

4

Book III: "Al that which chargeth nought to seye"

Book III of the *Troilus* provides the climax, in every sense, of Troilus and Criseyde's love affair. The importance of the consummation scene is indicated by the percentage of scholarship dealing with Book III, and in many cases the poem as a whole, which examines and speculates on the various details of this one, specific occurrence. There are, of course, ambiguities: namely the famous scholarly fist-fight over the relations between Pandarus and Criseyde following her night of love with Troilus. Pandarus achieves his low point as an alleged pimp. So too, Troilus finds his low points as a blundering and clumsy lover who laughingly, it seems, tries to assume the veil of control in bed with his "lark." Criseyde, however, remains the enigma she has been up to this point in the poem, and, as we will see from the various contributing scholars, her readings continue to be debated.

Laura Hodges ("Sartorial Signs in *Troilus and Criseyde*") continues her study of costume, examining Criseyde in the consummation scene of Book III. At this point, Hodges claims, "Chaucer reverses his pattern of evoking character through the established signatory garments" (232). Once Criseyde is in the bedchamber, her widow's garments, a dominant motif in Books I and II, vanish. This differs from the same scene in Boccaccio, where Criseida (Parte Terza stanzas 30-32) removes her chemise. Again, as in Book I, we see Criseyde, now naked, through Troilus' eyes. Chaucer reverses the costume rhetoric of Troilus, once in armor, now in his "sherte," as Hodges points out, not usual dress for a fourteenth-century English nobleman (233). The scene as a whole ridicules and subordinates Troilus, in laughable dress, waiting in a gutter in order to appear through a trap door, then fainting before being chastised and thrown into bed by

Pandarus.

Pandarus has earlier warned Criseyde against deceiving Troilus—“That for to holde in love a man in honde,/ And hym hire lief and deere herte calle,/ And maken hym an howve above a calle” (3.773-775). As Hodges notes, the *Riverside* glosses “howve” as “hood,” an image of deception which Pandarus uses to move Criseyde closer to consummation with Troilus. Pandarus suggests to Criseyde that such a woman who “maken hym an howve above a calle.....She doth hireself a shame and hym a gyle” (3.775, 3.777). Criseyde is, thus, trapped and must further the relationship to save her honor. When Criseyde offers her ring as a token of appeasement (3.890-93), Pandarus passes it off, contrasting his Book II metaphor equating a woman lacking pity to a ring lacking “vertu” (2.346). This rhetoric is again ironic because Criseyde must forfeit her virtue in consummation with Troilus in order to show pity. The jewelry rhetoric of the consummation scene clarifies Pandarus’ earlier references: “...a brooche, gold and asure,/ In which a ruby set was lik an herte,/ Criseyde hym yaf” (3.1370-72).

Elizabeth Archibald (“Declarations of ‘Entente’ in *Troilus and Criseyde*”) looks at the “entente” of Criseyde and those surrounding her in Book III. At Deiphebus’ house, Criseyde is finally allowed to hear Troilus’ ‘entente’ from Troilus himself, instead of through the filtering of Pandarus. Troilus promises “mo desiren fresshly newe/ To serve” (3.143-44), which satisfies Criseyde. Pandarus’ intentions, though, look further:

That Pandarus, that evere dide his myght
Right for the fyn that I shal speke of here,
As for to bryngen to his hows som nyght
His faire nece and Troilus yfere,

Wheras at leiser al this heighe matere,
Touchyng here love, were at the fulle upbounde,
Hadde out of doute a tyme to it founde. (3.512-18)

Troilus and Criseyde continue to be pieces in Pandarus' own game of "entente." The narrator continues to load the word "entente" preceding Criseyde's visit to Pandarus' house as he says, "Ye han wel herd the fyn of his entente" (3.553). Finally, after Pandarus' further fabrications, Criseyde, now with Troilus just before consummation, protests, "In all thyng is myn entente clene" (3.1166). Although similar protests by Pandarus are already easily distrusted, we have no reason, at this point, to think this way of Criseyde. As Troilus and Criseyde affirm their love for each other, Archibald declares 'entente' to regain its more noble and "Troilan sense" (Archibald 201):

Criseyde, al quyt from every drede and tene,
As she that juste cause hadde hym to triste,
Made hym swych feste it joye was to sene,
Whan she his trouthe and clene entente wiste. (3.1226-29)

However, Pandarus corrupts the reading of "entente" in its last occurrence in Book III: "And Pandarus hath fully his entente" (3.1582). Again, it is equated to "satisfied desire" (202). Book III displays each character's declarations of "entente," but Pandarus' will dominates as he seems to manipulate, to an extent, Troilus', and more certainly, Criseyde's intentions to satisfy his own.

Sheila Delaney, in her article, "Techniques of Alienation in *Troilus and Criseyde*," points to a specific question Criseyde asks just before the consummation: "Is this a mannes game?" (3.1126). As Delaney notes, this is one of many instances in which manliness is addressed in the

poem. On the surface, this question seems to question “courage,” and, as Delaney notes, the ironic connotation is sexual. However, we may also read her question, more deeply, as a question of human existence; “What is it to be a man?” (Delaney 44). Delaney suggests:

This question, like the other, has a dual aspect which requires for its real answer both the dramatic action and the epilogue: Troilus’ fear, weakness and lust truly express the limitations of human nature, while his eventual transcendence expresses what humanity is capable of at its Christian best. (44)

Archibald mentions the word “fyn,” and some of the many passages containing this word in wrestling with “entente” in Book III, but Delaney takes “fyn” further here, proposing that the question “where are you heading?” is “couched” in its many appearances throughout the poem, so that, as Delaney says, “the questions themselves emerge with startling clarity to illuminate more than their immediate narrative context” (44).

Patrick J. Gallagher provides more close reading of intentions in his article, “Chaucer and the Rhetoric of the Body.” Following her question– “Is this mannes game?”– Criseyde demands more information about the fabrication of her relationship with Horaste. The narrator here again defends Troilus, who “most obeye unto his lady heste;/ And for the lasse harm, he moste feyne” (3.1156-57). Gallagher argues that this scene is a continuation of ever-changing active/passive responses by the central characters. Criseyde actively responds, “Wol ye the childissh jalous contrefete?/ Now were it worthi that ye were ybete” (3.1168-69). Troilus then becomes what Gallagher terms “ludicrously active” saying, “What myghte or may the sely larke seye/ Whan that the sperhawk hath it in his foot?” (3.1191-92). However, this shift to the physical is enough to turn Criseyde to an apprehensive and passive stance as she “senses herself acted upon”

(Gallagher 223):

Criseyde, which that helte hire thus itake,
As writen clerkes in hire bokes olde,
Right as an aspes leef she gan to quake,
Whan she hym felte hire in his armes folde. (3.1198-1201)

Gallagher points out Criseyde's self-perception as object of Troilus' actions in the first and last lines of this passage (223). Troilus oversteps his active bounds, though, making, as Gallagher terms them, "deftly unsuitable terms of the hunt and of chivalric victory" (223): "And seyde, 'O swete, as evere mot I gon,/ Now be ye kaught; now is ther but we tweyne!/ Now yeldeth yow, for it other bote is non!'" (3.1206-08). Criseyde sees comedy in Troilus' protestations and responds, "Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte deere,/ Ben yold, ywis, I were now nought heere!" (3.1210-11). Criseyde's passivity is again asserted as her body becomes the object of Troilus' action—"He gan to stroke, and good thrift bad ful ofte/ Hire snowissh throte, hire brestes rounde and lite" (3.1249-50). The consummation scene provides "imbalance" to the active and passive tendencies of the characters. Gallagher suggests, "the concordance of active and passive, of initiative and acceptance, accompany what most readers see as a prominent instance of Troilus' basic or potential integrity," but "as the story progresses, Criseyde will take on too much autonomy, and ineffectuality will continue to plague Troilus" (223).

Louise O. Fradenburg, in her chapter, "Loss, Gender, and Chivalry in *Troilus and Criseyde*," finds irony in Criseyde's assertive response to Troilus' "sperhawk" boasting:

A picture of maidenly modesty? Or are we indeed to question what the innocent, helpless, and possibly foolish lark is supposed to say when the sparrowhawk has it

in its foot? Possibly “Ne hadde I er, my swete herte deere,/ Ben yold, ywis, I were now nought here”? (100)

But what Fradenburg finds more troubling are the pastoral images describing the lover’s delight (3.1226-32), for these lines are followed by the glum comparison of Criseyde to the nightingale:

And as the newe abaysed nyghtyngale,
That stynteth first whan she bygynneth to synge,
Whan that she hereth any herde tale,
Or in the hegges any wyght stiryng,
And after siker doth hire vois out ryng,
Right so Criseyde, whan hire drede stente,
Opned hire herte, and tolde hym hire entente. (3.1233-39)

Fradenburg asks, “Are we to hear behind Criseyde’s (to us) inaudible voicing of her ‘entente’ the mutilated mouth of Philomela?” (100). Philomela, Procne, and Criseyde are survivors, but survivors who, in some form or another, lack voice, whether by physical incapability or simply not being heard. Fradenburg argues, “The possibility of Criseyde’s rape can be spoken only through a kind of intertextual haunting” (100). Such assertions rarely address the scene of consummation in the *Troilus*. However, Fradenburg proposes:

The consummation scene is written to produce an ambiguity that cannot be resolved through interpretation; we cannot “decide” whether Criseyde has consented or not, whether she has been raped or not. We can only see that the possibility has been raised and then made undecidable and this suggests that for a woman in Criseyde’s position sexual violence may be what she has for love, may

be the medium of her consent. (100-101)

It is also worthy to note Christopher Canon who, citing Fradenburg's article in his, "Chaucer and Rape: Uncertainty's Certainties," suggests concerning consent: "The difficulty is pointed by the way we are everywhere given detail about Criseyde's consensual states, even when Criseyde is haunted by what Louise Fradenburg called the "specter of rape" (84). Such consent and ambiguity mask what Fradenburg calls the "delectation of violence" and, even more, allow the heroic figure, Troilus, to assert his masculinity while maintaining his honor.

In his article, "The Rapes of Chaucer," William Quinn argues that Troilus is, in fact, the one raped in the consummation scene. Criseyde, however, is innocent. Both lovers, as Quinn says, are "serially raped by the imperatives of love" (10). Such an assertion goes back to Book I where Troilus is shot by love's arrow, itself an act of penetration.

After Troilus and Criseyde's night of consummation, Pandarus comes to the bed and speaks with Criseyde. What happens here continues to be one of the more colorful debates in *Troilus* scholarship. Is it incest? Is it rape? Is it innocent "pleye"? E. Talbot Donaldson called this scene "delightful" and "not without a hint of prurience" (1136). More recent articles by Evan Carton, Robert apRoberts, and others have kept this debate raging. Stephen Barney, in his notes to *The Riverside Chaucer's Troilus*, calls any assertions of incestuous relations between Pandarus and Criseyde, "baseless and absurd" (notes to lines 1555-1582, p.1043). Such a definitive statement seems alarming coming from the standard edition of Chaucer's works over the last twenty years, but it only further testifies to the passionate nature of debate involving Pandarus and Criseyde's relations.

apRoberts uses Barney's note as a jumping-off point for his article, "A Contribution to

the Thirteenth Labour: Purging the *Troilus* of Incest.” apRoberts finds the seed of sexual intimacy between Pandarus and Criseyde sewn in Donaldson’s *Chaucer’s Poetry*, in which the scene in question is, according to Donaldson, “not without a hint of prurience” (971-72). The lines in question must themselves be examined:

Pandare, o-morwe, which that comen was
Unto his nece and gan hire faire grete,
Seyde, ‘Al this nyght so reyned it, allas,
That al my drede is that ye, nece swete,
Han litel laiser had to slepe and mete.
Al nyght,’ quod he, ‘hath reyn so do me wake,
That some of us, I trowe, hire hedes ake.’

And ner he com, and seyde, ‘How stant it now
This mury morwe? Nece, how kan ye fare?’
Crisedye answered, ‘Nevere the bet for yow,
Fox that ye ben! God yeve youre herte kare!
God help me so, ye caused al this fare,
Trowe I,’ quod she, ‘for al youre wordes white.
O, whoso seeth yow knoweth yow ful lite.’

With that she gan hire face for to wrye
With the shete, and wax for shame al reed;

And Pandarus gan under for to prie,
And seyde, ‘Nece, if that I shal be ded,
Have here a swerd and smyteth of myn hed!’
With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste
Under hire nekke, and at the laste hire kyste.

I passe al that which chargeth nought to seye.
What! God foryaf his deth, and she al so
Foryaf, and with here uncle gan to pleye,
For other cause was they noon than so.
But of this thing right to the effect to go:
Whan tyme was, hom til here hous she wente,
And Pandarus hath fully his entente. (3.1555-1582)

apRoberts points out that many scholars find the words “pleye” and “entente” to carry sexual meanings, but he argues that nowhere does Chaucer in the *Troilus* or any other work use “entente” to indicate sexual desire. Chaucer alters Pandarus’ role from Boccaccio, whose Pandaro is almost exclusively Troilo’s friend and servant; however, in the *Troilus*, Pandarus serves both Troilus and Criseyde seemingly in equal capacities. This change further modifies Pandarus’ intentions. While Pandaro argues for Criseida to love his friend, Troilo, Pandarus argues for the young and beautiful Criseyde to assume her rightful position as heroine to a worthy knight. This, apRoberts argues, is Pandarus’ ‘entente.’ Pandarus’ ‘pleye’ with Criseyde the morning following the consummation merely serves to break the tension of Criseyde’s

“embarrassment and chagrin” after the realization that Pandarus manipulated her the previous night in his arranging of the consummation scene. apRoberts reads the scene thus:

Pandarus knows that her anger is momentary and that she cannot really be offended...With that he playfully forces a kiss of reconciliation from her (a kiss of the kind that the knight enforces between the Host and the Pardoner). God forgave the Crucifixion, the most heinous of offences; surely it is not surprising that Criseyde forgave Pandarus’ deceit. There is, the narrator says, no need to dwell upon unimportant details. (16)

apRoberts, further, creates “an exhaustive list of incompatibilities” to remove any doubt from the bedside scene. First, incest is not feasible, in Criseyde’s mind, following Troilus’ early departure. We are told by the narrator that Criseyde “Of Troilus gan in hire herte shette” (3.1549). Second, incest is incompatible in light of Criseyde’s reactions to fidelity concerning allegations involving Horaste, her pledge of ‘trouthe’ to Troilus before leaving for the Greek camp, and her lament when she engages Diomedes’ love. Third, incest is unlikely considering the friendship of Troilus and Pandarus. apRoberts calls Pandarus a “true friend” to Troilus (19). One who, from his first appearance to his last, claims loyal friendship and shares in Troilus’ joys and sorrows. Fourth, incest is inconsistent considering Pandarus’ concern for Criseyde’s honor. Pandarus praises Criseyde’s “good name” and warns Troilus not to damage her reputation—“Requere naught that is ayeys hyre name;/ For vertu streccheth naught hymself to shame” (1.902-3). apRoberts argues that incest is further incompatible with the “picture of Pandarus as a faithful though unsuccessful lover,” with “the celebration scene in Book III of the happiness Troilus experiences in his life with Criseyde,” with “the basis on which Pandarus

believes Criseyde can be brought to love Troilus,” and, finally, with “the moral of the poem” (20-21).

Ultimately, apRoberts declares readings of the *Troilus* should always be compared with the *Filostrato*. While there are substantial changes made by Chaucer, all are done for the unity and coherence of the poem as a whole. Scholars who propose such prurient readings should first ask whether their interpretation accords with the poem’s unity; suggestions that Pandarus and Criseyde have incestuous relations fail this test.

T.A. Stroud considers the impulse to read incest between Pandarus and Criseyde “partly due to the nature of post-modernist criticism, especially that of Deconstructionists and their ilk, who hold inconsistencies, contradictions, and discontinuities enrich fictions by contributing to their aesthetic value” (Stroud 16). In his article, “The Palinode, the Narrator, and Pandarus’ Alleged Incest,” Stroud argues that more consideration should be given to other more narratively essential passages in the poem, especially the palinode incorporated into the closing of the poem (5.1814-34). The poem’s virtue lies in understanding cruxes essential to the poem’s narrative structure, including the palinode. Stroud, echoing apRoberts’ argument, believes the reading of incest in this scene simply destroys this narrative structure. Finding incest here contradicts centuries of readers who found Criseyde wicked for her betrayal of Troilus for Diomedes, not for incestuous sex with her uncle. Donald Howard says of Criseyde, “She never does anything wrong until she has left Troy.”¹ Stroud says further “these critics” who view incest are motivated by a “desire to join with the age in flaunting its rejection of Victorian prudery,” and that such thinking “comes quite naturally in this age (though athletes are somewhat exempt), but hardly passed for current in the Middle Ages” (21-22).

Stroud argues that no scenes before the alleged incest indicate that Pandarus desired sex with his niece. And, while Stroud acknowledges a possible reading of Pandarus' voyeuristic excitement, assuming he never left the room during the consummation, this is hardly grounds to dismiss the "centuries-old impression" that Pandarus jokes with Criseyde in order to ask for forgiveness of his role in luring her to bed (23). If we read Criseyde's earlier protests of virtue and reputation, it is difficult to comprehend her willingness to engage in casual sex with her uncle. Stroud suggests the humor of this scene was easily understood by Chaucer's audience, who would have never heard a true tale of clear incest that did not also involve punishment, and audiences who followed for many centuries; however, our sex-obsessed culture, as in many other instances, has muddled the interpretations (24).

Richard W. Fehrenbacher contrasts both apRoberts' and Stroud's arguments in addressing the scene in his article, "'Al that which chargeth naught to seye': The Theme of Incest in *Troilus and Criseyde*." Fehrenbacher points out that much of the recent scholarship, by critics such as C. David Benson, Alan Gaylord, A.C. Spearing, and Barry Windeatt, refuses to answer definitively whether or not Criseyde and Pandarus engage in any sexual intimacy,² instead remarking how these passages alert the reader to his/her responsibility in interpreting the text.³ Fehrenbacher cites Evan Carton's article, "Complexity and Responsibility in Pandarus' Bed and Chaucer's Art," which is perhaps is the catalyst for most recent scholarship regarding the ambiguous scene. Fehrenbacher chooses to look further in claiming such ambiguities between Criseyde and Pandarus are evident throughout the poem, and, moreover, that a complete refusal to acknowledge the possibility of these incestuous tendencies "participates in not only the peremptory denial of incestuous desire found in patriarchal societies, but also in that denial's

concomitant invocation of the incest taboo as a foundational and untransgressible origin that underwrites that society's oppressive 'traffic of women'" (344).

Incest would certainly have been a taboo because of its damaging nature to a patriarchal society which depended on lineage, thus its importance in the alleged scene, and its significance to fourteenth-century England's self-inscribed lineage to Troy. Both Augustine and Aquinas discuss the dangers of incest, even though early civilizations commonly practiced inter-family marriages, which leads to an inclusive society lacking diverse social bonds found in one man taking his wife from another family, thus linking each.⁴ Derrida cites Rousseau in suggesting, "Society, language, history, articulation, in a word supplementary, are born at the same time as the prohibition of incest."⁵ Levi-Strauss goes further, however, in suggesting that as a society prohibits incests, they, in turn, permit the exchange of women."⁶ Gower deals with incest in the *Confessio Amantis*, as do Arthur legends, specifically, of course, Malory's *Morte Darthur*.

Even more obvious, the specific story of *Troilus and Criseyde*, as Fehrenbacher says, "is haunted by the Theban story" (352). Troy is already a place where women are traded with, of course, Helen, but also Priam's sister Heroïdes, the Homeric Briseis, and others. Even within the poem, Helen is a character; Troilus offers her, along with Polixene, and Cassandra, to Pandarus (4.1346); Criseyde is quickly deemed exchangeable by the citizens of Troy (4.193). Pandarus' role as a trafficker of women links him to the incest taboo, and it is accentuated by his patriarchal relationship with Criseyde, whose own father abandoned her. Pandarus' incestuous links "haunt" his relationship with Criseyde up until the scene in question (358). In Book II, Pandarus has an incestuous vision, the rape of Philomela, before going to visit Criseyde with news of Troilus' love. He intrudes upon Criseyde, who is herself reading of incest in the story of

Thebes. But Pandarus's responsive reference to Statius' *Thebaid*, which Fehrenbacher calls "a purely military and thus masculine, matter" (364), deadens the incestuous nature of her reading, and, in fact, takes away Criseyde's power to read altogether because she, as a woman, is unable to read or understand this masculine text.

Criseyde, though, seems apprehensive about Pandarus' possible incestuous desires, even threatening to call to her ladies when Pandarus has her in the inner room of his house— "Lat me som wight calle! I! God forbede it sholde falle" (3.760-61). With so many references to incest strewn throughout the poem, the infamous bed scene between Pandarus and Criseyde cannot, as is often done, be seen as what Fehrenbacher calls, an "anomalous textual hiccup" (367), but rather must be seen as the culmination of Pandarus' conflicting role as trafficker of women and patriarchal figure.

Robert Levine ("Restraining Ambiguities in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*") also addresses Pandarus and Criseyde's alleged incest. Levine also cites Evan Carton's article, and further mentions Dieter Mehl's, "The Audience of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*,"⁷ which echoes Carton, and the many other scholars mentioned above in interpreting the scene as a statement on reader responsibility. Levine points out some of the "absurd lengths to which some twentieth-century imaginations might carry those impulses" to read this scene, including Beryl Rowland's theory of Pandarus as "bisexual pimp," who, having voyeuristically watched the consummation, then has his way,⁸ or Haldeen Braddy, who argues that "deth"(3.1577) is a reference to orgasm.⁹ While Levine chooses not to see an overall theme of incest running throughout the poem, as Fehrenbacher does, he argues, in turn, for a rhetorical strategy by Chaucer, citing a lesson found in *Ad Herenium*: "It is of greater advantage to create a suspicion

by paralepsis than to insist directly on a statement that is refutable.”¹⁰ Ultimately, arguments that view this scene as a rhetorical device, or as an incestuous act, are based on reactions Chaucer intended to evoke in constructing the scene.

Sarah Stanbury (“Voyeur and the Private Life in *Troilus and Criseyde*”) provides one more comment in the ongoing debate. She seems to agree with conservative scholars that the scene solicits reader interpretation, but more interestingly suggests that since we are prompted to interpret the scene, we, as readers or witnesses to both the consummation and alleged incest, become ourselves voyeurs, “catching ourselves imagining a scenario that would seem to be a projection of Pandarus’ erotic fantasy, unless, that is, we are willing to rewrite the monogamous ethics of courtly love to comfortably allow Pandarus’ brief incestuous liason with his niece” (155).

Few articles look past the consummation scene and alleged incest of Pandarus and Criseyde, but Gale Sigal does so in investigating Criseyde’s actions in Book III as an alba lady, in her chapter, “Benighted Love in Troy: Dawn and the Dual Negativity of Love.”¹¹ She calls the parting scene in Book III, following Troilus and Criseyde’s night of consummation “a pivotal and central moment in the narrative” (191). The alba song, or aubade, of each lover is symmetrical, each containing three stanzas, the first from Criseyde, and the second from Troilus. Criseyde addresses Troilus and then night, in her first aubade:

‘Myn hertes lif, my trist, and my plesaunce,
That I was born, allas, what me is wo,
That day of us moot make disseueraunce;
For tyme it is to ryse and hennes go,

Or ellis I am lost for evere mo!

O nyght, allas, why nyltow overe us hove,

As longe as whan Almena lay by Jove? (3.1422-28)

While scholars often puzzle over Criseyde's fears despite Troilus' worthiness as a suitor, Sigal argues these fears are logical and, specifically, that Criseyde's fear of public exposure is typical of the alba. But Criseyde's holding to secrecy, in fretting over and desperately trying to keep her affair with Troilus secret, actually leads to the demise of her situation because the Trojans, unaware of her having any but familial ties in the city, willingly trade her to the Greeks (193).

The second stanza, whose possible interpretations are discussed in Chapter 1 of this work, demonstrates Criseyde's humility in her situation, equating herself to a larger society of "bestes" and "folk" who fear the coming of dawn. She further muses on a god who conceals lovers with the night, as a god who, as Sigal says, "contrasts markedly with the Christian God of light and revelation" (195). Dennis Cronan argues that Criseyde's fear early in Book II, which establishes itself for the whole of the poem, is based on abandonment, the initial abandonment of her father and a threat of abandonment in Book II by Pandarus. But Sigal takes this idea further by suggesting Criseyde displays, in the last stanza of her alba song, the fear of abandonment by night as well. Each of these three abandoners, Calchas, Pandarus, and night itself, initially serve to protect Criseyde, but each seems to leave her in more dire and compromising situations. She asks God, "Thow racle nyght! Ther God, maker of kynde.....So faste ay to oure hemysperie bynde,/ That nevere more under the ground thow wynde!" (3.1437-40). She reveals her need, her desperation, for fixity in her world of shifting foundations. Thus, Criseyde, in the three stanzas of her dawn-song, shifts herself from happiness to fear, lamentation, and discontent.

Troilus' aubade, which focuses on day, and not night or dawn, is separated by one stanza from the end of Criseyde's, a separation which Sigal argues, "parallels, on the textual level, the emotional disengagement from one another" (197). She continues:

Troilus and Criseyde's individual, specifically focused songs reflect in which half of a bisected world they abide. Criseyde, looking back toward a happy past as it flees, attempts to cling to its last seconds of grace. Troilus, however, across dawn's divide, looks ahead, toward a dreaded future, as it impends. (197)

Echoing Sarah Stanbury's work on spatial invasion, Sigal suggests Troilus' seeming victimization by day, which invades and exposes his situation—"O cruel day, accusour of the joie...Acorsed be thi comyng into Troye" (3.1450, 3.1452). Ultimately, these aubades, Sigal proposes, "serve to highlight temperamental tendencies in their characters that, in the course of the poem, receive fuller development and that prefigure their separate, though intertwined fates" (192).

Sigal also picks up the argument made by Fredenburg in a second chapter on the alba, "The Alba Lady, Sex Roles, and Social Roles: 'Who peyntede the leon, tel me who?'" Sigal views most scholars as categorizing the alba figure as the "passive, victimized female" (221). However, Sigal asserts, the alba gains power in love and loving—"Her dignity, her active role, and her poignant expressions of feeling are as unprecedented as they are persuasive" (221). Rather than reversing sexual roles, which Fradenburg's article discusses, Sigal says alba lovers shed these conventional roles altogether (222). Sigal highlights an article by Robert Kaske, "The Aube in Chaucer's *Troilus*," which is credited with introducing the alba to scholarship on Chaucer's *Troilus*.¹² But Kaske wrongly assumes specified sex roles for albas, and his views have never

been challenged, but rather accepted. Maureen Fries' study, "The 'Other' Voice: Woman's Song, Its Satire and Its Transcendence in Late Medieval British Literature,"¹³ continues the established sex-role (passive, desperate, and "impotent" [Sigal 225]) assuming the desire for privacy and presence of passivity in the female, as compared to the active and public responses of the male. But Sigal argues, in a general statement that might easily be used to read Troilus and Criseyde's own interpretation of their scenario, "Both lovers long to escape from the 'world of male activity,' which for them is synonymous with the despised authoritarian obstruction of their love, self-expression, and freedom" (226). Ultimately, Chaucer, as an alba poet, did not desire fixed roles for his lovers— even the notion of sex-role reversal, mentioned in Fradenburg and by Kaske and Fries, is fixed— but rather saw correctly the fluidity of the alba's actions and that either the male or female could be passive or active.

Scholars who question whether Criseyde is passive or active in the poem receive no clear answer in Book III. In fact, Criseyde's character is further complicated by the actions within Book III. Is she in bed with Troilus by her own choice, as she protests, or is she truly the "larke" to Troilus' "sperhawk," or more truthfully, Pandarus? Ambiguities are pushed aside as the poem to Book IV reminds readers of the ultimate conclusion of Troilus and Criseyde's love affair.

Notes

1. Qtd. in Stroud 20. Donald R. Howard, "Experience, Language, and Consciousness: *Troilus and Criseyde*," *Chaucer's Troilus: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Stephen A. Barney (Hamden, Conn., 1980) 180.

2. Some of this scholarship will be addressed in this chapter, but Fehrenbacher notes other works as well, and I will add to his list. See C. David Benson, *Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990) 94-95; Jane Chance, *Mythographic Chaucer: The Fabulation of Sexual Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995) 132; Alan Gaylord, "Reading Chaucer: What's Allowed in 'Aloud'?" *Chaucer Yearbook 1* (1992) 87-109; Barry Windeatt, *Troilus and Criseyde* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 292-93.

3. Evan Carton, "Complicity and Responsibility in Pandarus' Bed and Chaucer's Art," *PMLA* 94 (1979): 49-61. Fehrenbacher claims such a reading has its origins in Evan Carton's article.
4. Fehrenbacher quotes similar passages from both Augustine and Aquinas. St. Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, vol. 4, ed. and trans. Phillip Levine (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 196) 502-4; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 2a2ae.154.9, ed. and trans. Thomas Gilby (London: Blackfriars, 1968) 239.
5. Qtd. in Fehrenbacher 349; Fehrenbacher quotes from Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974) 263.
6. 350; Fehrenbacher cites Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Trans. James Harle Bell and Richard von Sturmer (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969) 493.
7. Dieter Mehl, "The Audience of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*," *Chaucer and Middle English Studies in honour of R.H. Robbins*, ed. Beryl Rowland (London, 1975) 178,187.
8. Beryl Rowland, "Pandarus and the Fate of Tantalus," *Orbis Litterarum* 24 (1969): 11,15.
9. 564; Haldeen Braddy, "Chaucer's Playful Pandarus," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 34 (1970): 80.
10. Qtd. in Levine 564; Levine quotes from H. Caplan, ed. *Ad Herenium*, (Cambridge, 1954) 320-21.
11. Sigal is also discussed in Chapter 1 pp.12-13. For an explanation of the *alba* and *aubade* see Chapter 1, note 9.
12. Robert Kaske, "The Aube in Chaucer's *Troilus*," *Chaucer Criticism II*, eds., Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961): 167-79.
13. Maureen Fries, "The 'Other' Voice: Woman's Song, Its Satire and Its Transcendence in Late Medieval British Literature," *Vox Feminae: Studies in Medieval Woman's Song*. John F. Plummer, ed. (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 1981) 155-78.