's poetry are the aristocratic women, such as Emilye of Knight's Tale and the Duchess of the Book of the Duchess, who are idealized beauties, ever constant in love. There are the lower class women, also, such as Alisoun, of the Miller's Tale, and May, of the Merchant's Tale, ever ready to sleep with men other than their husbands. Most of Chaucer's company of secular, mortal women fit into one of these two categories. Criseyde, who is numbered among the ladies but who also is numbered among the inconstant, does not. This contradiction of Criseyde's rank and actions has caused much debate about Chaucer's intentions in his presentation of Criseyde: is she presented as a victim or an accomplice; is she a person or only a symbol?¹ In all of these discussions, no one seems to have considered the possibility that her costume might be a pointer towards Chaucer's intentions. The oversight is understandable; Chaucer mentions costume infrequently throughout Troilus and Criseyde, and if we consider these references by themselves they indicate very little, either about Criseyde's character or about Chaucer's use of
costume in general. But if we compare Chaucer's references to Criseyde's costume with his references to the costume of other of his women, we can learn something of Chaucer's general use of costume. Such a comparison does not help much in the debate over Criseyde's character, however. So far as I can determine, the costume Chaucer gives her coincides with the costume of his other ladies; in this area, she does not step over the social bounds.

The following comparison of Chaucerian costumes is an exploratory one, intended only to show the possibilities of such a study. In making this study, I am aware that I risk being accused of practicing a method of research after having strongly criticized it in chapter 2 of my discussion. Not only will I speculate about social practices from a literary base, but I will cite as authorities some of those fashion historians and critics I have so severely criticized. In addition, some of my claims may not be adequately documented because they are based on knowledge I have absorbed over the years from sources now forgotten. I can only plead that this discussion is not a definitive study and that, at present, I have no other resources.

My discussion of Criseyde's costume begins with an examination of her formal portraits, which Chaucer provides in several places throughout *Troilus and*
Criseyde. The complete formal portrait in medieval rhetoric included a head-to-toe description of a character's physical appearance, followed by a description of his or her costume, followed by a catalog of his or her moral qualities. Neither in Troilus and Criseyde nor elsewhere in his poetry does Chaucer use the complete formal portrait, but the pieces of it that he does include usually contain one or two references to the character's costume. The formal portrait of a character is thus the most promising place to begin a study of that character's costume. In the case of Criseyde, Chaucer scattered parts of her portrait throughout his tale, beginning with three sections in Book 1.

The first description of Criseyde occurs immediately after we are told that her father has deserted to the Greek camp:

Criseyde was this lady name al right.
As to my doom, in al Troies cite
Nas non so fair, for passynge every wight
So aungelik was hir natif beaute,
That lik a thing inmortal semed she,
As doth an hevenyssh perfit creature,
That down were sent in scornynge of nature.

(TC 1.99-105)

The second picture is given as she stands in the temple:

Among thise othere folk was Criseyda,
In widewes habit blak; but natheles,
Right as oure firste lettre is now an A,
In beaute first so stood she, makeles.
Hire goodly lokyng gladed al the prees.
Nas nevere yet seyn thyng to ben preysed derre,
Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre

As was Criseyde, as folk seyde everichone
That hir behelden in hir blake wede.
And yet she stood ful lowe and stille allone,
Byhynden other folk, in litel brede,
And neigh the dore, ay undre shames drede,
Simple of atir and debonaire of chere,
With ful assured lokyng and manere.

(TC 1.169-182)

Then Troilus sees her, giving Chaucer an opportunity
to add to her description:

She nas nat with the leste of hir stature,
But alle hire lYffies so wel answerynge
Weren to wommanhod, that creature
Was nevere lasse mannyssh in semynge.
And ek the pure wise of hir mevynge
Shewed wel that men myght in hir gesse
Honour, estat, and wommanly noblesse.

( TC 1.281-289)

The next portrait is given on the first night she and
Troilus are together:

Hire armes smale, hire streghte bak and softe,
Hire sydes longe, flesshly, smothe, and white
He gan to stroke, and good thrift bad ful ofte
Hire snowisshe throte, hire brestes rounde
and lite. . . . (TC 3.1247-1250)

She is described for the last time after she has moved
from Troy to the Greek camp:

Criseyde mene was of hire stature,
Therto of shap, of face, and ek of cheere,
Ther myghte ben no fairer creature.
And ofte tYffie this was hire manere,
To gon ytressed with hire heres clere
Doun by hire coler at hire bak byhynde,
Wich with a thred of gold she wolde bynde.
Although these descriptions take up a number of lines, little specific information is provided. We know, quite definitely, that Criseyde is unsurpassed in beauty, except for her flawed eyebrows. She is feminine, knows the social graces, and has soft, white skin. The problem is that most of the terms do not evoke precise images. For example, what does the phrase "goodly of hire speche in general" mean? Does it mean she had a pleasant voice, that she knew how to make polite conversation, or only that she usually did not use profanity? Chaucer's audience would have had a better idea than I have at present. Descriptive phrases such as "[s]o aungelik was hir natif beautee" give an impression only, which each reader fills in with his own ideal, as the discussion of the Duchess will demonstrate. Even phrases which seem specific, such as "armes smale," leave much to individual imagining.
The only information about Criseyde's costume given in the portraits is that she dresses as a widow and that, during her stay in the Greek camp, she wears her hair in a braid hanging down her back. Little else is said about her clothes in the rest of the poem. She puts on silk widow's garments to call on Hector; she gives a ring and brooch to Troilus (TC 3.1368-1372) and a brooch and sleeve to Diomede (TC 5.1040-1043); Diomede takes a glove from her (TC 5.1013). At one point while he is describing Troilus's love for her, Pandarus urges Criseyde to take off her widow's barbe (TC 2.110) and widow's weeds (TC 2.222). Perhaps she followed his advice because, when she learns she has been ransomed she vows (in the privacy of her bedroom) that, henceforward, she will wear black in token of her sorrow (TC, 4. 778-779), a decision that implies that she has not been wearing black. But we can only guess whether Criseyde has been wearing black, because Chaucer does not describe her clothes when she dines at the house of Deiphebus, on her first or last night with Troilus, or when she rides to the Greek camp. Not all of his sources for the story of Troilus are so reticent. For example, in the Roman de Troie, Benoît de St. Maure describes in great detail the costume that Briseida wears when she rides to the Greek camp. Perhaps Chaucer included fewer costume details because his
original audience was familiar with his sources and he expected them to supply the details he omitted. Some evidence that Chaucer expected his audience to supply settings from their own knowledge can be found in his poetry. For example, the Squire, rather than interrupting his story with a lengthy account of a feast, tells his audience that they know the details already:

What nedeth yow rehercen hire array?
Ech man wot wel that at a kynges feeste
Hath plente to the meeste and to the leeste,
And deyntees mo than been in my knowyng.
(SqT 298-301)

Romances such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* usually include extensive descriptions of clothing, feasts, and tournaments. Comments such as the one from the Squire's Tale imply that Chaucer knew his original audience was expecting such a description, but thought it unnecessary to repeat what had been rehearsed so many times before.

As a rule, Chaucer ignores a character's costume. When he does mention costume, the reference does not always have a dramatic place in the story but is part of the tradition of the costume descriptions in romances. One example is the description of Dido as she sets out with Aeneas on a hunt:

Upon a thikke palfrey, paper-whit,
With sadel red, enbrouded with delyt,
Of gold the barres up enbosede hye,
Sit Dido, al in gold and perre wrye;
And she as fair as is the bryghte morwe,
That heleth syke folk of nyghtes sorwe.

(LGW 1198-1203)

With such descriptions, the poet and, presumably, his audience appear to have been concerned as much with the marvelous riches of the world of the story as they were with the plot of the story.\(^4\) However, Chaucer's mention of costume frequently does have a dramatic place in his tale, furthering the plot or emphasizing a person's characteristics. In Troilus and Criseyde, costume references usually help the action along, although their meanings are not all evident today. Sometimes the meanings implicit in a reference to a garment are complex, even though the reference seems, on first reading, to be incidental.

Included among the costume references related to Criseyde is the incident in Deiphebus's house in which Criseyde is led by means of a "lappe" of her clothing to see Troilus (TC 3.59). Later, in a parallel incident, Troilus is led by means of a "lappe" into Criseyde's bedroom (TC 3.742). In both cases, it is Pandarus who catches the "lappe," leading each one, on a sort of leash, to meet the other. The Oxford English Dictionary defines "lappe" as a part of a garment loose enough to be raised, folded, or seized, either the lower part of a skirt or shirt; a loose, hanging sleeve, or the tippet of a sleeve.
Whatever part of their garments Pandarus seized, it served to get each participant into the room where Pandarus wanted her or him, the action thus highlighting Pandarus's rule as an eager, even aggressive, go-between, helping to set the stage for the physical force he has to use to get Troilus into Criseyde's bed at last. (TC. 3.1097) That each one had to be led accents his or her reluctance to meet the other, a reluctance which could be either a proper lover's shyness or coy dissimulation. If "lappe" is to be understood as referring to the skirt of Criseyde's dress or Troilus's shirt, the reference may be a sexual innuendo, also.

Some references to costume have much simpler meanings than the references to "lappe". The glove which Diomede takes from Criseyde, for example, probably functions as no more than a gift, presumably not beyond the degree of intimacy allowed at this stage of the game (TC 5.1050). But if the glove is an improperly intimate gift, the action shows an indecorous haste on the part of Criseyde that contradicts the narrator's protests of her reserve (TC 5.1086-1092). Such an interpretation assumes that Diomede takes a glove he is offered by Criseyde rather than one he steals without her knowledge, a point which the text of the poem does not make clear.

Answers to the questions of whether the gift
of the glove and whether Criseyde's reluctance to see Troilus at the house of Deiphbus are proper would help in answering the question of whether Chaucer has presented Criseyde as a victim or an accomplice. The implications of the other gifts Criseyde offers to her lovers would help determine Chaucer's attitude, also. Pandarus clearly considers the blue ring Criseyde offers to moderate the woe of Troilus as an inadequate gift (TC 3.885-893). Whether the reader is to consider it inadequate is not clear. The narrator clearly disapproves of Criseyde giving Diomede the brooch Troilus gave her. But whether he disapproves because the brooch had been a gift from Troilus or because Criseyde should not have given Diomede any gift at all is not clear. Nor is it clear whether the reader, as well as the narrator, is to disapprove of the nature of the gift. All these actions by Criseyde are part of the medieval ritual which today we call courtly love, a conceit so entangled with our fancies of what it should have been that we may never understand its position in the Middle Ages. Until we do know its position and rules, we cannot know whether Criseyde's actions are proper or whether Chaucer, when he wrote Troilus and Criseyde, was writing a poem which lauded or derided a convention. Since reliable research does not yet exist, I must leave the question of the propriety of
Criseyde's gifts and shyness unanswered for the present.

My inability so far to find reliable secondary studies on a particular area of medieval society also has prevented my investigation into the meanings of several costume references concerning marriage and widowhood. The first reference occurs during the first night Troilus and Criseyde spend together. Sometime during these hours, they playfully exchange rings (TC 3.1368), a reference which has been construed to mean that they were secretly married. This interpretation may or may not be true, but the line does, for some reason, evoke the marriage ceremony. Chaucer also emphasizes the fact that Criseyde is a widow. When he first introduces her, Chaucer mentions that Criseyde is a widow (TC 1.97); when she flees to Hector, Chaucer refers to her widowed state again (TC 1.109); three times in Book 1 he refers to Criseyde's black garments (TC 1.170, 177, 309); Troilus refers to her black garments in his prayer to the god of love (TC 2.533-534); when he first tells Criseyde of Troilus's love for her, Pandarus urges her to take off her widow's barbe (TC 2.110) and widow's dress (TC 2.122). This emphasis on her widowed state may mean, in the context of the story, that the only woman who properly can have an extramarital affair is a widow. On the other hand, the
significance may lie in the color black, rather than the fact that she is a widow. But the significance of the exchange of rings and of Criseyde as a widow cannot be determined at present because both require knowledge of the marriage customs of the Middle Ages. The studies of medieval marriage practices that I have found offer a tangle of conflicting opinions. Each author appears to have approached his sources with a preconceived idea of medieval marriage customs, usually based on a nineteenth- or twentieth-century ideal of romantic love. Working from his preconceived idea, each author has noticed in the primary sources only those laws or other references which support his idea. Discussions stemming from such research claim to present a complete view of medieval marriage customs, but do not. More balanced studies must be available before anything new on Criseyde's widowhood can be added to Chaucerian scholarship. It is also possible that Chaucer is referring to what he believed were practices of ancient Troy, contributing a touch of historical authenticity.

Although present outside sources are of little help in studying Chaucer's use of costume, we can learn some details if we confine ourselves to his poetry only, comparing the costumes of different characters. The remainder of my discussion, therefore, concentrates on this aspect, comparing Criseyde's
costume with the costumes of the other women in Chaucer's tales.

The final portrait of Criseyde contains a description of her hair, bound with a gold thread, hanging down her back (TC 5.810-812). This hair style is worn by only two other women in Chaucer's poetry. In the **Parliament of Fowls**, Venus lies in bed:

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Hyre gilte heres with a golden thred
Ibounden were, untressed as she lay. . . .
(PF 267-268)
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In the Knight's Tale, Emilye walks in a garden one day in May with her blond hair:

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broyded in a tresse
Bihynde hir bak, a yerde longe, I gesse.
(KnT 1049-1050)
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One of Chaucer's sources for both the Knight's Tale and **The Parliament of Fowls** was Boccaccio's *Teseida*, whose Venus wears a similar hairstyle.\(^9\) Chaucer uses the hairstyle from the *Teseida* for his Venus and transfers it also to Emilye, providing a direct connection between the goddess of love and Emilye, who, although a follower of Diana, is the cause of a battle for love. Chaucer wrote *The Parliament of Fowls* around 1382. Around 1386, he wrote *Troilus and Criseyde*.\(^{10}\) Remembering the hairstyle from the *Teseida*, he gave it to Criseyde in a description which immediately precedes her infidelity to Troilus,
once again providing a direct link between his heroine and the goddess of love. How many members of his audience would have recognized the connection would have depended on how many were familiar with the sources he used.

In addition to emphasizing their role in the love game, Chaucer may have given Emilye and Criseyde the long braid as a touch of historical authenticity for tales set in ancient Athens and Troy. Various lines in his poetry demonstrate his awareness that customs of different times and countries are not the same. For example, there is the apology at the beginning of Book 2 of *Troilus and Criseyde* in which he notes that both speech and courtship customs have changed (TC 2.22-49). Diomede, in the first conversation recorded between him and Criseyde, asks if the "Grekis gise" is strange to her (TC 5.860-861). In the Knight's Tale, Emilye and her maidens prepare for the sacrifice to Diana "as was the gyse" (KnT 2279) and Emilye walks in the funeral procession:

> With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse. (KnT 2911)

The fire is for Arcite's funeral pyre, a custom which was not a part of a fourteenth-century English funeral. Finally, Lucrece, after she has been raped, sits in her house:
In addition to his awareness that customs change, Chaucer may have regarded Boccaccio as an accurate historical source. The *Teseida* was not written until around 1339, but Chaucer may have known that Boccaccio had based his story on more ancient sources and thought the hairstyle came from one of these sources. Chaucer also may have seen the hairstyle on an old statue or in an old painting, a visual record of a style from a bygone era. When he set the Knight's Tale and *Troilus and Criseyde* in olden times, he may have added the old hairstyle to make the setting more authentic.

Other critics, notably Bloomfield, have also recognized some of the references in Chaucer's poetry that indicate a sense of history. In his discussion of Chaucer's historical perception, Bloomfield asserts that Chaucer was far ahead of his contemporaries in his comprehension that customs change from century to century. Bloomfield also points out that, because Chaucer's historical knowledge was incomplete, he included anachronisms in his tales set in ancient times. Although I agree that Chaucer added authentic historical touches to some of his tales, I cannot agree with Bloomfield's other two points. Chaucer's historical perspective cannot have been that far in...
advance of his contemporaries. He would not have included phrases such as "as was that tyme the gyse" (KnT 2911) if he had not thought that at least some of his original audience would have understood them. Additionally, when he included descriptions of customs such as the funeral pyre of Arcite, surely all his audience recognized that these customs differed from the ones they practiced. I doubt that the medieval sense of history was the same as ours (which is sometimes obsessive in its demand for authenticity), but Bloomfield's discussion of anachronisms in Chaucer's work, with its implication that modern writers are historically accurate, is misplaced. Our use of historical settings is not so accurate as we pride ourselves that it is. We tend to place King Arthur in a fifteenth century setting, when Mallory collected the legends, rather than in the more appropriate sixth century. In her discussion of historical costume in the theater, Hollander notes that, usually, only one particular part of a costume is required to satisfy our perception of historical authenticity. An Elizabethan without a neck ruff, for example, will be viewed as inaccurately dressed, even though Elizabethan costume did include styles without ruffs. Conversely, a man with a ruff will be viewed as an Elizabethan even if the rest of his costume is from the seventeenth century.15 As a
final example, scholars now tell us that they can find no evidence that the Vikings ever wore the horned helmets which are considered essential in any representation of Viking costume. I could add to the list, but these few examples should adequately demonstrate that we, as well as Chaucer, incorporate anachronisms into historical settings.

Criseyde's hair is mentioned twice more in addition to the reference in her final portrait. Learning that she is to be traded to the Greeks, Criseyde goes to her room and, throwing herself on her bed:

Hire ownded heer, that sonnyssh was of hewe,  
She rente, and ek hire fyngeres longe and smale  
She wrong ful ofte, and bad God on hire rewe,  
And with the deth to doon boote on hire bale.  

(TC 4.736-739)

Later, when Pandarus arrives with the message from Troilus, he finds a thoroughly distraught woman:

for with hire salte teris  
Hire brest, hire face, ybathed was ful wete.  
The myghty tresses of hire sonnysshe heeris,  
Unbroiden, hangen al aboute hire eeris;  
Which yaf hym verray signal of martire  
Of deth, which that hire herte gan desire.  

(TC 4.814-819)

Other women mourn in a similar manner. The women in the Knight's Tale are "cracchynge" their cheeks and "rentynge" their hair as they lament the death of Arcite (KnT 2834). Ariadne, finding that Theseus
has deserted her, cries:

"I am betrayed!" and hire her torente,  
And to the stronde barefot faste she  
wente. . . . (LGW 2188-2189)

Eventually, she faints, falling on a rock. Dido begs  
Aneas not to leave her:

She falleth hym to fote and swouneth ther,  
Dischevele, with hire bryghte gilte her,  
And seyth, "Have mercy! and let me with  
yow ryde!" (LGW 1314-1316)

Lucrece sits:

by hire beddes side  
Dischevele, for no malyce she ne thoughte;  
And softe wolle our bok seyth that she wroughte  
To kepen hire from slouthe and idelnesse. . . .  
(LGW 1719-1722)

After she is raped, Lucrece calls her friends and  
family to her:

And al dischevele, with hire heres cleere,  
In habit swich as women used tho  
Unto the buryinge of hire frendes go,  
She sit in halle with a sorweful sighte.  
(LGW 1829-1832)

With one exception, all these situations are ones of  
deep sorrow. The exception is that of Lucrece at her  
bedside. The "dischevele" in this case may mean that  
Lucrece is in dishabille as well as having her hair  
disarranged, but whether the word refers to garments,  
hair, or both, she is in this disarray because she  
is in the privacy of her own room, surrounded only by
her woman servants. It is worthy of note that, as with Susannah and the elders, evil deeds are instigated by the sight of a woman who, in privacy, has disrobed herself. In the rest of the situations cited, for some reason Chaucer felt it necessary to draw his audience's attention to the manner in which these women mourn. All the women, including Criseyde, are from classical times, so the descriptions of mourning may be historical touches - scratching of cheeks and tearing of hair suggest customs more primitive than those of fourteenth-century England. Perhaps the point is that Chaucer considered these mourning customs to be superior to the customs practiced in his day. Of course, some of the women may be following the correct ritual and some may not. Almost all of the women are brought to grief by their husbands: Dido supplicates a husband who is in the act of deserting her; Ariadne mourns a husband who has already deserted her; Lucrece mourns the dishonor she feels she has brought on her husband and, probably, her own death; Emilye bewails the death of her husband and the women with her are lamenting the same death. In contrast, Criseyde sobs merely for the loss of a lover. And, again, with the exception of Criseyde, all the women mourn publicly. Perhaps Criseyde is being melodramatic and her desire for martyrdom emphasizes her overwrought condition. Whether the
privacy of Criseyde's grief is significant is unclear. She does not want her love affair with Troilus to become public knowledge. If she had wrung her hands, torn her hair, and sobbed in public, people undoubtedly would have demanded an explanation of her as they do of Lucrece (LGW 1833). On the other hand, Chaucer may be disapproving of both the affair and its secrecy. A possible substantiation of the impropriety of Criseyde's grief may be the fact that all Chaucer's ladies, except Criseyde, faint when great sorrow overcomes them. In Troilus and Criseyde, it is Troilus who swoons, the only Chaucerian knight who does so. I am not in agreement with the theory of a role reversal between Troilus and Criseyde, but the discrepancy between their actions and the actions of the rest of the Chaucerian nobility does suggest the possibility that Troilus and Criseyde are not perfect types of the hero and heroine.

Earlier, I noted that although the various pieces of Criseyde's formal portrait add several stanzas to the poem, they give few specific details about her appearance, offering instead a general impression of great beauty and a lady-like demeanor. If we compare Criseyde's portrait to the portraits of the other ladies in Chaucer's tales, we find that a generalized description which seldom mentions costume is the rule. The description of the Duchess
(BD 817-1041), the most complete portrait of a lady found in Chaucer's works, is the best example from which to work.

As both Kittredge and Bronson have observed, the portrait of the Duchess is not in the order dictated by the rhetorical formula for character descriptions, which started from the head and descended, feature by feature, to the toes, then to the moral qualities of a character. However, as Scharr observes, and as a comparison of the portrait of the Duchess with any other Chaucerian portrait demonstrates, none of Chaucer's portraits follow the conventional order. Kiernan notes that medieval poets other than Chaucer also deviated from the rhetorical formula for a character's description.

In view of this evidence, I doubt that the lack of order is important to a study of the Duchess's character, although it may be important to a study of the literary history of medieval romances. What is important here for a study of characterization through costume is that the poet takes roughly one hundred twenty-five lines to describe this woman and never once mentions her clothing. In fact, the entire poem does not mention any garments worn by the Duchess. The only detail mentioned which is included in our definition of costume is that her hair is the color of gold (BD 855-858). If we compare her description
with the ideal medieval beauty, we can conclude that the Duchess probably would have been considered a beauty. Her description continues to charm critics today who, following the suggestion inherent in the general terms used, fill in their own ideal of beauty. If these critics studied medieval paintings and illuminations, however, instead of relying solely on mental images conjured by words, they might reconsider their assumption that ideals of feminine beauty have not changed. For example, the eyes of the Duchess are described as opening "by measure," a trait which the poet emphasizes is natural to her, not a "countrefeted thyng." If these lines describe the half-closed, almond-shaped eyes of the women in medieval art, the description may charm twentieth-century ears, but its actual form does not charm twentieth-century eyes. Other details in the artworks are equally at variance with the twentieth-century conception of beauty, causing me to doubt that we would consider the Duchess a beauty if we could see her instead of only reading about her.

Comparing the portrait of the Duchess to those of Chaucer's other noble women (with the exception of Criseyde), we find that they are described in the same manner as the Duchess; that is, if a description progresses further than a line or two mentioning the lady's perfect beauty in general terms, it is to
comment on her physical and mental characteristics with little mention of her costume. Often a lady's portrait consists of only one or two lines. Cleopatra is "fayr as is the rose in May" (LGW 613); Dorigen is "oon the faireste under sonne" (FrT 1734). In both cases, the one line is sufficient description for the purposes of the story; we hear no more of either lady's appearance or costume. In his discussion of medieval ideals of beauty, Curry notes that late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century poets often impatiently dispensed with the lengthy formal descriptions found in earlier romances so that they could continue with the action of their stories. 23

The shortness of most of Chaucer's formal portraits may be, in part, a result of this practice, an effort to follow the precept he set forth to excuse himself from describing Cleopatra's wedding:

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The weddynge and the feste to devyse,
To me, that have ytake swich empryse
Of so many a story for to make,
It were to longe, lest that I shulde slake
Of thyng that bereth more effect and charge;
For men may overlade a ship or barge.
And forthy to th'effect thanne wol I skyppe,
And al the remenaunt, I wol lete it slippe.
(LGW 616-623)
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But impatience probably was not his only reason. He expected his audience to fill in details of the portraits for themselves, as in the example from the Squire's Tale given earlier. He also appears, in
most cases, to have been tailoring the lady's de-
scription to fit the requirements of plot; what
Chaucer describes of each lady depends on what the
story requires of her. For example, Emilye's physical
appearance is emphasized, including a few lines about
her costume:

That Emelye, that fairer was to sene
Than is the lylie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures newe—
For with the rose colour stroof hire hewe,
I noot which was the fyner of hem two—
Er it were day, as was hir wone to do,
She was arisen and al redy dight . . .
Yclothed was she fressh, for to devyse:
Hire yelow heer was broyded in a tresse
Bihynde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse.
And in the gardyn, at the sonne upryste,
She walketh up and down, and as hire liste
She gadereth floures, party white and rede,
To make a subtil gerland for hire hede;
And as an aungel hevenysshly she soong.
(KnT 1035-1055)

The physical description fits Emilye's role in the
Knight's Tale: she is a body given in marriage with
no extraordinary call made on her virtue or moral
stamina. Constance, on the other hand, requires a
vast reservoir of moral, virtuous stamina, so her
moral qualities are emphasized:

To rekene as wel hire goodnesse as beautee,
Nas nevere swich another as is shee.
I prey to God in honour hire susteene,
And wolde she were of al Europe the queene.

In hire is heigh beautee, withoute pride,
Yowthe, withoute grenehede or folye;
To alle hire werkes vertu is hir gyde;
Humblesse hath slayn in hire al tirannye.
She is mirour of alle curteisy;
Hir herte is verray chambre of hoolynesse,
Hir hand, ministre of fredam for almesse.

(ML 158-168)

Constance has need of all these virtues as well as of a patience surpassing that of Job as she is twice married, twice accused of murder, once assaulted by a would-be lover, and three times cast adrift on the sea.

If we study the portrait of the Duchess once again, we find that, although the description is lengthy, it, too, is tailored to suit the needs of the narration. This portrait is a tribute to a woman whom the audience will not be able to observe reacting to the various pressures of a plot because she is dead. Therefore, a full recounting of her physical, mental, and moral attributes is necessary in the portrait. In this picture, any mention of clothing is superfluous for two reasons. First, the Duchess is described as being moderate in all things (BD 881-882), so she must have dressed in moderation, also, clothing herself in a manner appropriate to her position and to each occasion, eliciting no comment. Second, as she is dead, her unchanging qualities are what are praised; clothing is ever-changeable.

As we have seen, in the formal portraits of his heroines, Chaucer supplies us with very little
information about the wardrobes of the ladies. Throughout each tale he continues, for the most part, to ignore their costume; apparently all of his ladies dressed as appropriately as the Duchess. Occasionally, the plot requires that some detail of a lady's costume be mentioned. For example, Thisbe hastens to her tryst with Piramus:

> With hire face ywympled subtyly. . . .

(LGW 797)

This detail is mentioned because her wimple is the bloodstained garment which convinces Piramus that she is dead. As Constance goes to the sea to be set adrift for the second time, we watch an act of motherly tenderness that, while incidentally disclosing that her costume includes a coverchief, emphasizes her concern for others over herself:

> Her litel child lay wepyng in hir arm,  
  And knelynge, pitously to hym she seyde,  
  "Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee noon harm."  
  With that hir coverchief of hir heed  
     she breyde,  
  And over his litel eyen she it leyde,  
  And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,  
  And into heavene hire eyen up she caste.  

(MLT 834-840)

Cenobia is paraded, captive, before the Romans in a costume mentioned because it emphasizes the difference between her present and past states:
Earlier in her story we are told of her rich costumes in a description of her which emphasizes her great skill in war, her great riches, and her great learning:

I seye, so worshipful a creature,
And wys therwith, and large with mesure,
So penyble in the werre, and curteis eke,
Ne moore labour myghte in werre endure,
Was noon, though al this world men sholde seke.

Hir riche array ne myghte nat be told,
As wel in vessel as in hire clothynge,
She was al clad in perree and in gold,
And eek she lafte noght, for noon huntyng,
To have of sondry tonges ful knowynge,
Whan that she leyser hadde; and for to entende
To lerne bookes was al hire likyng,
How she in vertu myghte hir lyf dispende.

In addition to emphasizing her skills and her captivity, there is, in both of these descriptions of Cenobia, an echo, also, of the practice I have remarked on earlier in regard to the description of Dido going hunting; that is, the costumes, fighting prowess, and learning are described to show the marvels of another world rather than to aid in plot development.

Plot development and marvelous sights are the usual reasons that Chaucer mentions a lady's costume. He does not often mention it as an illumination of her character; for character portrayal he prefers to enumerate the points of her physical appearance and
her moral qualities. If we compare this treatment with his treatment of Criseyde, we find that much the same thing applies. The pieces of Criseyde's formal portrait emphasize her physical beauty and her virtues. She does not, to be sure, possess virtues equal to those of Constance, but they do compare favorably with those of the Duchess. In one of his discussions of Criseyde's character, Donaldson points out that Chaucer intended his audience to understand that Criseyde had only the appearance of virtue, citing as evidence Chaucer's use of the word "gesse" in relation to her character (TC 1.288-289). Men might think her honorable, Donaldson concludes, but Chaucer's wording in this line declares that they would be wrong. The point is worth considering, but the rest of her description is so positive (except, of course, for her flawed eyebrows in Book 5) that I doubt that the use of the word "gesse" is that significant. My doubt is increased by the fact that the poem was written for a society in which one might be as likely to hear a story as to read it for one's self, a society in which large numbers of exactly-duplicated, printed texts were not available for readers to pore over, carefully weighing each word.

When details of Criseyde's costume are mentioned, they add information relevant to the plot. The main emphasis on costume, as I discussed earlier, is the
fact that she is dressed in compliance with her widowed state, a point which appears to be important to the story's development but which, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter, cannot be explored at present because of lack of evidence. Her hairstyle in Book 5, and her brown, silk widow's dress in Book 1, may or may not be indications of character traits which would separate her from the ladies. Her hairstyle links her to Venus and does so in the narrative immediately before Criseyde's infidelity to Troilus. The link may point only to the fact that Criseyde is the woman in a game of love, but it might also point to the fact that Criseyde's nature is as wanton as that of Venus. A comparison of the mannerisms of Chaucer's ladies and of his common women with those of Criseyde might shed some light on this problem. Licentiousness is a quality of Chaucer's common women, usually shown by their actions rather than by their costumes. Pride is another failing of these common women, and, in her wearing a brown dress to Hector's court, Chaucer may be indicating that Criseyde has a pride equal to theirs.

Comparing his treatment of his ladies to his treatment of his common women, we find that Chaucer treats each class in an entirely different manner. In particular, the wardrobes of the common women
receive much more attention than those of the ladies.

Chaucer does not describe many common women. From those few that he describes I have excluded two: the Prioress and May of the Merchant's Tale. It is uncertain whether the Prioress was of noble birth or not; but her position in life if she had not entered a convent is irrelevant. Chaucer presents her as a religious, not a member of the laity. As such, she would have been expected to conform to rules of costuming that differed from the rules followed by secular women. My discussion, as I observed at the beginning of this chapter, is concerned with secular women. Although we are told that she is "of smal degree" (MerchT 1625), May is, oddly enough, described in the general, physical terms used for a noble heroine, having such characteristics as fresh beauty, wise governance, and womanly bearing (MerchT 1601-1604). Although we are left in no doubt at the end of the story that she is of common stock, her description and costume are those of a lady; therefore, I have excluded her as too atypical for my discussion. She is almost in the same class as Criseyde, except that Chaucer is not half so clear as to what opinion we are to have of Criseyde.

For a study of the typical common woman, the description of Alisoun, the wife in the Miller's Tale, is best, because it is the most complete:
Fair was this yonge wyf, and therwithal  
As any wezele hir body gent and smal.  
A ceynt she werede, barred al of silk,  
A barmclooth eek as whit as morne milk  
Upon hir lendes, ful of many a goore.  
Whit was hir smok, and broyden al bifoore  
And eek bihynde, on hir coler aboute,  
Of col-blak silk, withinne and eek withoute.  
The tapes of hir white voluper  
Were of the same suyte of hir coler;  
Her filet brood of silk, and set ful hye.  
And sikerly she hadde a likerous ye;  
Ful smale ypulled were hire browes two,  
And tho were bent and blake as any sloo.  
She was ful moore blisful on to see  
Than is the newe pere-jonette tree,  
And softer than the wolle is of a wether.  
And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether,  
Tasseled with silk, and perled with latoun.  
In al this world, to seken up and doun,  
There nys no man so wys that koude thenche  
So gay a popelote or swich a wenche.  
Ful brighter was the shynyng of hir hewe  
Than in the Tour the noble yforged newe.  
But of hir song, it was as loude and yerne  
As any swalwe sittynge on a berne.  
Therto she koude skippe and make game,  
As any kyde or calf folwynge his dame.  
Hir mouth was sweete as bragot or the meeth,  
Or hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.  
Wynsynge she was, as is a joly colt,  
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.  
A brooch she baar upon hir lowe coler,  
As brood as is the boos of a bokeler.  
Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye.  
She was a prymerole, a piggesnye,  
For any lord to leggen in his bedde,  
Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.  
(MillT 3233-3270)

The main difference between this description and  
Chaucer's descriptions of ladies becomes obvious  
from the third line. Although the woman is fair to  
look upon, suddenly it is her clothing, not her body,  
that receives the most emphasis. We find ourselves  
looking, not at fair, white skin and a smooth, round
neck, but at a silk belt and headband, an embroidered collar, and a beaded, tasseled, leather purse. The emphasis on clothing is typical of the other of Chaucer's descriptions of common women, all of whom are disposed of in far fewer lines. To sharpen the contrast with the ladies, Chaucer never gives us a list of the moral qualities of common women. We see them in action—cunning, deceiving, and unfaithful. We see or hear of no other qualities.

Perhaps Alisoun is described so completely because her description is a parody of the lengthy descriptions of noble heroines. Even something about her manners is included, although her loud, lively singing voice lacks the sweetness of the voice of the Duchess or the angelic tones of the voice of Emilye. Almost every other feature is set in opposition to the features of the noble heroine, also. Although she is fair, as are all noble heroines, she possesses black eyebrows which she plucks to make them form the proper arch. Noble heroines had no need of such a counterfeiting of nature, as Chaucer emphasizes in his description of Lucrece:

(And by no craft hire beaute nas nat feyned). . . . (LGW 1749)

Alisoun has a golden skin whose color is compared to that of a new coin, instead of the lily-white
skin of noble heroines such as Emilye. Alisoun frolics rather than taking part in the refined games such as the Duchess delighted in. Finally, as noted before, her clothing is mentioned in much more detail than the clothing of a noble heroine ever is. Chaucer plays on the antithesis of the noble heroine and the common woman in almost all his descriptions of common women, no matter how brief the latter descriptions are. For example, after describing a rather chunky shape of the daughter in the Reeve's Tale, he ends with the saving feature of fair hair:

This wenche thikke and wel ygrowen was,
With kamus nose, and eyen greye as glas,
With buttokes brode, and brestes rounde and hye;
But right fair was hire heer, I wol nat lye.
(RVT 3973-3976)

Apparently, one could look at her hair, at least, without too much aesthetic shuddering. In other descriptions, if Chaucer notes nothing else, he notes the pride of the common women such as that of the guildsmen's wives, who would not object to their husbands becoming aldermen:

It is ful fair to been ycleped "madame,"
And goon to vigilies al bifore,
And have a mantel roialliche ybore.
(Gen Prol 376-378)

Such thoughts are reminiscent of the Wife of Bath's insistence that she should make the first offering
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every Sunday:

In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon
That to the offrynge before hire sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.

(Gen Prol 449-452)

The pride motivating the thoughts and the actions of the
gildsmen's wives and of the Wife of Bath is not a trait
of Chaucer's noble heroines. Ladies are born to such
rights and rich costumes as the common women covet.

When Chaucer describes the costumes of common women,
he often notes the fabrics of which the costumes are com­
posed. Alisoun, for example wears silk, leather, and
metal. Any attempt to learn exactly what Alison was
wearing uncovers the fact that, except for her smock,
Chaucer mentions accessories only. She wears a belt,
an apron, a collar, a cap, a headband, a purse, a
huge brooch, and shoes, all them easily removable
to reach her smock and the body underneath it. By
emphasizing Alison's accessories and smock, ignoring
the one or two garments which were, probably, between
the apron and smock, Chaucer certainly is directing
his audience's attention to Alison's wanton nature.
By naming the fabric of which her various accesso­
ries were made, Chaucer also is directing his audi­
ence's attention to Alison's vanity, shown by the
display of fabric which she, as a craftsman's wife,
should not have been wearing. We can infer what
she should not have been wearing from reading the
sumptuary laws, although I am not sure how far we can rely on these laws for proof. No record exists of sumptuary laws being in force during the reign of Richard II, but from the ones enacted during the previous reign, we can learn what the upper classes considered it impertinent of the lower to wear. For example, neither craftsmen nor their wives were to wear anything made of silk, yet Alison wears a silk belt, a silk collar, silk tapes on her cap, a silk headband, and has silk tassels on her purse, pretending to be higher on the social scale than she really is, in a manner similar to that of the guildsmen's wives. I suspect that another reason for Alisoun's acquisition of these silken accessories is that they are brighter and more delightful to touch and to wear than similar woolen articles; I doubt that Chaucer or his audience considered this aspect. When they enacted the sumptuary laws, the aristocracy carefully reserved the finest, softest fabrics for their clothing, ruling that commoners should be content with coarser materials. Since they had never been forced to wear garments fashioned from coarse fabrics, the aristocracy probably had little idea of the relative discomfort caused by such garments.

Although he probably was criticizing Alisoun's social pretensions, Chaucer may also have been mocking her provincial attire. With all of the accessories
mentioned in her description, especially the huge brooch on her collar, Alisoun seems overdressed. The paintings and sculptures from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries usually show women in relatively simple garments, adorned with only a few jewelled ornaments. The voluper and fillet which adorn Alisoun's head, for example, is a combination which I have never found mentioned in fashion histories nor seen in artwork. This fact, of course, is not proof that the combination was not worn; it may even be one of the provincial details that Chaucer is ridiculing.

The main emphasis in Chaucer's descriptions of common women, then, is their pride, displayed by means of their costumes, and their lack of virtue. The description of Alisoun is unusual in that her costume demonstrates both her pride and her easy virtue. Usually a common woman's lack of virtue is demonstrated only by means of her "daliance" (to borrow from the Wife of Bath's vocabulary [WBT 565]) with some man other than her husband. In comparison with the costumes of these women, Criseyde's costume is firmly allied with the costumes of the noble heroines, with two possible exceptions. The first is Criseyde's braid bound in gold, the possible implications of which I have discussed. The second possible exception is the dress she wore to Hector's
court. Whether Chaucer is referring to the width or the length, his use of "large" to describe this dress implies that this garment may be one of those which the Parson denounces as a "superfluuitee of clothynge" (ParsT 416). The vanity which may have motivated this display of fabric may be accented when Chaucer mentions that this widow's habit is made of samite, naming the fabric of which the garment was made, a descriptive detail that he uses for some of the common women but never for the ladies. Although these inferences tempt one to state that Criseyde wears the brown, silk dress out of pride, such a conclusion may be incorrect. One flaw in the argument is that Hector treats Criseyde as if all is as it should be. Further, we cannot forget the possibility that Chaucer is describing an old-fashioned garment, thereby providing an historic touch.

In concluding that Criseyde's costume portrays her as a lady, we must remind ourselves that this conclusion is tentative rather than definite. Much of the meaning of her costume still remains to be explored. Were the gifts she gave to Diomede proper? Why did she and Troilus exchange rings? Why is she a widow rather than a wife or a maid? Answers to these questions might resolve the ambiguity currently perceived in the characterization of Criseyde.

A study of the costume of Criseyde would be
incomplete without some mention of her joined eyebrows which, in her final portrait, mar her beauty (TC 5.813). An examination of this feature does not uncover anything relevant to Criseyde's character, but it does suggest that the gap between the expectations of Chaucer's original audience and of his modern one is wider than we usually assume. Criseyde's eyebrows have perplexed a number of critics, who cannot understand why Chaucer broke the artistic unity of his poem by changing the appearance of his heroine: when we first see her, every feature is perfect; when we last see her, one feature, inexplicably, is ugly. A couple of solutions have been offered in an effort to exculpate Chaucer from the charge of being false to what modern critics conceive of as his art. Donaldson claims that in Book 1 Criseyde is seen through the eyes of an enchanted lover and, therefore, her features are idealized. But in Book 5, the enchantment is gone and, for the first time, Criseyde's actual features are described. Griffin, having discovered that one of Chaucer's sources includes a mention of Criseyde's imperfect brows, concludes that Chaucer sacrificed art to historical accuracy. Both solutions assume that Chaucer recognized the inconsistency as a problem, a questionable assumption. Instead, I submit, he would have considered the change as a transformation caused by Criseyde's
infidelity. That Criseyde's changed appearance is to be accepted as a marvel rather than explained away as the fading of an infatuation or as a historical nicety can be substantiated by a glance at the various costumes which adorn Griselda as she patiently endures her various misfortunes.

Griselda is not a typical Chaucerian woman. She is a commoner, but, unlike Alisoun or May, she is not unfaithful to her husband; instead she is faithful and obedient to a point that we, placing the duties of motherhood above those of wifely obedience, consider extreme. However, it is Griselda's costumes, not her actions, which are pertinent to my discussion. When Griselda first appears, her physical appearance is merely "fair ynough" (C1T 209); but her virtue is something more:

But for to speak of vertuous beautee,
Thanne was she oon the faireste under sonne;
For povreliche yfostered up was she,
No likerous lust was thurgh hire herte yronne.
Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne
She drank, and for she wolde vertu plese,
She knew wel labour, but noon ydel ese.

(C1T 211-217)

Such a characterization rivals that of Constance. But even Constance would have scorned to wear the "wrecched clothes" which Griselda wears during much of the story (C1T 850).

Griselda enters the narrative dressed in clothing so ragged that the ladies who are to disrobe her
for her wedding:

were not right glad
To handle hir clothes, wherinne she was clad.
(C1T 375-376)

In spite of their aversion, these women remove Griselda's old clothing, dress her in sumptuous garments, and comb her tangled hair (C1T 377-380). With her new clothes and her marriage to Walter, Griselda assumes the high rank of a ruler's wife. She continues in her new station, wearing her fine garments, until Walter sends her back to her father, clad only in a smock (C1T 895). At the end of the story, she is once more dressed in rich apparel as she is welcomed back to her social eminence as Walter's wife (C1T 1116-1120). In all this disrobing and robing, the point relevant to Criseyde's eyebrows is the transformation of Griselda when she first is dressed in the aristocratic clothing. Previously, she was merely attractive; suddenly she becomes beautiful and people have difficulty recognizing her:

this mayde bright of hewe
Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe.

Hir heris han they kembd, that lay untressed
Ful rudely, and with hir fyngres smale
A corone on hire heed they han ydressed,
And sette hire ful of nowches grete and smale.
Of hire array what should I make a tale?
Unnethe the peple hir knew for hire fairnesse,
Whan she translated was in swich richesse.
(C1T 377-385)
This transformation is as marvelous that in the Wife of Bath's tale, where the old hag is changed into a beautiful woman. I doubt that Chaucer's audience questioned either marvel, just as they do not seem to have questioned the intermixing of the natural and supernatural in manuscript miniatures. In Griselda's case, she begins the story as a commoner and, therefore, cannot be of unsurpassed beauty. She ends the story as a noble heroine, who must be beautiful; therefore, her appearance changes. The discrepancy in Criseyde's appearance follows the same logic. She begins as a lady who is of perfect character and beauty. She ends as something less than a lady (although Chaucer never quite reduces her to a common woman), with an imperfect character and, therefore, a flawed beauty. Pandarus, Troilus, and the narrator are not at first blinded to the imperfection; the imperfection does not exist when they first see her. There is, also, another possible explanation of the change in Criseyde's appearance. The poem was meant to be heard as well as read. A listener is not likely to keep tiny descriptive details in mind from Book 1 through Book 5. Even a person reading the poem would not necessarily have noticed the change, especially if he accepted marvelous transformations as a valid literary device. An author writing for such an audience might not have considered
it necessary to check back through his manuscript for discrepancies. Once again, this problem seems to me to be one created by modern critics studying a printed text with the assumption that medieval art was based on the same tenets as modern art. The realistic explanations offered by Donaldson and Griffin may be true if Chaucer found it necessary to justify the change. But the possibility that the question never occurred to either Chaucer or his audience should at least be considered.
CONCLUSION

From the discussion in the preceding chapter of Criseyde's costume in comparison with the costumes of other Chaucerian women, I have pointed out very few points directly related to Chaucer's meaning that were not known before. The examination of Criseyde's costume does not settle the debate over whether or not Criseyde is seduced by her two lovers or is the leader in both affairs. Throughout the poem, she dresses as a lady despite her actions. Perhaps Chaucer has given us a suggestion of pride in one court dress and of moral laxity in Criseyde's final hairstyle, although I am inclined to think that both are historical touches rather than indications of character. However, the present evidence is insufficient for proving either side of the argument. My discussion has pointed out, also, that Chaucer does not describe upper and lower class women in the same terms; he tells us about the bodies and characters of aristocratic women and about the bodies and clothing of common ones. In this chapter as well as in the previous chapters of my discussion, I have not been concerned with proving definite conclusions about why Chaucer included a costume reference in a poem.
Rather, I have discussed the fact that, although Chaucer does use costume in his stories, we cannot discover the meanings of these references because the research available on medieval costume is inadequate for such a study.

A study of Chaucer's use of costume must rely to a large extent on secondary sources because the primary sources for such a study are too numerous and cover too many fields for one person to study adequately. But the secondary sources that are available on costume history lack the documentation necessary for a researcher to use them with confidence. The lack of reliable costume histories has gone unnoticed because most critics ignore the costume references in Chaucer's stories, just as they ignore his references to other social practices. The failure of critics to consider medieval social customs in relation to Chaucer's stories appears to be based on the idea that social trivia such as costume and mannerisms cannot have played a part in Chaucer's meaning. This attitude, which also underlies critical studies that deal with the social details, is exemplified by a comment on the use of costume in the Clerk's Tale. In his study of the patient Griselda, Griffith, unable to avoid some mention of costume, concludes that the various costume changes are meant as a contrast between the natural and supernatural worlds of the
story, not just as "medieval and folk love of personal adornment".\textsuperscript{1} In reaching this conclusion he completely overlooks the society on which the story as based, a society which believed that each social class should dress in a manner befitting its position. When Griselda changes social rank, she must change her costume, also. It is true that Griselda's costume changes are something other than a love of fine clothing, but it is equally true that we do not have to pass the bounds of the natural world in order to find an explanation. The social world that Griffith, as well as other critics, brushes aside needs to be investigated.

In my investigation of Chaucerian costume I found that Chaucer makes very few references to costume. I had expected many more, primarily because of my familiarity with the more extensive costume descriptions of modern novelists. A ready example is Dickens, who introduces a character with a description of his garments, mannerisms, and physical appearance. Chaucer's apparent disregard of costume may be the result of his writing for an audience more homogeneous than that modern writers address. Dickens can serve again for a comparison. Because he wrote for strangers whose social backgrounds he could only guess, Dickens needed a method of ensuring that his audience reacted as he wished to a character.
Adding specific details of costume and mannerisms was one solution to this problem. On the other hand, because Chaucer wrote for an audience with whose social background he was familiar, he did not need to be as concerned that the audience would not react as he wished. If he stated that a woman was a lady, he knew that his original audience would fill in the proper details of costume. Chaucer would have been further assured that his audience would supply the proper details because he usually portrays stereotyped characters. His ladies are beautiful, presumably dress with taste, and are chaste. His lower class women are sometimes dowdy, sometimes attractive, but never beautiful. They dress ostentatiously and lack virtue. Criseyde, who does not act like a lady, and Griselda, who does not act or dress like a commoner are the only two exceptions.

My assessment of Chaucer's audience and how it influenced his writing is not definitive, a fact which points once again to the main conclusion of my study of Chaucer's use of costume: most of the current studies of medieval social customs are deficient both in objectivity and in documentation. Studies of social elements such as costume or etiquette should be carried out without the underlying assumption that social values have not changed and that medieval practices must be measured against modern practices.
Such studies also should provide proof to substantiate their claims. The acceptance of the poor scholarship usually found in costume and other histories of social customs stems from the belief that social mores are trivial matters of no concern to a serious author. But the social mores are the base on which an author constructs his poem or novel and he cannot be fully understood until his society is also understood.
Chapter 1


12. I am using the word "costume," rather than "fashion," throughout this study for two reasons. First, although "fashion" is used normally to mean clothing, it can be used to refer to the newest trend in any area of life. Second, when "fashion" is used to refer to clothing, it usually carries with it the implication that only the newest styles, sometimes called "high fashion," are meant. In this study I am concerned with high fashion, but am concerned also
with the styles worn by the people who did not follow current trends. Use of the word "costume" rather than "fashion" should preclude the implication that at any point I am referring only to high fashion.


14 Gen Prol 151; all quotations from Chaucer are taken from F. N. Robinson, ed., The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957). Hereafter, the line number and title of the work from which it is taken will be given in parenthesis within the text.

15 F. E. Baldwin, Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1926) provides a summary of the sumptuary laws during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II.


18 Costume is changeable but the reasons for its changeable nature can be traced to basic human needs, such as the need to be identified with a certain group of people. König outlines the various needs which costume fulfills, demonstrating that costume definitely cannot be regarded as peripheral.

19 Jill Mann, Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) summarizes the debate concerning the Wife's hat, p. 266, footnote 86.

20 To give just two examples: Chaucer notes that Criseyde goes to the Trojan court dressed in a widow's habit of brown samite, a specific type of fabric woven from silk (TC 1.109). Today we would notice only that she was wearing a brown widow's habit. He comments that the shipman wears a knee-length gown of falding, again naming a specific type of fabric, this time woven from wool (Gen Prol 391). As with Criseyde's dress, today we probably would notice only that the shipman wears a knee-length tunic. Chaucer's mentioning
of a fabric, however, does not carry with it an automatic judgement, either of approval or disapproval.


Chapter 2

1 Stella M. Newton, Renaissance Theatre Costume and the Sense of the Historic Past, (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1975), p. 31, comments that around the beginning of the fifteenth century two Eastern emperors visited France and the garments worn by them and their retinues inspired the French miniaturists to depict some Biblical characters in Eastern-style costumes. These garments may have caused changes in fashionable French costume, also.


3 Cunnington, 2nd ed. (Boston: Plays, Inc., 1969); Planché, 2 vol. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1876).

4 An accurate reconstruction would have to consider, also, the fabrics and dyes used in medieval England and the number, styles, and fabrics of the undergarments.


7 Cunnington & Lucas, p. 211.

8 Cunnington & Lucas, p. 241.

9 (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1927), Vol. 2. In the following paragraphs, where it was necessary to cite page references from Norris, I have included these references within parentheses in the text.

10 I question this theory because fashionable styles are not introduced for reasons of modesty.

11 Cunnington & Lucas, p. 208. This page contains a translation of these rules which I have used for my discussion.

12 Norris, p. 192.
For example, William Dodd, *Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower* (1913; rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959), p. 129, states "It is perfectly obvious that neither Chaucer nor Boccaccio was attempting to reproduce the life of the Trojans in the heroic age. . . . To both Boccaccio and Chaucer, Troilus and his lady were contemporary young people, and their love affair is related in terms of contemporary life." However, he offers no evidence in support of this assertion.

Karath and Kuhn.


C. Willett & Phillis Cunnington imply (p. 92) that this line refers to the wearing of garters, but they do not explain how they reached this conclusion.


Laver's histories, such as *The Concise History of Costume and Fashion*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., n.d.), I might note, are usually lacking any documentation except a very brief bibliography.

Bradfield, n.p.

Bradfield, n.p.
26 Bradfield, p. 45.

27 The names of garments used in my discussion are the names used by fashion historians. They may or may not have been used by the people who wore the garments. Fashion historians do not consider this detail.

28 Bigelow, p. 82.

29 Brooke, p. 28.

30 C. Willett & Phillis Cunnington, p. 82; p. 120.

31 Yarwood, p. 80.

32 Norris, p. 358.

33 Norris, p. 255.

34 Yarwood, p. xviii.


36 C. Willett & Phillis Cunnington, p. 6.

37 C. Willett & Phillis Cunnington, p. 78.

38 C. Willett & Phillis Cunnington, p. 6.


42 Rickert, p. 333.

43 Rickert, p. 339.

44 C. Willett & Phillis Cunnington, p. 87.

45 C. Willett & Phillis Cunnington, p. 97.

47 The black and white color scheme is curious because primary sources, such as paintings, indicate that medieval clothing was of bright colors. We would expect Alison to appear in the red of the dresses of the Wife of Bath (WBT 559) or of the miller's wife (RvT 3954).


49 For an example of his documentation, see his discussion of representations of Andromeda and Perseus in The Limbourg Brothers, pp. 27-28.


51 (Boston: Boston Book & Art, 1970).

52 Planché, p. 270.

53 Calthrop, p. 99.
Chapter 3

1 Lucie Schaefer, p. 124. Most of the works in Harleian 4431 are illustrated with one or more miniatures, all of which Schaefer discusses in this article.


3 Oxford English Dictionary.

4 Oxford English Dictionary.


6 The distinguishing factor may be that hood and cloak were sewn together. Edith Rickert in Chaucer's World, p. 339, quotes a directive to the Benedictine monks, issued around 1363, in which it is commanded that "whenever monks are to ride forth they shall be clad outwardly according to the ancient custom of our cloister in honest capes having their hoods sewn on."


8 C. Willett and Phillis Cunnington, Handbook, p. 69.


10 Descriptions of garments are based on the information given by the Cunningtons in their Handbook and by Planché's Cyclopaedia of Costume. The information given by these authors has been supplemented by my observations of the garments worn by secular women in the artworks I studied. A list of these artworks can be found in the "List of Artworks Consulted"
Evidence for the existence of this garment is derived from the occasional illuminations which depict women in a partial state of undress.

Planche, II, p. 90.

Copying does not seem to be a sufficient reason, nor does historical accuracy, for many of the figures surrounding Mary in the various pictures are dressed in fashionable costume, a change which the artist would have had to make if he were copying an older picture.


Identification of the women follows the identifications given by Hassall. The division into classes is my own, but the division is fairly obvious. Women such as the Virgin, Elizabeth, and Herodias, for example, are classed as aristocracy; women such as the innkeeper's wife and the widow with the mite are classed as commoners.

Salome, who dances at a banquet clad only in her inner gown, complicates matters somewhat, especially since she wears an outergown when she carries John the Baptist's head to her mother. However, few rules governing costume are totally consistent. In this case, Salome, whose reputation is somewhat dubious because she caused the death of John, may have been considered immodest for as long as she was a dancer. On the other hand, there may have been a few public occasions when it was permissible for even a modest woman to appear without an outergown.

I used to think that this lack of support for the cloak was an artist's idealization and that a brooch or cord must actually have held the garment on. However, Mary Gostelow, in her Complete International Book of Embroidery, (New York: Simon and Schustar, 1977), has a photograph on page 233 of an East Indian woman with a cloak covering her head, as one sometimes covers the Virgin's head. The method by which the East Indian's cloak is held in place is invisible in the photograph, so perhaps the medieval rendering is not an idealization after all.
Chapter 4

Representative of those who think Criseyde is a victim are George Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), who claims that her downfall is her fatal impressionability and softness; R. K. Root, Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926), who claims that her flaw lies in her 'slydynge corage'; and David Aers, "Criseyde: Woman in Medieval Society," Chaucer Review, 13 (1979), 177-200, who credits Chaucer with being a modern-day feminist, writing of a woman pushed around in a male-dominated society. Alice Kaminsky, Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde" and the Critics, on the other hand, sees Criseyde as a sexually-emancipated woman who was a willing accomplice in both affairs. Other critics view Criseyde as a symbol rather than a person. D. W. Robertson, Jr., A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives, and Charles Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition explicate variations on the theme that she is a symbol of the multability of the world. Arthur Mizener, "Character and Action in the Case of Criseyde," Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Edward Wagenknecht, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 348-365, says that Chaucer made no attempt to make her a consistent character, recording her infidelity because it was part of her history.

2 Muscatine, p. 17.


4 Muscatine points out, pp. 26-68, that in medieval romance monologues about morality and emotions were not intended to contribute to the action of the story and took precedence over dramatic probability. Much the same rule must have applied to the lengthy description of feasts, hunts, and costumes. It would be interesting to learn why the setting of a story and the thoughts of its characters were more important than its plot.
William Dodd, *Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower*, and C. S. Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938) are the critics most often cited for their studies of courtly love. However, neither author offers much proof for his claims regarding medieval practices.

Of the critics claiming that *Troilus and Criseyde* were married, Henry Kelly, *Love and Marriage in the Age of Chaucer*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), is the most convincing.

A representative example of this type of study is H. S. Bennett's discussion of love and marriage in chapters 3 and 4 of *The Pastons and Their England: Studies in an Age of Transition*, (1932; rpt. Cambridge: University Press, 1970). Bennett's book is a narrative based on the Paston letters, which have been edited by Norman Davis, *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). Bennett discusses several marriages mentioned in the letters. One is between John, the oldest son of Justice and Agnes Paston, and Margaret Mautoby. All that survives in the letters concerning this marriage are that the betrothal and financial settlement were arranged by the parents. There is no record of whether the pair met before the betrothal. The second marriage was between a son of John and Margaret, also named John, and Margery Brews. What survives of this arrangement are the financial settlement, some mention that Margery was in love with John, and some love letters of John to her. The third marriage was between a daughter of John and Margaret, named Margery, and the Paston's bailiff, Richard Calle. What survives in the letters concerning this marriage are the horror of the family over Margery's marrying beneath her, their efforts to dissuade her, and some letters from Calle, protesting his love for Margery and bemoaning the fact that her parents are keeping them apart. Of the first marriage, Mr. Bennett is sure the betrothed children must have objected to not being consulted on the matter and is appalled at the mercenary nature of the arrangements and total lack of any mention of other wedding plans. His opinion is that a marriage so arranged could not have been happy, although if the letters exchanged between this couple over the years give any sign of their disliking each other, Bennett does not cite any as evidence of unhappiness. The third marriage, Bennett is convinced, was a happy one. It was, after all, a love match. The fact that, according to the letters, Margery was forbidden ever to come into her mother's house after the wedding does not enter into his
consideration of happiness. The second marriage causes him some uneasiness. On the one hand, it clearly had its mercenary side; on the other hand, it clearly was a love match. Bennett would have been much happier if John, Jr. would have married Margery Brews without worrying about finances. Bennett's interpretation is based on the modern idea of romantic love that conquers all. But, given the letters which survive, his interpretation ignores a number of possibilities. First, in the marriage between John and Margaret, the letters concerning the marriage settlement were exchanged by Agnes and Justice. Presumably (although this presumption is based solely on men's actions today) Justice did not care about the other wedding plans so his wife did not bother him with them. Secondly, because no letter survives that shows that John and Margaret loved each other does not mean they did not. Some letters between them may have been lost, or perhaps they were never separated long enough to need to supplement actions and words with letters. The letters which have survived from the correspondence of John and Margery show that love and financial considerations were not mutually exclusive. Of the third marriage, we hear nothing after the wedding, so we cannot know if the Paston's daughter Margery was happy or not. Given the social step downward from mistress to servant and the ostracization from her mother's house, she probably had moments of regret and may have been unhappy for the rest of her life. In short, the letters do not provide sufficient evidence to support Bennett's positive claims.

8 I am a bit puzzled over how hair could be both bound ("ibounden") and unbound ("untressed"). However, the "untressed" may mean that Venus's hair was not braided, the loose hair being bound together in a single strand with the golden thread. It is possible, also, that the comma should be placed after "ibounden" rather than after "were," changing the lines to mean that her hair, which had been bound, is being unbound, perhaps by a servant, as she lies in bed.

9 Schaar, p. 190.


14 Bloomfield, p. 310.

15 Hollander, pp. 294-310.


17 I am assuming that the servants are women, both because they are doing needlework and because they are sitting in Lucrece's bedroom.


20 pp. 167-342.


22 Walter C. Curry, The Middle English Ideal of Personal Beauty as Found in the Metrical Romances, Chronicles, and Legends of the XIII, XIV, and XV Centuries, (Baltimore: H. Furst, Co., 1916) summarizes this beauty on p. 3. She is blond, with sparkling, blue eyes, a rose and white complexion, a broad forehead, red lips, white teeth, long, white arms, and hands that have long, slender fingers. Her figure is graceful and slender.

23 Curry, Middle English Ideal, p. 10.

24 E. Talbot Donaldson, "The Masculine Narrator and Four Women of Style," Speaking of Chaucer,


26 Baldwin, p. 69.

27 Baldwin, p. 47.


30 For example, manuscript miniatures portray devils perched on men's backs or behind bushes and souls being lifted to heaven by angels as the corpse lies below with his earthly friends clustered around his bed in sorrow.
Conclusion

1Quoted from Kristine Gilmartin, "Array in the Clerk's Tale," Chaucer Review, 13, (1979), 245. Since the tale was directed toward the cultured members of the English court, it is somewhat out of place to speak of a "folk love of personal adornment," as if the audience were naive peasants.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

I have divided the bibliography into four sections: "List of Works Cited," "List of Fashion Histories Consulted," "List of Artworks Consulted," and "Sources of Illustrations." The first division lists all the works cited in the text with the exception of fashion histories. Since my criticism of fashion scholarship is based on a study of more fashion histories than I have mentioned as representative examples in my text, I have included in the second division the fashion histories cited as well as the additional ones studied. The third division lists the pictoral sources used for my study of the Virgin Mary. The fourth division provides the necessary bibliographical data about the sources on which the figures which follow the bibliography are based.
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List of Fashion Histories Consulted


List of Artworks Consulted


Sources of Illustrations

Figures 1-4: Composites drawn by author.

Figure 5: After drawing in C. Willett and Phillis Cunnington, Handbook of English Mediaeval Costume, Boston: Plays, Inc., 1969, plate 55c; drawn by Debbie Lawson.

Figure 6: After drawing in Handbook, plate 17a; drawn by Debbie Lawson.

Figure 7: After drawing in Handbook, plate 17b; drawn by Debbie Lawson.

Figure 8: After drawing in Doreen Yarwood, English Costume from the Second Century B.C. to 1967, London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1967, p. 77; pattern on gown has been omitted; drawn by Debbie Lawson.

Figure 9: After portrait of Richard II in Westminster Abbey, from photograph in Gervase Mathew, The Court of Richard II, London: John Murray, 1968, plate 5; pattern on gown and background of painting has been omitted; drawn by Debbie Lawson.

Figure 10: Costume shown on Christine de Pisan throughout British Museum manuscript Harleien 4431; drawn by author.


ILLUSTRATIONS