1977

CHAUCER AND THE GAME OF LOVE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS, THE HOUSE OF FAME AND THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLES

Stephen Hyginus Murphy
University of Rhode Island

CHAUCER AND THE GAME OF LOVE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS, THE HOUSE OF FAME AND THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLES

BY

STEPHEN HYGINUS MURPHY

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

1977

MASTER OF ARTS THESIS

OF

STEPHEN HYGINUS MURPHY

Approved:

Thesis Committee

Major Professor Josie P. Campbell

Stanford Cashdollar

Walter Cane

A. A. Michel

Dean of the Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

1977

Abstract

Examining the courtly love tradition as a viable phenomenon in Middle English literature is an extremely fascinating encounter with the pulse of fourteenth-century society. There has been a great deal of scholarly work done on both the meaning of courtly love and Chaucer's use of courtly conventions. The critics who deal with the courtly love tradition can be classified into basically four groups: (1) those who see it as a viable literary tradition; (2) those who view it as a historical fact; (3) those who say it is non-existent; and (4) those who see it as a game. The game of love can be considered serious "pleye," and it is in this sense that I examine Chaucer's use of the courtly love tradition. While reading Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess, The House of Fame, and The Parliament of Fowles, I realized that Chaucer was engaging me as a participant in a game. I also discovered that to concentrate on the game structures was at least one way of understanding the total meaning of the poems. The three major game elements explored in these poems are: (1) the presentation of the fiction of courtly love as a game itself; (2) the "play" with artistic conventions of presentation; and as a result (3) the "play" with the expectations of his audience for certain traditional conventions. The Book of the Duchess appears to be a tightly structured poem where the content and the "pleye" are perfectly suited. In The House of Fame there seems to be a "player" in search of a "game," and, as such, the poem remains elusive. In The Parliament of Fowles Chaucer seems to be playing a variety of games and expands the vision he had in both The Book of the Duchess and The House of Fame. This investigation suggests that Chaucer as poet was playing with the implications of the poetic process itself, with his material, and with his audience.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Because of the overwhelming body of Chaucer criticism at our disposal, it is important to justify any further critical investigation. This is particularly true when the topic of the paper deals with both Chaucer and love. What more can be said about courtly love? What could be less new or less needed than an analysis of three Chaucerian poems in relation to courtly love? I do feel justified, however, in presenting the following study of Chaucer. Too many critics find nothing new to discover in Chaucer. Erroneously, they see Chaucer in The Book of the Duchess, The House of Fame, and The Parliament of Fowles as lacking originality. Nothing could be further from the truth, and this study will attempt to dispel these fallacies.

In the past the central critical dispute with courtly love concerned its origin. There have been a variety of origins claimed--Ovid, Provençal poetry, the Andalusian poetry of the Moors, and so forth. The present study will by-pass an investigation of the origins of courtly love and instead will focus its attention on the meaning of courtly love. This is not too narrow a scope, for courtly love is a very difficult topic to define. The problem is compounded by the divergence of critical opinion where theories tend to become mutually exclusive. Before stating what I believe to be Chaucer's view of courtly love and the meaning which will underlie this investigation, therefore, it may be helpful to review some of the most prominent and accepted notions of courtly love available to the student of medieval literature by both early writers and modern theorists.

A brief review of the critical opinions of twentieth-century critics on the meanings of courtly love reveals the wide range of opinions from C. S. Lewis' definition of courtly love, derived from Andreas Capellanus', as essentially adulterous[1] to G. L. Kittredge's view that courtly love is a special type of love which is pure, and as such, is both spiritual and non-sensual.[2] Although the delineation of varying critical views may seem to be an awesome task, they can be classified into basically four groups: (1) those who see it as a viable literary tradition; (2) those who view it as a historical fact; (3) those who say it is non-existent; and (4) those who see it as a game. Charles Muscatine is a member of the first group. He along with many other critics sees courtly love as a form many medieval writers used.[3] This form involved a number of rules and conventions which the medieval writers used as a vehicle for their poetry. Donaldson, on the other hand, sees courtly love as more real in the Middle Ages than now and as such, as a form of sublimation.[4] Silverstein states that "what was for them (medieval troubadours) a living preoccupation, connected with current problems of morals and of faith and reflected in contemporary poetry and song, is for us an historical pastime."[5] What was psychological and sociological can now be merely historical. Then there are those critics who do not believe in the importance of courtly love as a means of understanding medieval life and literature. D. W. Robertson, one of the most influential of the non-believers, asserts that courtly love is a term made up by critics and its use is only an impediment to our understanding of medieval literature.[6] John F. Benton, another non-believer, strangely enough sees courtly love as merely one aspect of medieval social history with absolutely no value to historians.[7] For these critics courtly love thus only exists in modern minds and is ultimately

non-existent. The final group of critics, such as Briffault and Singleton,[8] look at courtly love as an elaborate game in structure, and played often poetically, within a sociological, psychological, and historical context. Briffault explains this when he says that the courtly love conventions "performed the function of a protective coloring by means of which its bearers mimicked their environment."[9] Those participating in such a game were able to stand apart from the serious business of life while at the same time looking at it very seriously. The game of love, then, can be considered serious "pleye," and it is in this sense that I shall be looking at Chaucer's use of the courtly love tradition.

J. W. Lever has stated that "in considering Medieval and Renaissance poetry, the first step must always be to determine the nature of imitation--in other words, to ascertain the distinctive qualities of a work by comparison with its models."[10] Silverstein agrees, saying the reader is better able "to value the skill of the poet and the special conventions within which that poet works."[11] In looking at the courtly love tradition used by writers who lived before Chaucer, one discovers in a relatively brief survey the source of Chaucer's use of "game" and what this ultimately allowed him to do as a poet.

During the reign of Countess Marie de France, the daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204), at Champagne, there evolved a great interest in the world of pleasure, literary taste, and love. The convergence of Ovid's ideas on love, popular Provençal poetry introduced to Northern France by Eleanor, and the social conditions of the courts led to a new literature of love. Newman believes that Marie de France was the "catalyst for the emergence of a new literature and sensibility of love."[12] Andreas Capellanus, Marie's chaplain, was the first to

record the rules and form them into an established system of behavior for courtly love, a system that suggests a carefully, and intricately structured game. Donaldson firmly believes that Andreas' De arte honeste amandi (The Art of Loving Decently) is a rewriting of Art of Love and Remedies of Love, both by Ovid.[13] The parallels between Ovid's works and Andreas are self evident and the underlying use of game as metaphor reinforces the similarities. By reading Andreas, the subconscious meaning of love in twelfth-century society is revealed. It is stated in the preface that the book was written to explain "the way in which a state of love between two lovers may be kept unharmed."[14] The psychological and sociological implications are thus made clear even before the work begins. Koenigsberg says that the basic idea of courtly love, according to Capellanus, is that

> the Lady is to be worshipped, that she is to be intensely desired and ardently pursued, not only because of her intrinsic beauty and nobility but because of her capacity to endow the man with virtue through her acceptance of him. The Lady, in turn is to judge her pursuer, not on the basis of incidental qualities, but upon the basis of his character, the latter being defined and demonstrated through the performance of acts of gentleness and courtesy. The woman is obligated, indeed has a social responsibility to accept the man if he can exhibit that he is worthy.[15]

As a way of working out these principles, Capellanus divides his treatise on love into three parts. The first book is a series of dialogues between members of the opposite sex in which the male tries to persuade the female to love him and she counter-attacks on why she should not. The second book contains more general discussions on the role of each in love and gives the thirty-one rules of love. According to Donaldson the final section, book three, is "characteristically medieval" because it "repudiates the entire con-

tent of the first two."[16] It is obvious through Andreas' work that not only are the participants playing games but also that he is playing with the wit and wisdom of his audience. In all seriousness Andreas defines love as "a passion from the contemplation of beauty in the opposite sex, [which] culminat[es] in the gratification of the physical desire thus awakened."[17] Here his seriousness ends. The remainder of the work, while having the appearance of a de fide doctrine of love, turns into a guidebook with game as a metaphor for the social code. The entire book is structured as a game having rules, variations on rules, as well as boundaries.

Within the rules and boundaries are prescribed roles for both women and men to play. For example, the male

> extols the virtues and the beauty of the Lady, complimenting her, in fact, in such an exaggerated way that, to the extent that one ignores the ritualistic nature of the speeches, one senses insincerity, the praise seeming a caricature of respect and affection.[18]

Likewise, the women played their part by

> [insisting] upon the distance between herself and making the man's task as difficult as possible, countering his arguments, insulting his good intentions, and humiliating him as he is in the very act of expressing his virtues.[19]

It seems that the sadistic overtones of the lady and the insistance on a "masochistic submission to her will [are] central psychological feature[s] of courtly love."[20] and of Capellanus' game. He sets up the rules, positions the players, set the limitations, and finally lets the participants play out their roles.

It is important to remember that Capellanus' system and elaborate games of love were possible because of the idleness of the rich. The Courts of Love developed under Marie of Champagne whereby noble

ladies "amused themselves and the fashionable society about them by rendering decisions on difficult questions which were argued before the mock Courts of Love."[21] These were mainly concerned with whom the lover should choose as the recipient of love, how he could win her love, and how her favor might be maintained. This tripartite form is likewise found in Ovid's Ars Amatoria.[22] Koenigsberg sees implicit game elements in these court sessions by referring to the etiquette of love as "ritualistic, contrived, and argumentative."[23] Moller reinforces this idea by stating that "the esoteric discussions at the courts of Eleanor of Aquitaine and her daughter were not intended as a description of reality."[24] What started out as a game to pass the time away evolved into a systematic mode of behavior due to the influence of the troubadours whose source of inspiration for their songs was love itself. The truth of Capellanus' work, as he perceived it, rests in his fictional games of love.

The importance of Capellanus' work lies not so much in his establishment of rules of conduct, his discussions and decisions on love, nor on who may or may not love, but in his serio-comic presentation of the system of courtly love. Capellanus saw courtly love as a game and established a set of rules to follow. He viewed it as a pastime with serious overtones.

Capellanus' ideas are important for the purposes of this investigation, since we are trying to view courtly love not so much as an established cultural norm but as a system of wish-fulfillment and fantasy. For the noble class, courtly love may have become a means both to pass time and more importantly to act out externally, through role playing with assigned roles for males and females,

internal frustrations and anxieties. Capellanus was really one of the first to realize that the distancing necessary in the games of love ultimately caused self-awareness.

Just as De arte honeste amandi of Andreas is important in understanding courtly love and game as metaphor, so too is the Romance of the Rose of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun. Both Art of Love and Remedies of Love by Ovid considered the courtly lover as a cynical seducer, whereas both the Romance of the Rose and the De arte honeste amandi are not quite so cynical. In his "Introduction" to a modern English translation of the Romance of the Rose, Harry Robbins mentions that by the time this work was written in 1237 De Lorris' readers were well aware of the erotic passion of love as well as its secretive and extramarital nature spoken of by Andreas Capellanus. But as Robbins says, "Guillaume de Lorris, who knew well the discourses of courtly love, provided his audience with a fresh approach to this familiar matter."[25] (Later in this study it will be apparent that Chaucer, too, was able to provide his own "fresh approach to this familiar matter.") The Romance of the Rose had an important influence on the literature of the Middle Ages as well as on the conception of love. Huizinga believes that "by combining the passionate character of its sensuous central theme with all the elaborate fancy of the system of courtly love, [the Romance of the Rose] satisfied the needs of erotic expression of a whole age."[26] Though Robertson may not believe in courtly love, he nonetheless neatly summarizes its techniques recommended in the Romance of the Rose:

> ...the lover should spend all his wealth, employ outrageous flattery, engage in blatant hypocrisy about what he wants, and convince the lady that she can accumulate great wealth and a kind of eternal youth by granting her favors.[27]

I have previously alluded to the fact that many modern critics have divergent views on the meaning of courtly love. With the Romance of the Rose we have an example of two thirteenth-century contemporaries, de Lorris and de Meun, with opposing views of courtly love. Because Chaucer translated the Romance of the Rose into English, it may be helpful to look briefly at courtly love motifs in this book. The Romance of the Rose adheres to the general characteristics of the French form of the love vision as summarized by Sypherd: emphasis on the dream itself, the usual setting of a May day in the woods, the use of a guide, allegorical or mythological material, and the story usually experienced by a hero in the service of love.[28] William A. Nitze believes that the Romance of the Rose represents "the passage from the courtois to the bourgeois point of view."[29] Guillaume de Lorris wrote his section of the work in courtly style and utilized the very popular dream vision as an allegorical means of speaking to the psychological forces that operate in the world. De Lorris approached this subject with tenderness. On the other hand, de Meun, the psychological and social analyst, was anti-courtly, satiric, argumentative, and anti-feminine in his treatment of love, and thus the hard reality of the "third estate" is emphasized as he lashes out "against the evils of medieval society in general."[30] Huizinga sums this up: "the vigorous and trenchant spirit of de Meun tarnished the naïve lightsome idealism of de Lorris."[31] The ambiguous juxtaposition of the courtly conception of love with sensual cynicism heightens the effect of the Romance of the Rose.

Love is clearly spoken of in terms of "game" or "pleye" in the Romance of the Rose: "He who shall hear the story through and through/

Quite well will understand the game of love" (ll. 9, 47-48).[32] Love is viewed as a game or a contest which the lover must win in order to win the lady. In this game, Fair Welcome is the part of the Rose's personality that attracts the lover, whereas Danger is the aspect of her personality that repels him. The Duenna sets the rules and boundaries for the game. In the de Lorris section of the poem the enclosed garden is the place where the games take place. De Lorris himself seems to be "playing it straight" by emphasizing the lovely aspects of the garden of an idealized lady. His section of the Romance of the Rose seems almost "balletic game" with a great deal of ceremony, ritual, and delicacy. The rules of the game are those implicit in the word ballet; there is a sense of following the rules perfectly but with such ease that no one is aware of tight control. De Meun's round garden, on the other hand, becomes the vehicle, or mode, for game play that not only includes play within the structure of the poem but at the same time allows for game playing with his audience because of his irony. Davies believes that De Meun has "made out of the entertaining diversity of sex relationship a courtly game."[33] Just as in Capellanus' work De arte honeste amandi, the Romance of the Rose uses the game of love as a vehicle for externalizing internal anxieties.

All four poets, Ovid, Capellanus, de Lorris, and de Meun, made use of game structure in their works concerning courtly love, although each poet made use of the game of love for his own particular purpose and sometimes, as in the case of de Meun, with startling effect. Chaucer does not deny the traditions used by these poets,

but instead uses and adapts them in his own way. The game structures frequently remain in some form, however.

Game and its relation to life and society have long been of interest to anthropologists and sociologists. Huizinga's work, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture, tries to divorce itself from a psychological or anthropological discussion and centers on play as a cultural phenomenon. His aim is not so much to define play, which he says is impossible, or to explain the place of play in culture, but rather "to ascertain how far culture itself bears the character of play."[34] He is thus concerned with play as a social function, "a special form of activity, as a 'significant' form" (p. 4) and attempts to show that play is "one of the main bases of civilization" (p. 5).

As a cultural phenomenon, play has certain characteristics summed up as:

> a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious,' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an ordinary manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their differences from the common world by disguise or other means. (p. 13)

One by one, these characteristics can be paralleled to the courtly game of love.

There are numerous implications in the ideas of Huizinga and I would like to elaborate on them, first by illustrating the complexities in game playing in the ordinary child's game of hopscotch. Here is only one of the many ways to play hopscotch. First draw the playing area about ten feet long, consisting of eight squares having squares four-five

and seven-eight side by side while all other squares are drawn one after the other. Each player must have a coin, pebble, or bottlecap. This personalized marker is called a "potsie." The first player tosses his potsie into box one, hops over one on one foot, into two, then into three. At four-five he puts both feet down at the same time, one into each box. Then he hops on one foot into six, puts both feet down, one in seven and one in eight, jumps around to face the other way, with feet in seven-eight again, and then hops back through all the boxes until he reaches two. Here he bends over on one foot, picks up his potsie, hops into one and out again. Then he tosses the potsie into two, hops into one, over two, and continues on as before, picking up his potsie on the way out. He then tosses the potsie into three and so on through all the boxes. If a player tosses his potsie into the wrong box, he must toss it back into the last box he played and stop. The next player takes his turn. One must also stop playing and leave his potsie wherever it is if he puts two feet in one box or touches a line with his hand or foot. The next player does not need to play a box with someone else's potsie there. The first player to finish is the winner. No more than four players should play at one time.

Many of the qualities of play that Huizinga explained are present in this game. Every game has a pre-established playing area where certain perimeters are staked out. All games have a series of rules that provide a structure in which the game can be played. The game can be elaborate or simple depending on the number of rules and the complexities of the tasks the individual players are asked to perform. In most games the rules get more complex as the game progresses. The players are obliged to play by the rules of the game or else they are

not allowed to play. These rules, however, have flexibility as long as all the participants can agree upon the change. We have talked before about a game as an externalizing of internal frustrations and anxieties. From the illustration of hopscotch, one can see that child's play is psychological as well as sociological. He plays against an opponent toward a particular goal, although he may have a teammate. Through the structure of the game, an ordered system is "imposed" on the child's world by him. Boundaries and restrictions are clearly marked. But he can grow creatively by devising more elaborate configurations, by expanding the game, and even by changing the rules. The possibilities of the game seem almost limitless. The intensity of the game also varies; it may be joyous, serious, pensive, or it may provide a means of solving a problem or of providing a perspective. Whatever else, games appear to be very close to life. Particularly, this is true when game becomes an art.

Briffault's treatment of the development of courtly love poetry in The Troubadours provides many insights into the role of play in the courtly love tradition itself. According to him this poetry "answered the mood of a feudal society."[35] Its purpose was, as is all art, "to lift the mind's excitement above the oppression of actuality" (p. 12). The tunes sung were "conventional fiction" (p. 88). The poetical conventions that emerged "were essentially stage conventions" (p. 93) which "harmonized as a whole with the spirit of society" (p. 94). The courtly love conventions[36] "performed the function of a protective coloring by means of which its bearers mimicked their environment" (p. 97). In commenting on art as play and as psychology, Briffault

suggests that although one cannot establish a one-to-one relationship between the conventions and historical fact, they nonetheless reflect the mood of society.

While reading The Book of the Duchess, The House of Fame, and The Parliament of Fowles, it became obvious to me that Chaucer was engaging me as a participant in the game itself. I also discovered that to concentrate on the game structure was at least one way of understanding the total meaning of the poem. There are three major game elements that can be explored in these poems: (1) presenting the fiction of courtly love as a game itself (not unlike Capellanus and others); (2) "playing" with the artistic conventions of presentation; and in so doing (3) "playing" with the expectations of his audience for certain traditional conventions. For Chaucer the literary conventions of courtly love appear to be a game itself in which the aspects of idealization found in the poems are themselves conscious fiction. The fictional qualities of courtly love, however, had a relevance to life and became a way of dealing with certain situations, of getting one over the rough spots in life, of expressing innermost feelings, particularly in the relationship between the sexes.

Game provides a method of ordering, although for Chaucer it often is more than a mere structural device--it becomes metaphor as well. Chaucer reveals how conventions can be restrictive: the rules get rigid and mechanical and the meaning is lost, and he demonstrates how lifeless some of these conventions have become because there has been no change or evolution. He also shows how game can also be creative. One can expand the game, bend the rules, and even change them as long as the players agree. If rules are broken totally, the players will

probably be lost. Chaucer never really loses control of his poetic game, nor does he ever completely break the rules, the traditions, but carefully shapes them to draw the audience into the game itself.

Perhaps the most important game element to be examined in Chaucer's poetry is the game played with the audience, for it deals primarily with the meaning gained by the audience. By manipulating the game of love and conventional modes of perceiving it, Chaucer attempts to get his audience to discover for themselves the absurdities that people allow themselves to fall into and the distance that exists between what they say and what they mean and what they do. Courtly love itself is not necessarily ridiculous, but the manner in which people pursue it frequently is. The ideal of courtly love all too often turns into absurd games, Chaucer seems to be saying. His own artistic games with his audience suggests that while fiction is not life, it is connected to life. The mysterious interchange which occurs in the game between Chaucer and his audience reveals his awareness of them as participants in the poem, never shutting them out or expecting them to be passive. Chaucer plays a game with his audience as did Shakespeare in his plays. In both cases the authors give the audience what they expect but then play on that expectation. In Shakespeare's case the audience has a certain expectation of a particular type of Elizabethan hero. In Romeo and Juliet the typical Elizabethan hero ought to be Paris, but Shakespeare plays a game with his audience for the real hero is, of course, Romeo and not Paris. Again in Hamlet, Fortinbras is the typical tragic revenge hero but Hamlet, who does all the wrong things, turns out to be the real hero. So also in Chaucer's poetry. By playing games with the audience the

author makes them examine their own expectations by turning them around. Further, the author gets the audience to be more aware of their own expectations and to question the accuracy of these expectations or to adjust their views accordingly. This forces the audience to make choices, and leading them to understand the meaning of the poem as well as making them aware of how well the game has worked.

The three elements I have just examined are the focal points for examining Chaucer's poetry in this study. In doing this I may eliminate certain aspects of the poems on which others have already elaborated, as I suggest possible meanings through the inherent game structure of the poems. Obviously the three areas are interrelated. As I analyze the poetry I will attempt to look at each separately and then bring all three elements together.

Donaldson has said that "a definition of courtly love based on all the literature of the Middle Ages is too broad to be useful, one derived from selected primary documents fits better."[37] The reader must go to the poetry itself to find out how Chaucer uses these game elements. All three poems, The Book of the Duchess, The House of Fame, and The Parliament of Fowles, reveal a wide range of play. The Book of the Duchess appears to be a tightly structured poem where the content and the "pleye" are perfectly suited. The House of Fame seems to be a highly experimental poem and as such remains elusive. The Parliament of Fowles again suits the "pleye" perfectly, but here Chaucer seems to be playing a variety of games and expanding the vision he had in both The Book of the Duchess and The House of Fame. These three poems suggest to me that Chaucer as poet was playing with the implications of the poetic process itself, with his material, and with his audience. To paraphrase T. S.

Eliot, the really good artist is the one who uses his tradition but instead of merely copying or imitating it, reconceives it in light of his milieu: "The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that form which it was torn."[38] Few critics acknowledge that Chaucer used the courtly love tradition in order to adapt it. In this investigation, therefore, I will attempt to demonstrate how Chaucer uses game to adapt rather than adopt the various conventions for his own unique aesthetic purposes. Instead of merely imitating his predecessors, he fuses game elements with other traditions and as a result departs from them and adds a freshness to stale and over-used conventions. Chaucer reconceives traditional love motifs according to his poetic sensibilities and his own vision of life. As Huizinga states, "if, therefore, life borrows motifs and forms from literature, literature, after all, is only copying life."[39] What we discover of Chaucer's poetic sensibility and of his world view is found in the poetry itself.

Notes

[1]C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 2.

[2]George Lyman Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 26.

[3]Charles Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), passim. Kittredge, Lewis, and William George Dodd, Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1913), may also be included in this group.

[4]E. Talbot Donaldson, "The Myth of Courtly Love," Ventures 5, 2 (1965), 16-23. See also A. J. Denomy, "Courtly Love and Courtliness," Speculum 28 (1953), 44-63; and Theodore Silverstein, "Guenevere, or the Uses of Courtly Love," in The Meaning of Courtly Love, ed. F. X. Newman (Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 1968), passim.

[5]Silverstein, p. 78.

[6]D. W. Robertson, Jr., "The Concept of Courtly Love as an Impediment to the Understanding of Medieval Texts," in The Meaning of Courtly Love, ed. F. X. Newman, p. 3. See also B. Huppe and D. W. Robertson, Jr., Fruyt and Chaf: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), passim.

[7]John F. Benton, "Clio and Venus: An Historical View of Medieval Love," in The Meaning of Courtly Love, ed. F. X. Newman, p. 37.

[8]Robert S. Briffault, The Troubadours (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), passim. See also Charles S. Singleton, "Dante: Within Courtly Love and Beyond," in The Meaning of Courtly Love, ed. F. X. Newman, pp. 43-54; and Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), passim.

[9]Briffault, The Troubadours, p. 97.

[10]J. W. Lever, The Elizabethan Love Sonnet (London: Methuen and Co., 1956), p. 99.

[11]Silverstein, p. 85.

[12]F. X. Newman, "Preface," in The Meaning of Courtly Love, p. viii.

[13]Donaldson, p. 20.

[14]Andreas Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love, trans. John Jay Parry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), p. 27.

[15]Richard A. Koenigsberg, "Culture and the Unconscious Fantasy: Observations on Courtly Love," Psychoanalytic Review, 54 (1967), p. 37.

[16]Donaldson, p. 19. By "characteristically medieval" Donaldson means that the final section, instead of furthering the previous two sections, almost retracts them. This itself is a game medieval writers played.

[17]Capellanus, p. 29.

[18]Capellanus, p. 37.

[19]Capellanus, p. 51.

[20]Koenigsberg, p. 40.

[21]Dodd, p. 21; Briffault, p. 95.

[22]Dodd, p. 3.

[23]Koenigsberg, p. 39.

[24]Herbert Moller, "The Meaning of Courtly Love," Journal of American Folklore, 73 (1960), p. 40.

[25]Harry W. Robbins, trans., "Introduction," the Romance of the Rose, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1962), p. xv.

[26]Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., (1954), p. 112.

[27]Robertson, p. 2.

[28]Wilbur Owen Sypherd, Studies in Chaucer's House of Fame (New York: Haskell House, 1965), p. 4.

[29]William Nitze and E. Preston Dargan, A History of French Literature (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930), p. 56.

[30]Nitze, p. 58.

[31]Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, p. 113.

[32]Romance of the Rose, Robbins, p. 44.

[33]R. T. Davies, ed., Medieval English Lyrics (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 42.

[34]Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. ii. All quotations are from this work and are noted by page numbers only. In addition to Huizinga's ideas, the following will be used in examining the use of game and

play theory in Chaucer's poems: John Stevens, "The 'Game of Love,'" in Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Courts (London: Methuen & Co., 1961), pp. 154-203; and John Leyerle, "The Game and Play of Hero," in Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, eds. Norman P. Burns and Christopher J. Reagan (Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 1975), pp. 49-82.

[35]Briffault, The Troubadours, p. 3. All quotations are from this account and are noted by page number only.

[36]I am using "conventions" to mean the rules of an artistic game played with the audience. These conventions themselves contain games within games, which may demand rapid shifts from one convention to another on the part of the audience if they wish to continue their role as audience.

[37]Donaldson, p. 17.

[38]T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in Selected Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1950), p. 51.

[39]Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, p. 78.

I

The Book of the Duchess

All critics agree that The Book of the Duchess launched Chaucer's literary career. There are, however, many critics who see blatant faults in the work because of the immaturity of the artist.[1] Most agree, however, that the poem is an elegy, no matter how polished it may or may not be,[2] written in honor of John of Gaunt's wife, Blanche. The Narrator's importance to an understanding of the poem is also acknowledged by literary critics. Some modern critics see the Narrator as naïve and exhibiting "stupidity,"[3] while others acknowledge these faults but say these critics have lost sight of the reason why the Narrator is used by Chaucer in the way he is[4]--for artfullness rather than artlessness. Most critics also agree that this poem is in the genre of the love or dream vision common to French literature and as such, the courtly love conventions used throughout also have their basis in Andreas Capellanus, Guillaume de Lorris, Jean de Meun, Guillaume Machaut, and Froissart. Many believe however, that Chaucer was not merely indebted to these writers but that Chaucer's poem is a mere imitation of his French contemporaries. I feel Chaucer employed standard conventions in The Book of the Duchess as a means of establishing his career on well-fallowed ground. He is reconceiving these love motifs to agree with his own poetic sensibilities and artistic concerns. During the course of my discussion of The Book of the Duchess, I will demonstrate how various game elements as well as an overall game structure allowed Chaucer to do this. The three major game elements used are: the fiction of courtly love, the artistic conventions of presentation, and the expectations of his audience.

Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess has basically a four-part structure: the narrative exposition, the reading of the tale of Seyx and Alcyone, the dream vision, and the reawakening. As previously mentioned, Chaucer relied on his contemporaries for ideas and techniques, and so it is not surprising that this structure is based on the traditional format of a love-vision poem. Muriel Bowden succinctly summarizes the form as follows:

> the Lover (or, sometimes, a Narrator) complains of wakefulness and attributes his state to difficulties in love; he usually attempts to find solace in a book or poem which then causes him to sleep; he dreams (that is, has his 'vision'); the dream has the beautiful setting of a spring garden where the Lover, often led by an animal guide, encounters many allegorical figures; the Lover learns the true meaning of love; he awakens refreshed.[5]

Chaucer's use of this form will be discussed throughout the following pages in an attempt to show how Chaucer adapted this form as well as the courtly conventions that are so integral a part of the game of love.

Chaucer opens The Book of the Duchess by adhering to the form of the love-vision genre: the Narrator claims that he is unable to sleep (ll. 1-29). As a result, he states "thus melancolye/ And drede I have for to dye./ Defaute of slep and hevyness" (ll. 23-25),[6] with a subsequent loss of all pleasure in life, "all lustyhede" (l. 27). He then goes on in lines 30-43 to describe the reason for his insomnia: He "lyre[s] for day ne nyght ... [he] holdes hit be a sicknesse/ That [he has] suffered this eight year" (ll. 2; 36-37). He never explicitly states what his sickness is, but he continues to echo the language of the courtly lovers of the period, "For there is phisicien but oon/ That may he hele; but that is don" (ll. 39-40). It suggests

he may have played the courtly game of love and lost. In traditional courtly love terms the Narrator would be suffering from unrequited love either because his loved one is dead or has left him for someone else. In either case, the lady acts as physician: she is the only one who can cure him, can return his pleasure for life. But, the Narrator merely hints at why he cannot sleep; it is as though he purposely veils information from us, he does not tell us all, an ambiguity that permeates the entire poem. In this sense, Chaucer opens the poem by using a "game." By presenting the Narrator in this way he presents him as self-consciously acting out the role of the love stricken suitor. But he follows the role so exactly, almost by rote, that he is perhaps slightly absurd. Chaucer, standing behind his Narrator, takes the conventional love-lorn suitor and plays him fully, so much that we may question to what ridiculous lengths the courtly lover will go. The greatness of the Narrator as a created figure lies in the possibilities he presents to us: is he totally ridiculous? Probably not, since we have felt despondent and sleepless too. And can we be sure he is love-lorn? Not exactly. So we have to suspend any judgment until later. We do not know enough about him. Thus we are forced to participate in the poem as we move into it. More importantly, Chaucer the poet allowed the Narrator to set up a game with the reader/listener. He only tells so much, we wait to hear more.

Continuing in the French love-vision genre, the Narrator picks up a book because "To rede, and drive the night away;/ For me thoughte it better play/ Then play either at ches or tables" (ll. 49-51). In this reference to games, reading is seen as play; it is more profitable to play the game of reading to fall asleep than to play backgammon. This

is comically ironic. Chess (which takes on greater significance later) or "tables" requires more than one to play and since the Narrator is alone, he must fall back on a game that is preferable in his situation. Reading, although play, takes on practical value. The Narrator's game of reading the book as a way of falling asleep is similar to the many tricks insomniacs try to play on themselves, the classic being counting sheep. In any event, he reads the tale of Seyx and Alcyone. In Ovid's story, as told by the Narrator, Alcyone has insomnia caused by her bewailing the loss of her husband, Seyx, who we learn has died while at sea. Alcyone entreats Juno to allow Seyx to visit her in a dream:

> Send me grace to slepe, and mete
> In my slep som certeyn sweven
> Wherthourgh that I may know even
> Whether my lord be quyk or ded (11. 118-121)

Implicit in Alcyone's prayer of petition to the god is also a game element. Prayer is celebration, containing within it the element of ritual. Celebration itself is a form of play, while ritual gives people a feeling of security. In this celebration, ritualized in the prayer of petition and acceptance, the religious "game" psychologically affords release. Obviously, this is very serious game playing, where responsibility is transferred to a higher being. Thus, the expression, "I place it in your hands."[7] Juno, hearing Alcyone's plea, sends a messenger to Morpheus, god of sleep, to have him occupy the dead body of Seyx and appear to her. The disguise element of game-play is used as a means of deceiving Alcyone into believing Morpheus is actually Seyx, as he speaks to Alcyone:

> My swete wyf,
> Awake! let be you sorwful lyf!

For in your sorwe there lyth no red.
For, certes, swete, I nam but ded;
Ye shul me never on lyve yse.
But, goode swete herte, that ye
Bury my body, for such a tyde
Ye mowe hyt fynde the see besyde;
And farewel, swete, my worldes blysse!
I pray God your sorwe lysse.
To lytel while oure blysse lasteth! (11. 201-211)

She awakes, finds nothing, and dies "for sorwe ...within the thridde morwe" (11. 213-214). There is a certain ambiguity here because the text is unclear as to whether she was actually dreaming or awake during the visitation, although the form of her husband tells her to awake. Sleep, dreams, death, and mourning are essential elements in this tale. But what is even more interesting is that the Narrator cuts the Ovidian story short, "I may not telle you as now" (1. 216) meaning, that is all I have time for with this tale. Chaucer is using a medieval rhetorical device for a specific purpose, and before we cast judgment on why he stopped the story so abruptly, it is worthwhile for an understanding of the entire poem to see what the Narrator neglected to relate to his audience, and then the why.

In Ovid's original tale of Ceyx and Alcyone, Alcyone is a more fully developed character with intense love, and a deep fear that Ceyx will be killed at sea, "reminding her what part of herself she may lose."[8] Ovid suggests that the lover is part of the self; any loss is of the self. She is constantly crying in an attempt to keep Ceyx from what she envisioned in a dream would be his fate, "Recently I saw wrecked timbers on the shore." Despite Alcyone's protestations, Ceyx goes off to sea and as the storm approaches, his love for his wife is shown, "He thought of her, spoke of her. . . . Alcyone and nothing else was on his lips." He is shipwrecked and Alcyone asks

Juno for a vision. Morpheus appears to Alcyone in a dream as Ceyx, says he is dead and asks her to "put on mourning garb. Do not send me unwept into the void of Tartarus." (This anticipates the Knight in the dream wearing black mourning garb and weeping, mourning his beloved.)

A dramatic change now occurs between the Ovidian original and Chaucer's version. Whereas Chaucer's Alcyone died after the vision, Ovid's character goes to the shore and sees another vision which turns out to be her husband Ceyx. Miraculously, Alcyone undergoes a metamorphosis, acquires wings, and is transformed into a sorrowing bird singing plaintive laments. As she flies to Ceyx he is also transformed. Ovid insists that "their love endured, even after they had shared this fate, and their marriage vows were not dissolved when they acquired wings." Hereafter, Ceyx and Alcyone become birds for half the year. This Ovidian magical transformation with an unabiding faith in the power of love is highly idealized. Psychologically, it is also wish-fulfillment. Love is so powerful that it transcends death, not totally, but for half the year. Memory is part of the vehicle of this transcendent love. Thus each year, because of love, there is a rebirth in the transformed birds.

The ending of Ovid's story seems more in keeping with the meaning of the poem especially evidenced in the dream to follow. Why then did the Narrator neglect to complete the story? Kittredge shows Chaucer's indebtedness to Machaut for his treatment of this tale in Dit de la Fontaine Amoureuse where there was "a psychological link of cause and effect between its presence there and the vision"[9] that followed. For the Narrator, the tale is complete because it allows him to fall asleep eventually. Because the Narrator is so preoccupied with himself and

his sleeplessness, he may lose his critical literary judgment. By doing this he misses the whole intention of the tale, the sorrow at the loss of a loved one, and he is not moved by the grief of the tale. Chaucer may also have been counting on his audience's memory of Ovid's story, and thus playing a game with them. The Seyx and Alcyone tale is of ideal love and the audience would be fully aware that Chaucer had cut the tale short. Chaucer probably hoped his audience, who knew the missing part of the story, would keep it in mind, as they asked why the Narrator did not go on with the climax of the story. Instead the Narrator concentrates on what the audience would say is a trivial aspect of Ovid's story. But the audience would think this is humorous--a poet, the Narrator, not doing his job. We have found out something more about the Narrator, but not enough yet. I have mentioned previously that one of the ways in which Chaucer used game in the poems under discussion was by "playing" with the expectations of his audience for certain traditional conventions. As a result of playing with these expectations, the Ovidian story may be recalled later during the Knight's story. The ending of Ovid's story emphasizes the lack of finality in death, and the transcendence of love. Symbolically, like the phoenix which is reborn from his ashes, Ceyx is reborn and metamorphosed along with his wife Alcyone into a bird for half the year. What Chaucer has not allowed his Narrator to say is in many ways more important to an understanding of the dream than is merely the sorrow of loss stated in his tale.

In the dream of Alcyone, she discovers death and dies herself. Her problem is her sense of loss; this overwhelms her and kills her. The Narrator is preoccupied with his problem of insomnia and asks Juno and

Morpheus for the same assistance in sleeping that was granted to Alcyone. He echoes Alcyone by saying "I had be dolven everydel,/ And ded, ryght thurgh default of slep" (11. 222-223). Again the naiveté of the Narrator is emphasized when he bribes Juno and Morpheus with a mattress (1. 250), and although his game with the god of sleep may appear ridiculous, even more humorously, it works.

By having the Narrator cut short the Ovidian tale and by having him concentrate on the element of sleeplessness, Chaucer accomplishes several things. It is psychologically sound that the Narrator, sleepless himself, grasps at this element in the story. By doing this, however, it reveals the limitations of the Narrator. He cannot get beyond his own problem. Due to his obtuseness, the audience's expectations for the whole story are thwarted, and the possibilities of audience reaction are opened up, not closed off.

The Narrator's dream is the result of his sleep won from Morpheus and Juno. The tale of Seyx and Alcyone, read before sleeping, provides a link between the love-sick Narrator and his dream of a love-sick Knight mourning his dead lady just as the Narrator had bemoaned his eight year sickness. As Bowden states, "Chaucer provides a literary balance between the Ovid tale and the Narrator's dream, as well as making a natural connection for the reader between introduction--prologue and tale--and main body."[10] In addition, Chaucer has introduced the major game elements that will be evidenced in the dream itself: the fiction of courtly love, artistic conventions of presentation, and audience expectation.

In the next section of the poem, the Narrator sleeps and has his dream, lines 222-1334, or love-vision. If for the tale of Seyx and

Alcyone Chaucer had relied on the work of Machaut, here he is again faithful to the French love-vision form, but now he relies heavily on the work of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, the Romance of the Rose. As will be evidenced in the following discussion, even though the Narrator's dream-vision follows closely established tradition, Chaucer's treatment of this convention is quite original. Both de Lorris and de Meun used game structures in their work and made use of the game of love. It is interesting therefore to see how Chaucer adapts this in his own way and, using the words of J. L. Lowes, places his "unmistakable individual stamp"[11] on this traditional medieval form.

After falling asleep the Narrator finds himself "in [his] bed al naked" (l. 293) about dawn in the month of May. Outside he hears the sweet sound of birds singing as "they sate among/ Upon my chambre roof wythoute" (ll. 298-299). They are in one accord, with such harmony that his "chambre gan to rynge/ Thurgh syngnge of her armonye" (ll. 311-312). Soon after this awakening to the delightful sounds of these birds, his room is covered with paintings "and with glas/ Were al the wyndowes well yglased" (ll. 321-322). The story of Troy is painted there as well as "both text and glos,/ Of al the Romaunce of the Rose" (ll. 333-334). The emphasis on brightness, beauty, and harmony begins to change as the Narrator moves further into his dream. Chaucer leaves no doubt in the audience's mind that he has relied on the Romance of the Rose for his material, both "text," story, and "glos," explanation. All of the aspects of idealization found thus far in the poem represent the conscious fiction of the game of love. By doing this Chaucer has raised the expectation of his audience who will be able to judge what

artistic variations on traditional convention will be made. The explicit reference to the Romance of the Rose echoes the previous tale and anticipates the Black Knight's story to be told, for in the Romance of the Rose, especially in de Meun's section, Reason's lesson is to strive for another and better form of love, something more lasting than mere transient earthly love. But even here there is a certain freshness about the material used.

After such a beautiful scene we are immediately thrust into the world of competition and death--the hunt scene. With the sounding of the horn, the Narrator hears "al men speken of hunting,/ How they wolde slee the hert with strength" (ll. 350-351). He immediately mounts his horse to take part in the hunt, which is recounted as a game:

> Withynne a while the hert yfounde ys,
> Yhalowed, and rechased faste
> Long tyme; and so at the laste
> This hert rused, and staal away
> For alle the houndes a privy way. (ll. 378-384)

All are participating in a sporting game with a set of rules with the success or failure depending on the cunning of the "hert" as he seeks "a privy way." This scene is brief but the audience is never to forget that this hunt continues for the remainder of the dream. In the words of Reiss, the hunt scene "forms the background to the dialogue between the Narrator and the man in black."[12] There is a pun on "hert" in this scene. In his own bumbling way, the Narrator will go "hert" hunting with the Black Knight, who will hunt out his own "hert" until it is revealed, to himself as well as to the Narrator. This conscious play of words on Chaucer's part suggests a rather deep game structure at the level of language. Chaucer uses this scene to function much in

the same way as in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight where Bercilak's hunt is used as a backdrop for the conversations between Gawain and Bercilak's wife. It is extremely important that hunting precedes and follows the Black Knight's tale of love in The Book of the Duchess.

While the Narrator walks along, an affectionate whelp acts as his guide (an echo of the guides in the love-vision form), runs away, and leads him symbolically through a green wonderland into a darkened wood to "a man in blak" (l. 445). It is important to note the "play" of juxtapositions. We have the hunt, with its violence and threat of death. We also have the whelp that by chance, it seems, "affectionately" guides the Narrator--but through the green wonderland to the darkened wood to the man in black. This play of opposites will continue. Bowden views the significance of the whelp in this fashion:

> Chaucer may have placed the little animal in the poem as a contrast to the fierce hunting hounds, and to prepare the heart (the 'gentil herte' where pity dwells) for the sorrowful beauty which is to come: the praise and lament of Blanche ....[13]

We are now at the heart of the poem, but we have been prepared for this. The Narrator's sickness, the Seyx and Alcyone tale, the implications of the hunt scene, and the warm-hearted whelp all lead naturally to this present scene. Artistically, Chaucer has been going through a process of ordering conventional game elements to fit his particular poetic needs. As the brightness of the Narrator's bed chamber is in direct contrast with the dark wood that he now enters, so too the tone of the poem now changes. We open with the Narrator's description of the Knight as a man of fine upbringing who is young and handsome, but having "such sorwe and be not ded" (l. 469). The emphasis on death is an echo of the previous words of both the

Narrator and Alcyone. At this point Chaucer could be "playing" on the expectations of his audience as he makes a conscious association between Alcyone and the Knight. The Knight then recites a lay, vowing that all happiness has gone from his life because she had died, "fro me ded and ys agoon" (l. 479). There is a reversal of roles from Ovid's tale, where we now have a male moaning over the loss of his beloved. In the Knight's lay we see the same sorrow and death portrayed in the story read by the dreamer, the impetus for the dream itself. The Knight complains that death should have taken him instead of this fair and beautiful lady who "had no mete" (l. 486).

With the Knight's reference to "hep sorwful hert" we immediately feel his sense of loss but also we cannot but be aware of Chaucer's use of word play here. In the previous scene we had the "hert hunt" and now we have a hunt "herte." Again the verbal juxtaposition and association of the Knight's lament with the hunt scene is a device that will continue throughout this present scene and until the end of the poem as part of Chaucer's elaborate game structure.

Up to this point the Narrator has observed the Knight and overheard his sorrowful lament but as yet he has not been acknowledged by the Knight. The Narrator wants to find out what caused the Knight's sorrow, "knowynge of hys thought" (l. 538). This device is followed by a very telling line, "this game is doon./ I holde that this hert be goon" (ll. 539-540), referring possibly to life itself. The use of the game element and word play are a magnificant Chaucerian touch. Previously, the Narrator had wanted to be part of the "herte hunt" and found himself in another part of the woods with his game, the forlorn Knight. To the audience, the "herte hunt" is still going on,

and although the word "herte" appears numerous times in this scene, the Narrator makes the connection between the word and the action in which he is involved. Even though he is still "herte" hunting in a way, he now finds himself in the midst of another game as he will try to get the Knight to tell his complete story without being presumptuous and asking it outright of him. The word play on "hert be goon" implies that the hound has found a temporary rescue from the hunters and at the same time it capsulizes the feelings of the Knight. The Narrator volunteers:

> As sys helpe me soo,
> Amende hyt, yif I kan or may
> ... to make you hool,
> I wol do al my power hool. (11. 550-551;553-554)

The Knight immediately says that his sorrow is so great "For y am sorwe, and sorwe ys y" (1. 597) that not even a "phiscien" can help him. The reference to physician returns us to the opening of the poem and the Narrator's remark that there was only one physician that could cure him from his own love sickness.

It is important to pause momentarily to discern how much the Narrator knows, or more to the point, the ambiguity of the Narrator. When the Narrator overhears the man in black, note the construction of his language: "He sayd a lay, a manner song,/Withoute noote, withoute song" (11. 471-472); then he can "Rherse hyt" (1. 474) and then he refers to it as "his complaynte" (1. 487) (Italics inserted). These are formal poetic terms. The Narrator has it by rote, but does he understand it as felt by the Knight? Perhaps not. The "lay" and the "complaint" were aesthetic and formal conventionalized poems, not necessarily presented with feeling. The Narrator says how well the Knight speaks, "how goodly spak thys knyght" (1. 529) but he cannot be

thinking of the content when he says the game, the hunt, is done. The question is, does the Narrator know more than he gives away, or is he being obtuse again as he was with the Ovid tale? How conscious is the Narrator of what he says? Again, we have possibilities and perhaps no concrete answers, at least not here.

Before the Narrator has a chance to say any more, the Knight immediately tells the cause of his sorrow. He begins by using a series of antithesis characterizing his state of confusion and aimlessness:

> To derke ys turned al my lyght,
> My wyt ys foly, my day ys nyght
> My love ys hate, my slep wakynge. (11. 607-610)

He then explains his state in terms of a game, "For fals Fortune hath pleyd a game/ Atte ches with me" (11. 618-619). When the Knight is speaking of Fortune and her "false whel" (1. 644), the Narrator immediately breaks in and asks what has she done? He then describes "At the ches with me she gan to pleye" (1. 652) and how he "kouthe no lenger pleye" (1. 656) due to her craftiness and her being more skillful at ches than "Athalus, that made the game" (1. 665). He confesses that Fortune was better at chess and had taken his queen, "I shulde have pleyd the bet at ches,/ And kept my fers the bet therby" (11. 668-669). He realized that he had made a bad move "through that draughte" (1. 685), and this has caused him so much sorrow and pain for Fortune "staal on me, and took my fers ...she took the beste," (11. 654-684) his queen. (The image here is the traditional image of death who snaps up and steals away with life, biblically, according to St. Paul, like a thief in the night.)

Chess and the immediate association with a chess board is important in seeing Chaucer's use of the concept of play. The chess

game is an old metaphor for the game of life and the Knight here uses it to play his part in the game of courtly love. The Knight is using the chessboard to define his life through the area of the game, in Huizinga's words "its own proper boundaries ...in an orderly manner,"[14] a necessary ingredient or characteristic of every game. The Knight, who plays by the rules, loses the game to a far better player. But his true grief is caused not by the loss of the chess piece but by the loss of his wife. Even the most ideal game may have its losses. He has already stated in his lament that his beloved was dead, but remember, the Narrator overheard this without the Knight's knowledge. In relating his plight to the Narrator, he uses figurative language, really a series of euphemisms. Psychologically, word play helps us over the rough spots in life. Continuing to play a game, the Knight is keeping his grief in bounds and is ordering it. Chaucer has the Knight use the game element as a means of describing his inner frustrations and sorrows without explicitely having to reveal his personal feelings of loss. It is too painful for him to acknowledge his wife's death so he describes it as a chess game where Fortune won and in his eyes took advantage of him unfairly. The Knight is trying to make sense out of the senseless, order out of chaos. Here as elsewhere, the game elements are used to help the character externalize his inner turmoil, something too painful to speak directly. Similarly, the concept developed here of a game having boundaries and order becomes the central metaphor for the entire poem.

The Narrator attempts a momentary consolation of the Knight by recounting the foolishness of lovers who gave up their lives for their beloved. The naiveté of the Narrator is made clear in the lines, "But

ther is no man alyve her/ Wolde for a fers make this woo!" (ll.740-741). Some critics see this as a clear indication of the stupidity of Chaucer's Narrator--believing the literal meaning of the chess game rather than the figurative meaning--but others believe that the narrator may be playing a game with the Knight. We know that the Narrator has overheard the Knight's lament at the death of his lady. If we are sure he is aware of her death, why does the Narrator seemingly misunderstand all that the Knight has said? Kittredge believes that Chaucer has the Narrator act unaware in order "to afford the Knight the only help in his power--the comfort of pouring his sad story into compassionate ears."[15] Bronson posits yet another reason for the Narrator's position. He believes that the Narrator adhered to the literal rather than the figurative meaning in "that the knight as yet has given no sanction for the familiarity that a substitution would imply. Decorum not bewilderment, forbids the Dreamer's referring to the lady in more literal terms."[16] Bronson sheds light on the very function of the Narrator, to aid the Knight in telling his tale and attaining some relief from his grief: "Never presuming on his private knowledge, the Dreamer leads the Knight from that point to disclose everything, and at the knight's own pace and pleasure."[17] Lawlor does not view the Narrator's motives as being as altruistic as Kittredge and Bronson believe them to be. Lawlor believes that the Narrator "seeks to know more, namely the precise nature of the Knight's grief."[18] Remember, the Narrator is only aware of love's unfulfilled desire and as such he wants to know, in the Knight's predicament, "is it grief at love forever unfulfilled, or grief at Death's interruption of love in its fulfillment?"[19] The Narrator hopes to learn what fulfilled love is like and thus coaxes the Knight to ex-

plain his whole love affair by feigning ignorance and misunderstanding. It is a simple case of "auctorite" versus experience. The Narrator has experience of unfulfilled love, and now he hopes to learn of fulfilled love through the experience of the Knight, an "auctorite." Basically, the dispute over the Narrator narrows down to two questions: does he know what the Knight says, and is he artfully playing "him out," or has he misconstrued the Knight's words? After all, he does not seem to see the significance of the Seyx and Alcyone tale. Again, I see this ambiguous Narrator as Chaucer's means of game play, in which he allows his audience to perceive more than his Narrator by making use of dramatic irony. Perhaps Chaucer does not have as much control over his Narrator as he would like to have, but even here the art with which Chaucer conceives and manipulates his Narrator shows where Chaucer's greatness is leading--to the detached Narrator--when he finally breaks away from tradition to "dare to speak the language of the heart."[20]

The Narrator's game works, for the Knight says that he has lost more than a mere chess game. At this point the Knight admits the game is a metaphor for something greater. The Knight invites him to sit down and he will tell him his story of love and grief. By doing this he asks the Narrator to participate in a game that operates on two levels: the complaint and the confession. The story that the Knight now tells is out of the courtly love tradition. Here the game represents the ideal and it has within it a great deal of tenderness as it is related in a very beautiful way. In this long narrative (lines 758-1310) the French love tradition and the conscious fiction of the courtly game of love are heavily employed but with Chaucer's characteristic orginality. Bowden and Kittredge both attest to this for although

they see Chaucer's lack of divergence from tradition, they note his originality in using the traditional "lover's complaint" for the purpose of a personal elegy.[21] The praise of Blanche in this elegy is even more striking by the fact that it is told by her husband, the Knight, and not by the Narrator.

The Knight begins his story by explaining how he entered the service of Love, and how he was his devoted subject. Dodd[22] glosses this section by seeing two images of the god of Love developed. First, he appears as a feudal ruler, "Be tributarye and yiven rente ... as to my lord and dide homage" (11. 765,770) and then as a god to whom the lover prayed, "He shulde besette myn herte so/ That hyt pleasance to hym were,/ And worship to my lady dere" (11. 772-774). He continues, "I ches love to my firste craft/ Therefore hit ys with me laft" (11. 791-792). The Knight had no commitments "And this was longe, and many a yer,/ O that myn herte was set owher" (11. 775-776) and let youth be his master, "For that tyme yowthe, my maistresse,/ Governed me in ydelnesse" (11. 797-798). These two stages of development parallel similar occurrences in de Lorris' the Romance of the Rose. Throughout the Knight's narration, the echoes of this work are numerous. Game elements continue to be present in the poem as the Knight now describes how courtly love was played. Young men are initiated into this game by dedicating their lives to the service of Love, and as Huizinga explains as a characteristic of play, they involve themselves into it "intensely and utterly."[23] The various idealizations represented are conventional, and the Knight explains how the established codes defined how nobles lived. Chaucer's manipulation of the code of courtly love is his way of arousing his audience to have

certain expectations. In this poem the audience has no expectations of the lady. The Knight makes the comparison that she is not like other courtly ladies. Chaucer thus carefully directs his audience's attention to the lady's good qualities.

As a result of following the rules of courtly behavior in the service of love, the Knight is directed by chance, "hap" (1. 810), one day to a group of ladies; but one stood out above all others, "that was lyk noon of the route" (1. 819), and he immediately knew that this was his lady and now he must enter her service. What follows are the conventional games he played in order to have her accept him as her lover. The emphasis on eyes is conventional because traditionally the young lover is smitten in the eye by Cupid's dart and then in his heart. He blames his joyous plight on Fortune, "the false trayteresse" (1. 813). He describes the beauty of his lady, "Of stature, and of wel set gladnesse,/ Of goodlyhede so well beseye--/ Shortly, what shall y more seye?" (11. 828-830). And again the conventional connotation of "eyes" is used, "hir eyen/ So gladly, I trow, myn herte seyen" (11. 841-842) and decides it is better to serve her unthankfully than to be with another, "better serve hir for noght/ Than with another to be wel" (11. 844-845).

The concept of love entering the heart through the eyes was a favorite conceit of Chretien de Troies. The "eyes" are used in very much the same way as Narcissus's pool in the Romance of the Rose, a catalyst for an immediate attraction and compulsive love. He is unrequited but he continues to play the game by the rules and he will endure much love sorrow for her as a result. There are basically two game elements present in this section: the participants "surround

themselves with secrecy,"[24] and there are obstacles to overcome. The lover knows, according to the established code of courtly love, that he must remain in the background until he is accepted by his beloved. In his eyes she was perfection and in his elaborate descriptions he catalogues all of her attributes. These elaborate detailed descriptions show the influence of the troubadours as well as the writers of courtly love verse. Because of her fairness he believes her name "goode faire White" (l. 948), Blanche, is most appropriate, "She hadde not hir name wrong" (l. 951). Characteristically, after giving a gentle, loving, and tender description of her, he berates his own ability to do justice to a description of her greatness:

> Alas! myn herte ys wonder woo
> That I ne kan discryven hyt!
> Me lakketh both Englyssh and wit
> For to undo hyt at the fulle; ...
> I have no wit than kan suffise
> To comprehenden hir beaute. (ll. 896-899; 902-903)

But he was always aware that she had the power to hurt him, for although he loved her and could think of nothing else but her, she had hurt many with her glance, "But many oon with hire lok she herte" (l. 883). He emphasizes her indifference, the conventional pose of the courtly lady, and her unapproachableness, "To gete her love no ner nas he/ Than woned at hom, than he in Ynde" (ll. 888-889). But none of this mattered to the Knight for she was his "lyves leche" (l. 920) who could "hele" (l. 928) him of any malady. We are reminded of the two earlier references to physician, the Narrator's "phisicien but oon" and the Knight's belief that "no phiscien" could help him. Traditionally the courtly lady was seen as having medicinal qualities for if one were in her countenance, one had no problems. Love rather than

reason ruled the Knight's life. Blanche "absorb[ed] the player [the Knight] intensely and utterly," in Huizinga's words.

Besides her physical beauty and her delicate manners, she also possessed perfection of her heart. She had a sense of faithfulness and constancy, "Therto she hadde the most grace,/ To have stedfast perseveraunce" (11. 1006-1007). She would never send a man on foolish adventures to far off places "To Pruyse, and into Tartarye ...." (11. 1025-1026). For "She ne used no suche knakkes smale" (1. 1033). He sets Blanche apart from all the other courtly ladies. Traditionally, these ladies acted coyly, sending men on ridiculous adventures to prove their loyalty, and in general making them act like fools. The Knight acknowledges that his lady did not employ any of these. She did not play by traditional rules, instead she made the rules flexible. He also did not play the game always by the rules,

> For of good wille myn herte hyt wolde,
> And eke to love hir I was holde
> As for the fairest and the beste. (11. 1077-1079)

The Knight explains the absurdity of the game of love. He feels that all too often there is a distance between what we say and what we actually do. The Knight's words are not mere game, they have a basis in real life. At this point in the poem, Chaucer is "playing" with the artistic conventions of presentation. While demonstrating how rules become so restrictive they lose all meaning, he also shows how games have a creative dimension. The rules to the traditional game of love are changed but with the agreement of both players. Both players shape the rules to fit their needs. Chaucer is also "playing" with the expectations of his audience. They may expect her to send the Knight off on meaningless adventures, a ridiculous side of courtly love. Thus,

Chaucer turns around the expectations of his audience forcing them to question the appropriateness of their expectations.

After the Narrator interrupts the Knight, he continues his story. He was committed to her and all he could think about was "to do hir worship and the service" (l. 1098). At times when he realized how far away he was from attaining her, he would seek relief by gazing at her and she "warished of al my sorwe" (l. 1105). Momentarily, he thinks of his loss and queries if it was all worth it and then realizes "I nyl foryete hir never moo" (l. 1125), stressing the importance of memory. The Knight is beginning to realize that this loss is not as great as he had imagined, for although she is dead his memory of her will last forever and thus so shall she. Again the Narrator interrupts and says "Hyt ys no nede to reherse it more" (l. 1128) "Tell me al" (l. 1143), suggesting something about the Narrator himself. I think that the Narrator's two interruptions reinforces Lawlor's feeling on the naïve Narrator. He is less concerned with helping the Knight realize relief from his grief and more interested in finding out the cause of the grief "Nyl she not love you? Or have ye oght doon amys,/ That she hat left yow" (ll. 1140-1142).

The Knight responds with an outburst explaining that he placed everything on her "On hir was al my love leyd" (l. 1146), and she had control over him "She was lady/ Of the body; she had the herte,/ And who hath that, may not asterte" (ll. 1152-1154). The lover's sickness, herëos, was so great in him that he sought the conventional relief of courtly lovers in song-making. Up to this point he has still kept his love but he remains silent because he is afraid that she will reject

him " I am adred she wol be wroth" (l. 1190), an affliction far worse than his present sorrow. He continues by explaining the anguish and turmoil he had and finally says "Hyt nas no game, hyt sat me sore" (l. 1220), attesting to the fact that others may have merely played the game of love strictly by its rules, but this was no mere game, this was his life. Finally he had enough courage to speak to her, to tell her of his feelings, and to pledge his fidelity and service:

> Ever to be stedfast and trewe
> And love hir alwey fresshly newe,
> And never other lady have,
> And al hir worship for to save
> As I best koude, I swor hir this--
> 'For youres is alle that ever ther ys
> For evermore, myn herte swete!
> And never to false yow, but I mete
> I nyl, as wys God helpe me so!' (ll. 1227-1235)

Her answer, "she sayde 'nay'" (l. 1243), merely serves to increase his sorrow and causes him again to emphasize that he was not merely playing a courtly game, "I loved hyr in no gere" (l. 1257). It is not mere game, but serious game. His rejection reminds the reader of the lover in the Romance of the Rose, his rejection, and his similar sorrow but the difference in the two works lies with Chaucer having the Knight insist that he is not playing the game as did previous courtly lovers. The Knight's stand here seems paradoxical as he insists that his position is more than a game. There are distinctions to be made, therefore, between the Knight's use of the chess board and its implications of game and the Knight's denial that his love was a mere game. Although he followed the rules of the game, he made these rules flexible enough for himself, and by changing the rules, he changes them with greater value than they ordinarily have. The Knight's game is creative, not rigid and confining.

After the Knight's rejection, one year passes and he decides to approach the Lady again. This time she accepts his vows of service and fidelity. By asking him to wait one year, Blanche did not reduce the game to absurdity but continued to play it out. She has tested the seriousness of the game and the player. It is interesting that the lover never berates the lady because of her rejection. And when she accepts him it is made to look as if it was neither his nor her fault exclusively. Now that she realizes his worth she gave him "the noble yifte of hir mercy" (l. 1270) and he was immediately "Reysed, as fro deth to lyve" (l. 1278). His account of their marriage is given in the conventional framework, "she took me in hir governaunce" (l. 1286) but concludes it by speaking of the uniqueness of their mutual happiness:

> Our hertes wern so evene a payre,
> That never nas that oon contrayre
> To that other, for no woo.
> For sothe, ylyche they suffred thoo
> Oo blysse, and eke oo sorwe bothe;
> Ylyche they were bothe glad and wrothl
> Al was us oon, withoute were.
> And thus we lyved ful many a yere.
> So wel, I kan not telle how. (11. 1289-1297)

In the sensitivity of real feelings, Chaucer exhibits his originality in the midst of conventional material. There is an equality in marriage and in the courtly love situation, which directly contradicts C. S. Lewis' definition of courtly love as basically adulterous. The above lines contain some of the most telling literary evidence that courtly love as a serious and ideal game could exist in marriage. This description with all its delicateness, beauty, and virtue is immediately followed by the Narrator's unceasing game, his desire to know all, "'where is she now?'" (l. 1298) and the Knight finally confesses "'She

ys ded!'" (l. 1309). Throughout this narrative the Knight has been reluctant to utter these words to the Narrator, although he has tried to say it through the euphemism of the chess game. Because of the Narrator's insistence he has been forced to rely on his memory to recount this entire story, even though the Narrator seems unable to understand the reason for the Knight's behavior until he actually says that Blanche is dead. The Knight takes a long time to admit his loss, and the various word games he uses help him to get over the rough spots without actually confronting his loss. As soon as the Knight's words are uttered, the hunt scene, that has been in the background throughout, appropriately brings us to the end of the Narrator's dream with the various word plays dealing with the Knight's identity: "long castel" for Lancaster; "walles white," Blanche; "Johan," John of Gaunt; and "Rydre hil" representing Richmond.

Although the intrusion of the hunt scene seems so inappropriate after such a beautiful description of the Knight's life with his lady and the news that she is dead, it nonetheless is fitting. When the Narrator started to dream, he was thrust into the hunt where his game quarry became the Knight. At that time I mentioned the implicit relation between the hunt and love, the juxtaposition of violence and tenderness. Similarly we can think of the Knight's love of Blanche as a hunt, the pursuit of his loved one. As we have evidenced the game elements are interwoven into the tapestry of Chaucer's poem. The Narrator has played his game to its natural conclusion with the Knight, the Knight has confessed all. In many ways the Knight, in Bronson's terms, acts as a surrogate[25] for the Narrator, and as the Knight relives his experiences, so also vicariously, does the Narrator. The

Knight is forced to remember his love experience and is able to attain a consolation, a cathartic release from his sorrow; "the mind is purged by a sense of the sadness which pervades its beauty and its joy."[26]

In The Book of the Duchess, memory is extremely important. In the Knight's words he is truly "reysed, as from deth to lyve," for by recalling Blanche's perfection, her countenance, their courtship, and their happy life together, he is released from the sorrow he has felt. The Knight knows what Alcyone knew in Ovid's tale: the lover is part of oneself and therefore any loss is of the self. But he also realizes that even though one has the ideal, it does not prevent death. More importantly he understands that love does not end in death. By thinking of his Lady, by remembering, he is able to have her with him. The emphasis on memory adheres to Huizinga's ideas on play: "once played, it endures as a new-found creation of the mind, a treasure to be retained by the memory."[27] The relationship that existed between Blanche and the Knight acts as a metaphor for all of us. Chaucer does not suggest a fairy tale way of dealing with loss, but instead suggests to us that loss can be made bearable by the memory of the very beautiful love play that transpired between Blanche and the Knight.

The Knight has been able to come to a new self-awareness by "playing out" the Narrator's game which causes him to remember. Neale sees play as a means of re-creating form and order as a direct result of man's need and experience:

> It is the need to discharge psychic energy that relates the individual to the concrete and enables him to become aware of a moment in time and of an object in space. The need to design and organize experience drives the individual toward the formal .... Both discharge of experience and design of experience are necessary for self-awareness.[28]

In order for the Knight to come to his realization about life and loss he had to order his world. The Knight has "re-created" Blanche and attained self-realization. At the end of the poem both the Knight and Blanche are transformed into transcendent lovers just as in Ovid's original tale of Ceyx and Alcyone because memory has the power to metamorphose. Thus games are serious play in this poem. While the game of chess is used as an attempt to deal with death, the game of love is the serious play of life. Memory binds both games or provides a bridge for them. Death is not transcended as in Ovid's tale by transformation into birds, but death is made bearable by the memory of love. Blanche lives as long as the Knight remembers her. This may not be Ovidian wish-fulfillment but perhaps the best sort of metamorphoses humans can have. In the dream, the Narrator forces the Knight to re-call his love experience and ultimately realizes he has not lost but gained, through memory, the love of Blanche forever. Catharsis is achieved but more importantly, the self-awareness attained through memory and the understanding of the value of love itself, not the rules of a mere game, are established. When the Narrator awakes from the dream he says, "That I wol, be processe of tyme,/ Fond to put this sweven in ryme/ As I kan best, and that anoon" (ll. 1331-1333). The realization is that Blanche is not only immortal because the Knight remembers her, but that memory is the vehicle which makes it possible to create a poem that will always call to mind a very special courtship.

The abundance of play elements in The Book of the Duchess point to Chaucer's purpose in the poem. The generally accepted rules of courtly love are not followed, and the intimate relationship between the lovers is what is finally important and powerful. It is as fragile as life,

however; what lasts is memory. Chaucer has also shown the relationship between the conventional and life and how it is used to deal with certain situations. In employing the traditional conventions of courtly love, Chaucer's originality consists "not in the invention of new material, but in the vitality he infuses into what is old and outworn."[29] We see here Chaucer as poet playing a game with the material of his contemporaries, adopting it in order to point the direction for his creative development. Even though the setting of this poem is highly conventional it is described with freshness. The lover, the Black Knight, is straight out of the mold of the courtly lover of the Provençal troubadours but his passion is genuine and his love is real. Moreover, the passion is sustained and flourishes in marriage. As Dodd says "Most of all does Chaucer's originality appear in the treatment of the lady."[30] The details may not be original but Chaucer "reveals for the first time. . . a sympathetic insight into woman's nature. . . ."[31] Kittredge believes Chaucer vitalizes conventions, for the two most typical figures are given new life, the lover who lost in vain, and the lover who has lost.[32] Finally Sypherd asserts:

> What Chaucer has done, however, is to transform various bits of this conventional love-vision material by his own poetic talent and marked imaginative power, and thus to construct on the foundation of a common inheritance an original work of art.[33]

Chaucer does not allow the rules of the game of courtly love to become too restrictive, but instead makes the game creative. Both the Knight and Blanche deny one or more aspects of the game and make the rules flexible enough to suit their individual needs.

Game is used as a structural metaphor for ordering in this poem, and to this end Chaucer employs the Narrator. In many cases Chaucer

plays a game with his audience by letting his Narrator have the experience but miss the meaning. Chaucer has framed a character which when used to his fullest keeps Chaucer completely detached from the poem, yet allows for the irony he desired. Chaucer's Narrator is not the stock conventional character of his contemporaries, but he is fresh and new, a masterful creation, that, as we shall see in the two succeeding poems, allows Chaucer to adapt tradition to his own poetic temperment. Through the Narrator Chaucer's game structures are played out, and through him he is able to manipulate both the ideas and the language of love.

On another level we have Chaucer playing a game with his audience. He gives his audience what they expect and then plays on these expectations by turning their expectations around. The audience must constantly realign their expectations, and re-examine the assumptions on which they are based. They must constantly suspend judgment until the end. At the end, they can recall the "left-off" portion of Ovid's tale and align that with the use of memory in the Knight's tale. By engaging in retrospective patterning, the audience is continually a part of the "poetic process," a game in itself. Chaucer asks his audience to perceive the possibility of loss as well as to examine how memory can recreate the lovely aspects of the game. In this re-creation we are able to go on despite the loss. We, as audience, have learned something of our own imagination given the ideal game enacted in The Book of the Duchess, for just as the Knight gains self-awareness, so also through the game structure of the poem, the audience gains insight into their own feelings. Professor Buytendejk calls "love-play the most perfect example of all play, exhibiting the essential features of play in the

clearest form,"[34] and the various game elements in the poem encourage the audience to view them as revelatory of meaning of that most "perfect . . . play." All of these levels of game add a richness and complexity to the poem that are missed when the poem is viewed in a more traditional way, merely as an imitation of Chaucer's contemporaries.

Notes

[1]Norman E. Eliason, "Chaucer the Love Poet," in Chaucer the Love Poet, eds. Jerome Mitchell and William Provost (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1973), passim.

[2]F. N. Robinson, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957), pp. 266-267; 273 ff.; Eliason, p. 11. Although most critics see the poem as an elegy, Eliason has to interject that Chaucer did a poor job with the elegy tradition.

[3]George Lyman Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), passim.

[4]Bertrand H. Bronson, "The Book of the Duchess Re-opened," in Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Edward Wagenknscht (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), passim.

[5]Muriel Bowden, A Reader's Guide to Geoffrey Chaucer (New York: Noonday Press, 1970), p. 144.

[6]Robinson, pp. 267-279; 280-302; 309-318. All quotations from The Book of the Duchess, The House of Fame, and The Parliament of Fowles will be taken from this source and noted by line reference only.

[7]Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969). This work is good for a further theological discussion of the aspect of play in life based on the medieval concept of the court-jester--that all men have a jester within them. See also Robert E. Neale, In Praise of Play (New York: Harper and Row, 1969). This work aims at a psychology of religion in relation to play.

[8]Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. Mary M. Innes (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1955), pp. 256-265. All quotations from "The Tale of Ceyx and Alcyone" will be taken from this source and will not be noted in the text.

[9]Kittredge, p. 57.

[10]Bowden, p. 147.

[11]J. L. Lowes, Geoffrey Chaucer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 95.

[12]Edmund Reiss, "Chaucer's Parodies of Love," in Chaucer the Love Poet, eds. Jerome Mitchell and William Provost, p. 35.

[13]Bowden, p. 148.

[14]Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 13

[15]Kittredge, p. 63

[16]Bronson, p. 284.

[17]Bronson, p. 289.

[18]John Lawlor, "The Pattern of Consolation in The Book of the Duchess," in Chaucer Criticism II: Troilus and Criseyde and The Minor Poems, eds. Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1961), p. 244.

[19]Lawlor, p. 245.

[20]Kittredge, p. 54.

[21]Kittredge, p. 60; Bowden, p. 145.

[22]William George Dodd, Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1913), p. 109.

[23]Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 13.

[24]Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 14.

[25]Bronson, p. 281.

[26]Kittredge, p. 71.

[27]Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 10.

[28]Neale, p. 29.

[29]Dodd, p. 117.

[30]Dodd, p. 118.

[31]Dodd, p. 119.

[32]Kittredge, p. 70.

[33]Sypherd, p. 11

[34]Quoted in Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 43.

II

The House of Fame

It is now widely accepted that The House of Fame follows chronologically The Book of the Duchess and precedes The Parliament of Fowles. After a close reading of The Book of the Duchess, The House of Fame appears to be a much different poem. The Book of the Duchess is a tightly knit poem having courtly love games at its center. The difficulty with The House of Fame is finding its center. Critics agree that The House of Fame is a very difficult poem to understand and as such, there have been various interpretations suggested. Some merely call the poem a fragment with no real merit, while others say its "fragmentariness" was intentional rather than accidental. The central critical debate, however, centers on the meaning of the poem. Sypherd,[1] the standard interpretation against which all others are viewed, firmly believes the poem is in the French love-vision tradition. He disregards any large scale relation between The House of Fame and Dante's Divine Comedy, affirms that there is definitely no moralizing about rumor and fame, and finally disclaims any autobiographical interpretation. Koonce[2] deals with the symbols and figures in the poem and interprets them in light of medieval scriptural exegisis and allegory. Patch and Coghill[3] follow the Sypherd interpretation while Ruggiers[4] interprets the poem as one talking about poetry and about the making of poetry.

In my treatment of The Book of the Duchess I pointed out various game elements and their significance. Although game elements are still present in The House of Fame, they are used for a different purpose. In terms of the overall concern of this investigation, the poem fits into my

argument in a limited fashion, for only in Book I are courtly love games played extensively. After that, in Books II and III, courtly love games are forfeited for a variety of other games involving many other problems: science, the meaning of certainty, truth, various forms of art, poetry itself, and perhaps the whole oral tradition. In this poem Chaucer seems to play with the courtly love tradition and its static conventions in an attempt to change the rules, to make them more flexible, and perhaps to free himself from a rigid poetical order. Many of the game elements in The House of Fame are directed to this end--to liberate the poet from the rigidity of convention--but as we shall see, the poem is not complete and the game itself is not resolved. We know that Chaucer intended to utilize the idea of the game of love, for when the golden eagle explains why he is there, he says that his purpose is to take the Narrator to a place of "love tidings" where he shall have "disport and game." The problem with the poem is that the courtly love game appears to be forgotten in Books II and III, while the few remaining links to the courtly love game are very tenuous. It is obvious, however, that Chaucer was subtly examining the nature of art and ultimately the meaning of making good poetry in The House of Fame.

Unlike the Narrator in The Book of the Duchess who could not sleep because of his love sickness, the Narrator in Book I of The House of Fame seems to have no difficulty in falling asleep, because he is merely physically weary. He never mentions any problems with unrequited love but asks the "mover" (l. 81), seen as a trinity "that is and was and ever shal [be]" (l. 82), to stand in favor of his "loves" or "in what place/ That hem were levest for to stonde" (ll. 86-87). Later we learn that the Narrator is not himself a lover but is a love poet who has "served Cupido/ And

faire Venus also" (Book II, ll. 616-618). The Narrator follows the courtly love poetic tradition rather conventionally.

But the Narrator's dream takes place on "Decembre the tenthe" (l. 111), an unusual time in love-vision poems, as he envisions the Temple of Venus, a "temple ymad of glas" (l. 120). In his vision he sees many "ymages" of the old masters, "ymages" which tend to be static and result in a lack of movement in this section of the poem. The dreamer takes the reader on a guided tour of the sights in the Temple of Glass as if it were a gallery or a museum, with a complete reliance on the sense of sight throughout Book I. The recurrence of the phrase "Ther sawgh I" followed by a cataloguing of visual detail along with the use of "ymages" lead the reader to believe that Chaucer is intentionally using the language of art, and more particularly of poetry, to set the mood for the rest of the poem. Chaucer plays with the presentation of the fiction of courtly love when dealing with the images at the opening of the poem, for there is something odd about the images. We are not taken in by their beauty. They are so stylized that we are put off by them.

Implicit in the Narrator's description of the Temple of Venus is a skepticism about art. Chaucer seems to be questioning the enduring power of poetry. The Narrator describes scenes from Virgil's Aeneid such as the destruction of Troy as it was painted on the walls:

> Ther saugh I such tempeste aryse
> Taht every herte myght agryse
> To see hyt peynted on the wal. (ll. 209-211)

Then he comes upon the love story of Dido and Aeneas. The previous mention of Cupid and Venus coupled with the Temple of Venus, the story of Troy, and now the story of Dido and Aeneas plant us firmly in the courtly love tradition and the presentation of the fiction of courtly love as a game. The

story of Dido and Aeneas is the most famous love fiction in the Middle Ages. Virgil and Ovid have told this story and now we have the Narrator's version. This is made obvious by the Narrator when he says that

> Whoso to knowe hit hath purpos,
> Rede Virgile in Eneydos
> Or the Epistle of Ovyde. (ll. 377-379)

The Narrator's emphasis of the tragic tale of Dido centers on the hypocrisy of the lover Aeneas, "Allas! what harm doth appearance,/ What hit is fals in existence!" (ll. 265-266) (Italics inserted). In telling this tale the Narrator makes it clear that Dido plays the game by the rules. The relationship of Dido and Aeneas is couched in courtly terms, "her lyf, hir love, hir lust, hir lord . . . your love, your hond/ That ye have sworn with your ryght hond" (ll. 258;320-321). Dido takes on the role of the unrequited lover, scorned by Aeneas. She follows the rules and observed the boundaries of the game but Aeneas does not. He merely pretends to love Dido, only playing the game by the rules to attain her. Dido learns:

> That som man, of his pure kynde,
> Wol shewen outward the fayreste,
> Tyl he have caught that what him leste;
> And thanne wol he causes fynde,
> And swere how that she ys unkynde,
> Or fals, or privy, or double was. (ll. 280-285)

Aeneas plays the game by his own set of rules, which for him does not mandate fidelity. His fickleness with women is to "have fame/ In magnyfyinge of hys name" (ll. 305-306). Love and fame are linked in Aeneas' character in a very conventional manner. Dido concludes how Aeneas, and all men in a courtly tradition "grone" (l. 338) but as she claims, "Anon as we have your receyved,/ Certaynly we ben deceyved!" (ll. 339-340).

By presenting the above version of Dido and Aeneas, Chaucer demonstrates how the courtly love game is played. But in this case the game strategies are played with disastrous effect. The game of love fails as far as providing a framework for the relationship of Dido and Aeneas. Chaucer shows his audience that the game of love is not all "beer and skittles"; it can be treacherous. Chaucer's skepticism is perhaps most evident as he shows Aeneas playing a game of love that he saw as a "jape," a joke, a furtive move in a game of chess. Chaucer is not so much skeptical of courtly love as a literary tradition as he is concerned that this tradition might become mechanical, itself be turned into a "ful fals jape" with a falsity about it.

Important for our purposes is Dido's complaint addressed to Fame:

> O wikke Fame! for ther nys
> Nothing so swift, lo, as she is!
> O, soth ys, every thing ys wyst,
> Though hit be kevered with the myst.
> Eke, though I myghte duren ever,
> That I have don, rekever I never,
> That I ne shal be seyd, allas,
> Yshamed be thourgh Eneas,
> And that I shall thus judged by, --
> 'Loo, ryght as she hath don, now she
> Wol doo eft-sones, hardely;'
> Thus seyth the people prively. (11. 349-360)

At this point, the audience would wonder what connection does Chaucer expect them to make between love and fame. The two duties of Fame, reputation and rumor, are blended and become important again in Book III. The Dido story foreshadows Book III where the reader sees Fame in action. In the middle of his description of Dido and Aeneas the Narrator interjects:

> What shulde I speke more queynte,
> Or peyne me my wordes peynte
> To speke of love? Hyt wo; not be;
> I kan not of that faculte. (11. 245-248)

Chaucer, through his Narrator, seems to say that he knows nothing of the craft of love poetry. Is he subtly rebelling against the established tradition of poetry based on love? I tend to think so. He is playing a game and perhaps beginning to break away from the tradition gradually. He undercuts the love tradition by ironically reducing the beautiful story of Dido and Aeneas to a series of clichés. This reduction is a creative game Chaucer plays with the game of courtly love itself to get his audience to focus on its inadequacies as a completely viable game within life with which to deal with love. Chaucer the poet would be pointing out that dealing with a courtly love story, already so well known to his audience, "straight" may be unsatisfactory. The Narrator again talks about appearance and reality:

> Wol shewen outward the faryreste
> Tyl he have caught that what him leste
> And thanne wol he causes fynde
> And swere how she ys unkynde
> Or fals, or privy, or double was. (11. 280-285)

In these lines, as in the lines cited above, I see Chaucer as poet saying that the poetry of his time was based on love but this is all appearance, a mere game for him, seeing he "kan not of that faculte." This coincides with the reliance on sight imagery in Book I. It is not so much that Chaucer is uneasy with the subject of love as an impetus to art as he is uneasy with the manner of presenting it. By playing with tradition, Chaucer demonstrates how appearances may be deceiving. Aeneas plays the courtly love game by rote; the appearance of a sincere courtly lover is there but in reality, Aeneas has no feeling. By using the motif of appearance versus reality, Chaucer is able to examine the courtly love tradition itself and the ridiculous lengths to which people will go in pursuing it at times. There is an odd tone of cool detachment in these

descriptions. The descriptions are not filled with feeling but only with aloof analytical description.

Yet, during the descriptions there is a feeling of urgency, a need to move on as the Narrator says, "Hyt were a long proces to telle,/ And over-long for yow to dwelle" (ll. 251-252). We have talked previously of the Narrator as a player in search of a "game." The sense of urgency perhaps shows the Narrator's desire to get to the game. Near the end of Book I, we get the same feeling of urgency when the dreamer recapitulates what has happened to him:

> When I had seen al this syghte
> In this noble themple thus
> "A Lord!" thought I "that madest us,
> Yet sawgh I never such noblesse
> Of ymages, ne such richesse
> As I saugh graven in this chirche
> But no wrot I whoo did hem wirche
> Ne where I am, ne in what contree.
> But now wol I goo out and see,
> Ryght at the wicket, yf y kan
> See owhere any stiryng man
> That may me telle where I am." (ll. 468-479)

He feels lost in these surroundings, described as "a large feld," and as "the desert" (ll. 482,487). The use of a wasteland image is similar to the previous December reference. Both images picture the poet as poetically dry, seeking inspiration and new material. The Narrator has shown his failure with the courtly love game as fiction for poetry in the account of the Dido and Aeneas story by his use of clichés, his inability to further the story by reducing it; his anxiety in the desert may be a result of the above. The audience would be very uneasy with the December and the wasteland images, for they are not the images that usually appear in love-visions. Chaucer uses these images possibly to project his feeling about what happens when a convention is overused--it

becomes reduced to nothing but clichés and the poet tends to be a mere imitator. Chaucer's skepticism is inherent in this section of the poem, as he has the Narrator go outside to find his bearings, question his reasons for being there, ask who did these fabulous paintings, and wonder where he actually is. After being presented the fiction of courtly love and ending in a wasteland, the audience, too, feels the anxiety, frustration, and urgency of the Narrator. They may also feel a need to know what is going on in this poem.

I see Book I as Chaucer's means of experimenting with the traditional description of the love tradition. I have tried to show that Chaucer is skeptical[5] of the tradition. He wants to move out of the world of visual art, mere images, and into another situation. There is a sense of the static, the frozen, in the images used in Book I. This suggests that when a game becomes too rigid, it becomes mechanical, i.e. false. The playing is false too or mechanical. In the case of the poet, if he continues to "play" the poetic game by the traditional rules, he becomes mechanical. Thus there is anxiety expressed on the part of the Narrator because there is the possibility that the game will not work for him anymore, it does not solve his poetic problems. On the one hand, he feels he will never learn the game, he "kan not of that faculte," and he is right. Who can learn all the ramifications of the game of love? On the other hand, if he does learn the "rules" superficially, he will be caught in them if he continues to play them. At the end of Book I, I see a transition from mere images. The Narrator seeks direction, new games to play, and instruction, and therefore invokes Christ:

> "O Christ!" thoughte I, "thou art in blysse
> For fantome and illusion
> Me save." (11. 492-494)

This quotation suggests the seriousness of play. The Narrator seems concerned that the courtly love fiction of a Dido and Aeneas story may be worn out, and he is uncertain how anyone might achieve any fame from it. He is also worried that the idea of fiction making may be a "fantome" or "illusion." His prayer is answered, however, for just then an eagle descends. His use of "Al newe of gold another sonne" (l. 506) implies that something of a different nature is about to be experienced. The implication is that this new experience will answer questions and solve problems for the Narrator. As audience, we expect the tension and anxiety of the Narrator as well as the reason for this tension and anxiety to be resolved. Momentarily, the eagle is viewed as a vehicle to this end. But Books II and III do not do this. Instead, various other problems are discussed and other avenues explored, but the game of courtly love as presented in Book I is abandoned and never returned to in this poem, while the links to this game remain tenuous.

As audience, we are left in a state of suspension at the end of Book I. We have to move out of the desert but the question is, where do we logically go from here? We hope to find answers to many of the questions raised concerning courtly love in Book I but we do not. We also expect to hear more about courtly love as a game possibility for poetry but we do not. Instead, in Books II and III the poem takes on the form of a quest with the Narrator carried by the golden eagle, at least part of the way, to what may be the sources of fiction itself--the House of Fame and the House of Rumor. The focus of the poem shifts from the public game of courtly love to a private game that perhaps only other poets would be interested in: a search for a poetic or a poem

about the poetic process itself.

The golden eagle becomes the vehicle for this quest and new experience, but he does not fulfill the audience's expectations of "love's tidings." Traditional medieval iconography assigned the eagle to the apostle and gospel writer John for he was the one "who transported men to the very heart of divinity."[6] According to Pindar, the eagle is a symbol of inspiration[7] and one of contemplation. Chaucer introduces the eagle as a guide, not in the traditional sense of the love-vision, as a passive animal guide similar to the whelp in The Book of the Duchess, but as an active and creative force to inspire the Narrator to new poetic vistas. Bowden attests to this by saying "the great bird is no medieval allegorical figure but a three-dimensional portrait of a human being."[8] In Books II and III the eagle becomes an integral part of Chaucer's game structure, where another level of play is added by having the eagle "play" a game with the Narrator. Viewing The House of Fame as a poem about art allows the possibility that the ascent to the House of Fame described in Book II is actually the poetic flight later emphasized by the nineteenth-century romantic poets as it had been previously by the classical writers.

The ascent seems to be poetic flight in search of a new form from an old convention, a game of new play. Some very telling lines to substantiate the idea of the eagle as an inspiring force come from this personified creature:

> And this caas that betyd the is,
> If for thy lore and for thy prow. (ll. 578-579)

The eagle becomes a didactic yet comic force in the poem. Ruggiers sees this golden eagle as a combination of the eagle of the Purgatorio that guided Dante and the eagle of the Paradiso who lectured Dante. Chaucer

combines the two,[9] thus exhibiting his indebtedness to his Italian contemporaries, with new material that would most likely not be known by his audience. The eagle tells the dreamer that he is a messenger sent by Jupiter to instruct him, for Jupiter has taken pity on him because of the Narrator's hard work and "hermyte" like existence. He will aid him, in the words of the eagle, because:

> That thou so longe trewely
> Hast served so ententyfly
> Hys blynde nevew Cupido
> And faire Venus also,
> Without guerdon ever yit, . . .
> To make bookys, songes, dytees
> In ryme, or elles in dadence,
> As thou best canst in reverence
> Of Love . . .
> And peynest the to preyse hys art
> Although thou haddest never part. (ll. 615-628)

The Narrator is viewed as a servant of love rather than a lover himself. He has served Cupid and Venus, not as a lover, but as a writer in honor of these gods of love. Therefore, because he has not been rewarded for this great work, Jupiter takes sympathy on him and rewards him. The last line echoes the idea presented in Book I that the Narrator "kan not of that faculte [love]." The eagle is telling the poet that he must rely on experience and not merely on "auctorite." During the course of the eagle's discussions he never resolves the Narrator's question: which might be better, experience or book learning? Sometimes one is better and sometimes the other is better, but nothing is definite as is the case with most things discussed in The House of Fame. By manipulating the game of love, having a love-poet who knows nothing about love, Chaucer attempts to get his audience to see the absurdities that people fall into. Courtly love itself is not ridiculous, but the way in which people, even poets, pursue it often is. In this section of The House of Fame, Chaucer is trying

to show how courtly love can be turned into absurd games.

The eagle proposes to take him to the House of Fame to give him "som disport and game" and the "Loves folk moo tydynges" (l. 675) catalogued in lines 676-700, but he really never fulfills this promise. But the clear reference to "game" as part of the main purpose in going to the House of Fame is important for this present study. Chaucer's audience would immediately wonder why we should go to the House of Fame as part of the courtly love convention? Basically, it is because the game of courtly love has been immortalized, for better or for worse, through art forms--paintings and poetry. The focus on the game of courtly love itself, as we shall see, is now somewhat shifted to how courtly love is presented and its consequences. Because the Narrator is unable to play his own games, Chaucer intends to utilize the eagle as a master game player to instruct the Narrator on the game of love in its various forms, but again the eagle does not do this. Supposedly the eagle would supply the Narrator with new experience to incorporate in his verse. As we shall see, however, too many games are played and as a result the main focus is somewhat blurred, perhaps for the poet as well as for the audience. Although we expect to gain "love tidings" the Narrator, as well as the audience, are thwarted at every turn. Expectations are not played with but frustrated in Books II and III.

After a lengthy scientific and philosophic treatment of sound and speech, the golden eagle gives the Narrator a view of the natural order of the universe possibly to show the Narrator that there is an order to art also. When we do finally reach the House of Fame, in Book III, we discover it is a place of chaos and disorder. The poet's task is to transform chaos and disorder into order and harmony. Even though the

eagle has given the Narrator an emblem of the order of the universe, there always seems to be a threat of disorder. By extension, the poet takes on godlike attributes if he is to make order out of chaos. The poet must become a godlike or master game player, playing a game that will provide him a method of ordering. This is serious play indeed.[10] Chaucer, too, as a poet, must create order and seems to recognize the need for control over the poetic game. In The House of Fame, however, he seems to have difficulty in deciding which game to play.

There is a sense of movement and soaring, a jubilance in Book II. The images of ascent are far more optimistic than those of descent used previously in Book I. The sense of excitement is present in the discourses between the eagle and the Narrator that attempt to show many game possibilities and difficulties. For the audience, however, there are only mounting anxieties as they wonder when they will return to the game of courtly love of Book I.

Just at the end of Book II the eagle, again speaking for Jupiter, talks of the power of sound to create "ymages" and life itself:

> Whan any speche ycomen ys
> Up to the paleys, anon-ryght
> Hyt wexeth lyk the same wight
> Which that the word in erthe spak
> Be hyt clothed red or blak;
> And hath so verray hys lyknesse
> That spak the word, that thou wilt gesse
> That it the same body be,
> Man or woman, he or she. (ll. 1074-1082)

This quotation is important in terms of language. In Book I there was a sense of the static, the frozen, in the "ymages" used. Here we have the possibility of the vitality of language in contrast to frozen images. When the eagle enters the poem in Book II, the shifts and turns that take place force courtly love to be lost sight of. Chaucer's audience has been

caught up in the soaring, the jubilance of the movement and would be well aware that they have gotten more than they bargained for while at the same time a lot less than they expected.

In Book II Chaucer has "a glimpse of the possibilities open to poets outside the charmed circle of French love poetry."[11] In Book I Chaucer's game structures center on the traditional view in order to establish himself in a tradition. The game elements point to the deficiencies in the game of courtly love as traditionally played. Chaucer relies on his audience's expectations to show the absurdities people can fall into. In Book II a new approach to art and poetry emerges. Chaucer uses convention "but put[s] it aside for larger and profounder patterns of thought."[12] But the game elements in this section become muddled. Chaucer plays too many games and the focus is missing. Both Books II and III could stand on their own as being quite different from Book I, for Chaucer has moved so far away from the courtly game of love that the audience has a hard time aligning the game elements in all three books. The tone of Book II further makes it obvious that Chaucer is using game elements as a means of investigating all the possibilities open to him as a poet. Although The House of Fame is a poem full of possibilities, few solutions are ever provided. Chaucer's use of the eagle as a comic character is an important artistic asset to this so-called fragment. By using the eagle Chaucer is able to have games played between the eagle and the Narrator and between Chaucer and his audience. Book II and the employment of the eagle thus act as a transition between the traditional love tradition, lost sight of in this section, and the promise of reconceiving this tradtion in Book III. By playing off these conventional traditions he makes the entire encounter into a game, made

more obvious in Book III.

If there were previously any doubts that this poem was intentionally written about art, more specifically poetry and how it is made, they are dismissed in the "Invocation" to Book III:

> O God of science and lyght
> Apollo, thurgh thy grete myght,
> This lytel laste bok thou gye!
> Not that I wilne, for maistrye
> Here art poetical be shrewed, . . .
> And that I do no diligence
> To shewe craft, but o sentence. (11. 1091-1100)

The Narrator continues by asking the assistance of Apollo, the god of poetry, in relating what he experienced in the House of Fame:

> Wilt helpe me to shewe now
> That in myn hed ymarked ys--
> Loo, that is for to menen this,
> The Hous of Fame for to descryve. (11. 1102-1105)

If he receives this aid, then the poet vows to "kysse . . . the nexte laure tree" (11. 1107-1108) as he prepares himself for the many experiences he hopes to find in the House of Fame. We see Chaucer continuing to be the supreme game player. He uses the traditional invocation for the Narrator's assistance, but in ironic tones. The Narrator says he does not desire "art poetical" or "to shewe craft" but only to allow the words to be pleasing and understandable. Chaucer uses false humility and clichés in the Narrator's tongue-in-cheek invocation to Apollo. This invocation is extremely important in showing what has happened to the central focus of the poem, courtly love. The game of courtly love has been lost sight of and the links to this tradition are extremely slim in Books II and III. In this invocation, the Narrator seems unconcerned with courtly love and is more interested in "art poetical." The Narrator has completely forgotten his reason for playing these games. He has been taken in by the golden eagle and has

been thrown off his course by his revelations.

When we finally enter the House of Fame there are a variety of games being played. Everyone in suit of Fame is playing the game strictly by the rules in order to gain success. Now that we are in the House of Fame, Chaucer again links fame to love. Good tidings as well as bad will live on, for Fame allows these sounds to be disseminated throughout the universe. Fame is seen as a judge of supreme fickleness:

> And somme of hem she graunted sone,
> And somme she werned wel and faire,
> And somme she graunted the contraire (ll. 1538-1540)

Fame plays the game of fickleness as well as the game of appearance and reality when she takes on the role of Fortune where injustice is "her only standard,"[13] as she doles "out her favor and disfavor with random caprice."[14] This is Fame in action foreshadowed by the Dido story in Book I. All of the petitioners take part in this game where it is not so important what you ask but how you ask. Chaucer is attempting to demonstrate how a game can become absurd. Following the rules exactly is all that matters. The ideal has turned into the ridiculous because instead of preserving creativity, rigidity has taken over. But again, there are only tenuous links to the game of courtly love played in Book I. While Fame plays her game with her supplicants, the Narrator conveys a feeling of urgency, used previously in Book I, by saying so much and then stopping short. Examples of this are: "What shuld I make longer tale" (l. 1282); "Al to longe most I dwelle" (l. 1506); and "What shulde y more telle of this?" (l. 1513). These are simply evidence of a rhetorical device by which he pretends, plays at, politeness, while he shows his desire to get to <u>the</u> game.

Someone asks the onlooker what he is there for; is it to ask for fame? The Narrator quickly replies:

> "Nay, for sothe frend," quod y;
> "I cam nought hyder, graunt mercy,
> For no such cause, by my hed!
> Sufficeth me, as I were ded,
> That no wight have my name in honde
> I wot myself best how y stonde;
> For what I drye, or what I thynke,
> I wel myselven al hyt drynke,
> Certeyn, for the more part
> As fer forth as I kan myn art." (11. 1873-1882)

The Narrator plays a modest role by saying that he does not care if his name is known by all, a direct contradiction from his concern for critical appraisal in Book I. For him, all that matters is that he has written what he has experienced and felt, an echo of similar lines in Book I (81-108). In essence, the Narrator is refusing to play the game by the established rules for acquiring fame. He is in search of another game. When he is asked, if you are not here for Fame, why are you here? he responds:

> Somme newe tydynges for to lerne,
> Somme new things, y not what,
> Tydynges, other this or that,
> O love .... (11. 1886-1889)

This ambiguous reply returns the reader to the purpose of this journey, "Loves folks moo tydynges" (1. 675) and anticipates a later discourse on tydynges. The Narrator has been asked whether it is the consequences (fame) of the game that he is interested in, but he replies that he is interested in his own self-satisfaction. The reward, according to the Narrator, is an "internal" one.

And perhaps the "game" has turned so much inward that the audience has difficulty following the poem. But the Narrator still seems to have his own ideas on how the game (the material) is to be presented. He still

desires to find out what the game is all about since he wants to see the man of great authority at the end. What results from all of this is that the aroused expectations of the audience remain unfulfilled. Through the use of game structures, Chaucer is working with established literary convention, playing with it in a fresh and original way so as to free himself from its static almost frozen quality evidenced in Book I. We have experienced a change in the Narrator from Book I. In Books I and II the Narrator was a timid bookworm who relied on "auctorite." In Book II the eagle instructs him, and by Book III he has experienced a number of games opening many possibilities for him as a poet and player but not supplying him any paridigm for his poetry. He has observed many games but he has not participated in them. In the House of Fame, the Narrator has a brief glimpse of awareness when he says he knows who he is, but the audience never gain an awareness of who he is.

The Narrator moves on to the House of Rumor where we enter a whirling cage with noise and confusion. There has been a great deal of energy in the sheer movement of the poem, with numerous shifts in form, perhaps even in content and ideas. These shifts may be too much for the audience to keep up with but the shifts are exhilarating. The game possibilities presented to the audience makes them wonder about both their rules and the boundaries. We are beginning to realize that there may be no boundaries. The various games have been picked up, played, and then dropped. The characters in the whirling cage are running, tumbling, climbing, and shouting at the end, and there is a sense of energetic exhuberance that cries out for order. The chaos in this whirling cage suggests the task of the poet, to make order of all of this in his poetry, but the poet is not shown any poetic method.

In the midst of the confusion, the Narrator is reunited with the eagle, for he needs a guide at this point to bring him to experience all these "newe tydynges" (l. 2045). The Narrator has been carried along by the eagle, playing a variety of games in anticipation of the one game he is interested in, the game of love. Now he wants to experience all the "tydynges" of this game. He observes the game of gossip whereby a story is told, passed on to someone else, and grows in such proportion that it does not even resemble the original. The Narrator then explains "Thus saugh I fals and soth compounded/ Together fle for oo tydynges" (ll. 2108-2109) and further on he explains that the house was full of people "With scrippes bret-ful of lessinges,/ Entremedled with tydynges" (ll. 2123-2124), and "With boystes crammed ful of lyes" (l. 2129). Thus "lesinges," fiction, and "tydynges," truth, the two qualities of poetry, are joined. Books II and III have both been concerned with the quality of fiction: what is truth and what is fiction? Lies and truth are so intermingled that the Narrator and the audience cannot make a distinction between them.

The Narrator continues to play in an attempt to learn more about love and to learn more about making love poetry, for the Narrator himself is a poet of love, "served . . . Cupido/ And faire Venus also" (ll. 616-618). When the Narrator hears a great commotion where "men of love-tydynges tolde" (l. 2143), the poem ends with the noise and clamor surrounding the arrival of a "man of gret auctorite" (l. 2158). The Narrator and all the others present scramble to find this man. The Narrator looks for certainty, still relying on "auctorite," no matter what experiences he has had. He is putting tremendous hope in this man. There is a suggestion that the man of great authority will answer

all the Narrator's questions, but he never arrives and therefore the game is never resolved. Chaucer arouses the expectations of his audience so that they, too, would feel that the "man of gret auctorite" has certainty; he would become the center of the poem. But of course the audience's expectations are again frustrated, for the poem is incomplete. One possible reason why the poem was never completed may be that Chaucer was trying to play so many games at once that he lost sight of the focus. At this point, Chaucer does not seem to know how to resolve the game that he is playing.

In The House of Fame, the courtly love game seems to lead to nowhere or to the desert. This leads to anxiety and anxiety allows for a type of search for something more viable than courtly love games, but the search is not fulfilled in the poem. In Books II and III, although the eagle is a masterful creation, he is not enough to sustain our interest. He does not fulfill our expectations of love tidings. The quest or search seems to be all that holds the poem together, although the excitement of the search, the urgency, the uncertainties experienced may not be enough to satisfy the audience. The Narrator cannot seem to find satisfaction in the game of courtly love as evidenced by Book I, but the possibilities he observes in Books II and III do not necessarily suggest substitutes for the courtly love game. Furthermore there is no suggestion in the poem that the Narrator will use these other possibilities instead of courtly love games and as such the poem remains open ended.

The problem with the poem is that, although the limits of the game seem to be set forth fairly well in Book I, there is no closure at the end of Book I. We, as audience, expect the limits to be structurally

expanded or modified, but we do not expect them to be lost sight of. What happens structurally is that the focus of the games seems to shift towards other concerns: the concept of fame on a much broader level than courtly love, the distinction between truth and falsehood, the process of story making, the source of fiction, and the processes of oral narrative itself. Perhaps the overall concern is with what might be called the certainty of uncertainty in the world. Once this concern is voiced we never return to the presentation of the fiction of courtly love as experienced in Book I.

The House of Fame is a poem of possibilities about possibilities. Whatever else it may be or suggest, it is not a conventional love-vision poem. The conventional love-vision has an order about it with definite rules, and although the Narrator-poet senses the necessity for imposing order in poetry, he recognizes the threatening disorder behind it. The poet has been presented with an emblem of the universe and its order, but he must find his own poetic. The House of Fame may be a grand failure because Chaucer was unable to make order out of all the games played. Despite the implicit failure of The House of Fame, it makes it possible for Chaucer as an artist to go on to the variety of games encountered in The Parliament of Fowles.

Chaucer has passed from his emphasis upon traditional love and its phases in Book I to the means to and the making of poetry in Books II and III. We see that the conventions of Chaucer's contemporaries are only one small part of the total picture of poetry. Ruggiers suggests that the poem widens the scope to include more observation and invention of detail,[15] more use of imaginative "ymages" to express a new direction in poetry. Ruggiers continues by saying:

> This departure from the motive of love tidings exclusively seems to my mind to be the inevitable result of the universalizing impulse behind the broader concepts of Fortune in any of her cults. The steadily expanding compass of the successive books of the House of Fame demonstrated in small Chaucer's whole development as an artist as he masters a literary type, absorbs a new and liberating philosophy and creates a new form.[16]

I feel that although Ruggiers has a good thesis, he anticipates too much, for Chaucer has not abandoned "love tidings" yet. It is a long way to The Canterbury Tales; he is merely "playing" with the use of "love tidings" within medieval poetry as he will in the final poem under investigation here, The Parliament of Fowles.

Notes

[1]Wilbur Owen Sypherd, Studies in Chaucer's House of Fame (New York: Haskell House, 1965), passim.

[2]B. G. Koonce, Chaucer and the Tradition of Fame: Symbolism in the House of Fame (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1966), passim.

[3]Howard Rollin Patch, The Goddess Fortuna in Medieval Literature (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1927), passim; Nevill Coghill, The Poet Chaucer (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), passim.

[4]Paul G. Ruggiers, "The Unity of Chaucer's House of Fame," in Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Edward Wagenknecht, pp. 295-308.

[5]Sheila Delany, Chaucer's House of Fame: The Poetic of Skeptical Fideism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972). Delany believes that the skeptical tradition is at the root of medieval "arts poetical." She affirms that The House of Fame is based in a critical and skeptical tradition, "rooted in the awareness of coexistent contradictory truths and resulting in the suspension of final rational judgment" (p. 21).

[6]Emile Mâle, The Gothic Image (New York: Harper & Row Company, 1958), p. 36.

[7]Mâle, p. 37.

[8]Bowden, A Reader's Guide to Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 151.

[9]Ruggiers, p. 289.

[10]Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 10.

[11]H. S. Bennett, Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 46.

[12]Ruggiers, p. 305.

[13]Ruggiers, p. 299.

[14]Ruggiers, p. 279.

[15]Ruggiers, p. 304.

[16]Ruggiers, p. 305.

III

The Parliament of Fowles

In The House of Fame, Chaucer turned from the courtly love game after Book I to experience various other games in Books II and III. The Parliament of Fowles, however, is a tightly controlled poem in which courtly love figures very prominently. Even though there is no debating that The Parliament of Fowles is a poem about love, the types of love discussed pose a problem. The poem conforms to the standard form of the love-vision: the reading of the book, the dream in which the narrator enters an idealized setting, the introduction of various meanings of love, and finally the awakening. Chaucer's imitation ends with the conventional framework, however. He is no longer reliant merely on his French contemporaries. Although the elements of courtly love and the fiction of the game of love are overwhelmingly present, it is essentially a poem that is concerned with various forms of love. Most critical debate centers on pinpointing the exact types of love being discussed and which ones Chaucer was favoring.[1] The basic problem in approaching the poem in this way is that Chaucer himself was non-committal as to exactly what form of love he favored. Although discussions on love are usually at the heart of critical debate on this poem, some critics try to track down the occasion of the poem and as such the poem tends to be mere allegory.[2] Others try to investigate the various ramifications of the poem as a social satire.[3] The use of rhetoric[4] as well as the various sources[5] for the poem are also avenues of critical interpretation. In the final analysis, all of these critical concerns can aid our understanding of The Parliament of Fowles as a love poem.

In The Book of the Duchess Chaucer focused on one part of the game of love. In The Parliament of Fowles, the game is still love but he looks at it from many angles. Chaucer seems to have a great deal of control over the game in The Parliament of Fowles, which in turn gives him a great deal of freedom, because the best player in a game is in many ways the "loosest" player. Chaucer shows in this poem that he can play with the rules of courtly love, gain freedom, and still be in control of his audience. In The Parliament of Fowles Chaucer is playing a variety of games and expanding the vision he had in both The Book of the Duchess and The House of Fame.

Chaucer's The Parliament of Fowles has a four-part structure: the opening, the reading of the book, the dream including the garden of love and the parliament of birds, and the awakening and the return to reading. (This is basically the same framework used in The Book of the Duchess, but as we shall see, what Chaucer does with this framework is far less conventional.) Primarily, the poem is a love poem. The first section, lines 1-28, opens with the Narrator's definition of love:

> The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne,
> Th'assay so hard, so sharp the conquerynge,
> The dredful joye, alwey that slit so yerne
> Al this mene I by Love, that my felynge
> Astonyeth with his wonderful werkynge
> So sore, iwis, that whan I on hym thynke
> Nat wot I wel wher that I flete or synke. (11. 11-7)

This definition is a series of antitheses which, while stating the Narrator's feelings on love, also echoes many of the clichés of a courtly lover and as John Stevens cites, playfully twists the age old aphorism, "Ars longa vita brevis."[6] As had the Narrator in The House of Fame, so also here the Narrator claims to be inexperienced as far as love is concerned, "For al that I knowe nat Love in dede" (1. 8), the favorite pose

of Chaucer's narrators in the love-vision poems. He only knows of love through "bokes reede" (l. 10), not through human experience (a parallel to The Book of the Duchess and The House of Fame). The elements of play begin a chain of interlocked game structures that are at the heart of the poem. In a love-vision the audience expects the Narrator to play the role of the love-stricken suitor who cannot sleep. But the Narrator of The Parliament of Fowles does not play his role by rote and the ridiculous lengths to which the courtly lover will go are not found at this point in the poem. The Narrator mentions the extremes of love "Of his myrakles and his crewel yre" (l. 11). All he knows of the god of love is that "he wol be lord and syre . . . his strokes been so sore" (ll. 12-13). It is important to note the "play" of juxtaposition, which will continue. We see the Narrator as an enthusiastic bookworm:

> For out of olde felded, as men seyth
> Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere,
> And out of olde bokes, in good feyth
> Cometh al this newe science that men lere. (ll. 22-25)

(This turns out to be ironic on another level for Chaucer is attempting to bring forth something new from the old.) He reads books to learn a "certeyn thing" (l. 20), but we will have to wait quite a while before we find out what this certain thing actually is.

In the next section, lines 29-91, the Narrator relates the subject matter of "Tullyus of the Drem of Scipioun," which he has been reading all day. There is a cosmological dimension to this story with its seven chapters "of hevene, and helle/ And erthe and soules that therinne dwelle" (ll. 32-33). A strict moralistic and philosophical note is also found in the summary of what Affrycan revealed to Scipioun. We have a vision of

the universe with the milky way, the spheres, and the music of the spheres much more sketchily drawn than the emblem of universal order shown to the Narrator by the eagle in Book II of The House of Fame. A contemptus mundi is evident for the earth is referred to as "lytel erthe" (l. 57) and "erthe was so lytel" (l. 64). But this is only one view of the earth seen in this poem, and we shall see another view shortly. This entire account has an otherworldliness about it, where the way to heaven and salvation is through "lovede commune profyt" (l. 47):

> "Know thyself first immortal
> And loke ay besyly thow werche and wyse
> To commune profit and thow shalt not mysse
> To comen swiftly to that peace deere
> That ful beysse is and of soule cleere." (ll. 73-77)

Divine love and the working for the common profit is juxtaposed with the base human "likerous folk" (l. 79). These lecherous folk who will be punished may be the earthly lovers soon to be encountered in the Narrator's dream.[7] But the day begins to grow dark and the Narrator falls asleep, "Fulfyld of thought and busy hevynesse" (l. 89). The Narrator is much different from the Narrator of The Book of the Duchess, who read the tale of Seyx and Alcyone to fall asleep because of his love sickness. Both the Narrator of The Parliament of Fowles and the Narrator of The House of Fame are concerned with love, but neither has difficulty with sleep. Chaucer seems to have much more control over the Narrator of The Parliament of Fowles than he had over the narrators in the previous love-visions, and he does not let this Narrator play games in the same way as the others. The reasons for this will be seen as we encounter the dream section of the poem.

The action of the dream itself, lines 92-693, involves the play of

opposites. The dream is juxtaposed with the love of "commune profyt" we have just heard about. The Narrator dreams that Affrycan came to him and tells him that "sumdel of thy labour wolde I quyte" (l. 112). The Narrator in The House of Fame was rewarded by Jupiter through the vehicle of the golden eagle. Just as in The House of Fame the Narrator was guided by a golden eagle and in The Book of the Duchess by a whelp, so also here, following the conventions of a love-vision, the Narrator has a companion in his dream. And just as Affrycan took Scipioun to show him "Cartage" and the "lytel erthe," so too, now, Affrycan takes the Narrator to a garden. Chaucer is playing the game of courtly love by the rules and his audience would be aware of it. As we move into this garden, we move into the world of the courtly game of love and the Romance of the Rose. This is not the courtly love world of de Lorris, but the world of de Meun. There is no smooth treatment of this subject, but rather, a rough handling of the various ideas of courtly love.[8]

We have a seemingly conventional invocation to Cytherea to aid the Narrator in writing down the dream that she has sent. As a representative of one side of Venus, she becomes a force who works for the common good, similar to the divine love seen in the opening of the poem. The Narrator imitates the invocations he has read in his many old books, and I see this invocation as Chaucer's ingenious use of game-play with a naïve unreliable Narrator. The Narrator asks for help from "Cytherea! thow blysful lady swete" (l. 113) while Chaucer the poet, standing behind him, actually slights Venus by the use of the expression "north-north-west" (l. 117), thus giving the invocation an ironic tone. Robinson notes that Bronson translated this expression as "hardly at all" instead of interpreting it astrologically,"[9] implying that Venus was not

seen at all. At any rate, the invocation is at the least ambivalent. My reading is supported by the later reduction of this goddess in the garden itself. Chaucer uses the literary convention of the invocation as a game itself, through his ironic presentation of conventional material. Finally, Chaucer plays on his audience's expectation of the invocation itself, for they would expect an invocation to Venus, but perhaps not one that is so ambivalent. The audience would be slightly put on their guard by the tone of the invocation and would question the reason for the change. The possibilities of audience reaction to the happenings of the poem are expanded.

The contrasted parks and streams are reminiscent of the French work,[10] the Romance of the Rose. At the entrance to the garden there are obvious echoes of the journey in Dante's Divine Comedy, where Virgil is Dante's guide, and of The House of Fame, where Dante's golden eagle was also used as a guide. The inscription engraved on the lintel of the Gate to Hell in the Inferno reads:

> Only those elements time cannot wear
> Were made before me, and beyond time I stand.
> Abandon all hope ye who enter here.[11]

Dante inquires of Virgil the meaning of the inscription and Virgil replies:

> Here must you put by all division of spirit
> And gather your soul against all cowardice.[12]

We understand Dante's fright because of the nature of the gates, but the Narrator's reaction in Chaucer's poem becomes comic in light of his ironic use of Dante's gate:

> For with the oon encrescede ay my fere
> And with that other gan myn herte holde;
> That oon me hette, that other dide me colde
> Not wit hadde I, for errour, for to chese,
> To entre or flen, or me to save or lese. (11. 143-147)

This is a beautiful Chaucerian touch, for he allows the Narrator's reaction to be "played out" in courtly love terms, the contrast between heat and cold, the traditional effect of the lady on the lover. Also, "Affrycan, my guide/ Me hande, and shof in at the gates wide" (11. 153-154) parallels Dante's "He laid his hand on mine, and with a face/ So joyous . . . into the hidden things he led my way."[13] There is a double inscription on the gate: the one in gold to enter "that blysful place" (1. 127), and the other in black to enter the place where "nevere tre shal fruyt ne leves bere" (1. 137). Chaucer continues to give his audience what they expect, the conventional traditions of the game of love. The two inscriptions convey the courtly love idea of hereös, the lover's sickness, and reflects the earlier state of the Narrator. The gold inscription speaks of "lusty May" (1. 130), the conventional month for this type of love tale, and of the joy of the love experience as "hertes hele and dedly woundes cure" (1. 128), an echo of the healing power of love seen previously in both The Book of the Duchess and The House of Fame with the use of "phiscien" image. On the other hand, the black inscription speaks of sorrow and pain, the painful effect of rejection by the idealized lady. Contrary to the gold inscription, here the remedy for love is to shun it, "th'eschewing" (1. 140). Affrycan aptly capsulizes this courtly ideal when he speaks of its effect on him, "That oon me hette, that other dide me colde" (1. 145), echoing the fluctuation of the courtly lover between the two extremes. Besides being the two sides of courtly love, these inscriptions basically suggest different types of love, the subject matter to be encountered later in the dream. Throughout this section and the section that follows, Chaucer

uses traditional conventions and presents the fiction of courtly love as a game itself. He continues to satisfy the expectations of his audience but he will soon turn these expectations around.

Affrycan continues instructing the Narrator by telling him not to worry about going in, for these inscriptions are meant for lovers, and the Narrator has already disclaimed this role, "For al be that I knowe nat Love in dede":

> But dred not to come into this place,
> For this writyng nys nothyng ment bi the
> Ne by non, but he Loves servaunt be:
> For thow of Love last lost thy tast, I gesse,
> As sek man hath od swete and bytternesse. (11. 157-161)

The Narrator claims that he need not fear for he is not one of Love's servants. This would cause the audience to wonder what the Narrator really means. He is saying he is not one of Love's subjects but at the same time his language is the rhetorical verbal game play of courtly lovers. The contrast of the "swete" and "bytternesse" is the same as the juxtaposition of the two inscriptions, the two sides of the love experience. Then we return to the problem of "auctorite" and experience when Affrycan says that he is bringing him into the garden for experience:

> And if thow haddest connyng for t'endite
> I shal the shewe mater of to wryte. (11. 167-168)

As soon as they pass through the gates Affrycan disappears and is never seen again in the poem. This is similar to the disappearance of the eagle in Book III of The House of Fame, but the difference is that in The House of Fame the eagle does return near the end of the poem when a guide is once more necessary. Affrycan pushing the Narrator through these gates ironically underscores the Narrator's reluctance to pursue love.

All the elements of the courtly love allegory are present in the garden but because they appear so heavily stylized they lose their force. The Narrator catalogues the trees, talks of the garden, the music, the birds as angels--Dante's donna angelicata--and the peacefulness of the location. It is Edenic:

> Th'air of that place so attempre was
> That nevere was ther grevaunce of hot ne cold;
> There wex ek every holsom spice and gras;
> No man may there waxe sek ne old
> Yit was there joye more a thousandfold
> Than man can telle; ne nevere wolde it nyghte
> But ay cler day to any manes sughte. (11. 204-210)

The use of "hot" and "cold" is here used to point out that the climate is always the same, temperate. Then we see "Cupide" (1. 211) with his arrows "some for to sle, and some to wounde and kerve" (1. 217). Cataloguing continues as the personifications are seen--Pleasure, Lust, Curteysie, Youth, "ful of game and jolyte" (1. 226), and so on, but the personified figures do not have the vitality that they had in the Romance of the Rose. They do not become active participants in the dream as in previous works. Their use is merely for the sake of ornamentation and convention and they become "sterile abstract personifications."[14] Chaucer is playing the game by the rules to point out their rigidity and lack of creativity. The "play" of juxtaposition continues as the garden is shown to be a place of opposition just as had the gates at its entrance been shown to be.

The brass temple of Venus with "daunseden alwey/ Women inowe" (11. 232-233) is another convention. Having Dame Peace and Dame Patience "upon a hil of sond" (1. 243) carries the same symbolic insecurity that we saw in The House of Fame with Venus' temple of glass and Fame's house of ice. The description continues to employ traditional courtly love

terms, here used to describe the scene: "swough that gan aboute reune . . . hoote as fyr . . . engendered with desyr . . . al the cause of sorwes" (11. 246-251). As seen previously, these clichés show how Chaucer uses these conventional devices as he plays his game with the tradition that gave birth to them. In the temple there are the figures of Dido, Paris, Cleopatra, Troilus, and others, painted on the wall but they are not as extensively described as in The House of Fame. Continuing to play his game with this traditional material, Chaucer makes these figures of love seem one-dimensional, artificial, and merely conventional with no real vitality. Again Chaucer shows his audience what happens to a game that is played too long without any creative change. He arouses his audience's expectations and then gives them what they do not expect. Venus is described briefly and in a slightly pornographic and uncomplimentary fashion. She is pictured as being in a dark "prive corner" (1. 260), in a too human and erotic fashion:

> Naked from the brest unto the hed . . .
> The remenaunt was wel kevered to my pay
> Ryght with a subtyl coverchef of Valence
> Ther nas no thikkere cloth of no defense. (11. 269;271-273)

Commenting on this passage, Muscatine claims that it "hits on voyeurism that is unique in Chaucer."[15] But this is only a partial description for Chaucer makes the Narrator play the role of polite humility by stating that he was glad she was covered from the waist downward. (Psychologically, Moller affirms that the Narrator's voyeurism indicates a repression of a wish fulfillment. The Narrator's role of polite humility is all that he could play, otherwise he would overstep the permitted custom.[16]) Chaucer's "play" here would cause the appropriate comic

reaction from his audience that he desired, for if this Venus is going to be in charge of any courtly love games, they are going to be highly erotic.

After leaving the temple, the Narrator returns to the garden and sees the "queene," the goddess Nature. The use of space is interesting to note as we approach this section of the poem. The introduction and the reading of the book took place in the Narrator's room where space was confined. In the dream itself, the Temple of Venus section, there is still a sense of claustrophobia present. The temple, that "prive corner," seems very confined, enclosed space. Then we move out physically, in terms of space in the poem, as well as psychically. As we approach this final section of the poem it is important to realize that spatially we are expanding experiences to include various attitudes towards love. The expansion of physical space enhances and reinforces the expansion of experience.

The Narrator paints a very beautiful portrait of the goddess Nature for the audience. She sits upon a "hil of floures" in "a launde" (l. 302). There is obviously a direct contrast between this bright tender picture of Nature and the dark previously painted erotic portrait of Venus. Furthermore, whereas Venus is pictured as being in a confined space, the "prive corner," Nature is described as being in an open field. Chaucer again reverses the expectations of his audience for in this poem, Venus does not preside over the assembly but Nature does, "prest in here presence/ To take hire dom and yeve hir audyence" (ll. 307-308). In Chaucer's poem, Venus, the goddess of love, is subservient to Nature, the "noble empresse" (l. 319). This is important for the intention of the poem, where Nature and Venus are both links in the chain of love. Nature

represents love of the earth which also transcends earthly endeavors while renewing itself with the passing seasons; Venus represents love which dies when men die and is associated with lecherous desire and disaster.[17] The juxtaposition of these forms of love again hints at Chaucer's design in a poem devoted exclusively to love. In love-vision poems, the typical goddess to preside over the tidings of love ought to be Venus, but Chaucer plays a game with his audience, for the goddess to preside in The Parliament of Fowles, of course, is Nature and not Venus. By playing this game with his audience he makes them question the value of their expectations. Instead of using the conventional Venus to preside, he breaks from the rigidity of tradition and adapts it to his own creativity. Also, Nature becomes an active part of the poem whereas the other abstractions used in the poem do not.[18]

We learn that the birds surrounding the goddess Nature are present in order to receive a mate in the tradition of St. Valentine's Day. The catalogue of birds follows with basically four categories: the birds of prey, the seed fowl, the worm fowl, and the water fowl. Muscatine sees a basic irony in this description for "here the vices of secular life are recorded in a surprisingly full and over elaborate measure for a valentine."[19] A great noise resounds throughout the garden and the cataloguing ends with a traditional Chaucerian rhetorical device, "but to the poynt" (l. 372), immediately cutting short the action. Now we will focus on the center of attention in the garden, Nature, and the parliament of fowls.

Stevens believes that the observance of St. Valentine's Day has basically three game structures present: the assembly of the parliament, the social significance of the birds, and the choosing of mates.[20] The

assembly of the parliament is a game with set rules and predetermined boundaries with Nature as the referee. Within this game there are a variety of other games acted out in an attempt at self-satisfaction. The eagles play in order to win the formel eagle. The formel eagle's game is intended at testing the intentions of the three tersel eagles. The birds as representatives of social classes is a poetic game Chaucer plays. The irony and satire present add to the richness of this game. The choice of mates is also a game. For the cuckoo and the goose it is a game based on instinct, while for the turtle dove it is transcendent faithfulness. Finally, for Nature, choosing a mate is a very large game we all must play, like it or not, for the game of life to go on. Our part in it is that sometimes we may choose how we wish to play it. The various game structures that have operated in the poem up to this point have prepared the audience for the games to be played in the parliament of birds. The value of the audience's expectations will again come under attack.

The next section is overwhelmingly about courtly love and a note of artificiality is present throughout. Chaucer presents the fiction of courtly love as a game itself. On Nature's hand sits the formel eagle, an allegorical figure for the idealized lady. She is everything an idealized lady should be and her description reminds the reader of Blanche in The Book of the Duchess. The formel eagle is described as:

> . . . of shap the gentilleste
> That evere she among hire werkes fond,
> The most benygne and the goodlieste.
> In hire was everi vertu at his reste. (11. 373-376)

Then by having Nature described as the "vicaire of the almyghty Lord" (1. 379), the reader is returned to Affrycan's speech on "commune profyt." The language of the game of love continues to be present,

"hot, cold, hevy, light, moyst and dreye" (l. 380), to show how Nature harmonizes the elements and humors and blends them in her own presence. Nature assumes the role of the judge in this parliament. She plays this role according to the rules of the courtly game:

> But notheless, my ryghtful ordenaunce
> May I nat lete for al this world to wynne
> That he that moste is worthe shal begynne (ll. 390-392)

The Narrator then tells us of the game that ensues between the three eagles as they plead for the formel eagle to be their mate. The speeches, discussing the question of love, are of the love debate tradition, the demande d'amour,[21] of medieval literature. The debates that follow are similar to the ones described by Andreas Capellanus in Book I of De arte honeste amandi where he describes the Courts of Love and what they argued. Capellanus was the first to record the rules and form them into an established system of behavior, a system that suggests a carefully, and intricately structured game. In these debates the speaker's sole object is to "score points and in doing so it does not matter that he shifts his ground . . . [or] contradicts himself."[22] As with every game, there are both psychological and sociological implications to the participants' actions. It is obvious in Capellanus' work that not only are the participants playing games but that the author is also playing with his audience. Chaucer does the same thing here.

Nature presides over this court of birds as they play the game of love. These three eagles represent typical courtly lovers. The first to speak talks of his service and fidelity, two important elements of the courtly tradition:

> Whos I am al, and evere wol hire serve . . .
> Besekynge hire of merci and of grace
> For in myn herte is korven severy veyne

> Havynge reward only to my trouthe . . .
> Ne nevere for no we shal I lette
> To serve hire, how fer so that she wende.
> (11. 419;425-426;439-441)

He begs her for mercy and grace and if he is ever found unfaithful, lines 428-430, he hopes to be mercilessly killed. The second eagle's speech lacks the humility of the first and reads like a contractual arrangement as he claims he has served her longer than the first, "and lenger have served hire in my degre" (1. 453), and the third eagle believes that he has a greater depth of devotion than the other two[23]:

> But I dare seyn, I am hire truweste man
> As to my dom, and faynest wolde hire ese
> At shorte wordes, til that deth me sese
> I wol ben heres, whether I wake or wynke.
> And trewe in all that herte may bethynke. (11. 479-483)

The business-like tone is again evident in his speech but he avoids boasting by playing the part of a devoted servant. These three speeches are highly conventional and idealized in accord with the chivalric code of service and fidelity, but they seem to lack conviction and feeling. Chaucer's audience would expect the three eagles to posture in this way, but the deep game structure at the level of language, I suspect, would leave the audience with a sense of artificiality, sterility, and shallowness that Chaucer probably intended. Chaucer wants his audience to discover for themselves the distance that can exist between what we say and what we mean. The ideal of courtly love has been turned into ridiculous games. The three eagles have mouthed courtly love but emotionally felt nothing. Their rhetoric seems high-blown and full of hot air. Psychologically, their elaborate politeness and elaborate word games have been a cover-up for what they really want, a sexual mate. Through the obvious speeches of service and fidelity, they have conformed to the rules and regulations of the game of love in order to win the formel eagle. As we

shall see, their failure to secure the formel eagle may be in part due to their insincerity and phoniness. By allowing these three tersel eagles to play their game, the formel eagle also plays a game. After hearing these pleas the naïve Narrator explains:

> Of al my lyf, syn that day I was born,
> So gentil ple in love or other thyng
> Ne herde nevere no man me beforn,
> Who that hadde leyser and connyng
> For to reherse here chere and hire spekyng (11. 484-488)

The Narrator has been taken in by these speeches. Even though the Narrator believes in the sincerity of these suitors, Chaucer the poet adds his note of skepticism by allowing the Narrator to say that these speeches seemed planned, "reherse[d]." Chaucer attempts to show his audience what can happen to the language of love. The suitors say all the right things, they adhere to all the rules of the game, but the result is to rob the game of meaning.

High-blown idealism is contrasted with the practical thinkers, or more precisely the non-thinkers, symbolized by the other birds present during all of this. Their reaction is a brillant piece of Chaucerian comedy, "kek kek! kokkow! quek quek!" (1. 499). As we proceed, we shall see that their verbal responses are outright criticisms of the game of love and the courtly conventions that are part of it. Chaucer continually undercuts the idealism of the courtly system by positing the reality of a truly "human" sexual response and need for love. Unlike the idealized suitors who can spend all day debating the fate of the formel eagle, the other birds present are there for mates and procreation. They have no time or interest in the formalities of the game of courtly love. The cuckoo's initial reaction is thematically interesting:

"For I wol my owene auctorite
For commune spede take on the charge now,
For to delyvere us in great charite" (11. 506-508)

Again the use of "auctorite" and "commune spede" return the reader to the opening of the work. Certainly the three tersel eagles are not working for the "commune profyt." The goose, the cuckoo, and the duck want the common, as well as their own interests served, not only the interest of the elite. Nature then mentions that everyone should decide the fate of the formel eagle:

I judge, of every folk men shul oon calle
To seyn the verdit for you foules alle (11. 524-525)

The falcon, as the representative of the eagles, the highest class of birds present, says that a battle should decide which one wins the formel eagle, a game or a tournament to decide her fate. This is both a noble and a courtly love solution. The falcon, continuing in this courtly vein, says that she should marry the knight who has best followed all the rules of the game of love. The goose, speaking for the water fowls, has a more practical and down to earth solution, "But she wol love hym, lay hym love another!" (1. 566)--an expedient solution, "take love where you find it," and one completely opposed to the courtly system. The duck has his own sarcastic "solution":

That men shulde loven alwey causeless
Who can a resoun fynde or wit in that?
Daunseth he murye that is myrtheles?
Who shulde recche of that is recheles? (11. 590-593)

In reality the duck has no solution and suggests motivation is hard to come by. Again we see the "play" of opposites that has been operative throughout the entire poem. And the cuckoo, again on a very practical note, says that since they cannot agree, let each be single all his life so he can have his mate in peace. This is not for the "commune profyt"

but for his individual needs and desires. The turtle dove, on the other hand, blushing as had the formel eagle previously, agrees with the traditional beliefs,

> For, thou she deyede, I woulde non other make;
> I woe ben hires, til that the deth me take. (11. 587-588)

and, thus affirms the constancy and transcendence of true love espoused by courtly lovers. No solution is brought about until Nature intervenes and leaves it up to the formel eagle to decide, even though Nature prefers the "tercelet" (1. 634) to the others. The formel eagle's response is that she will wait one year before deciding. It is interesting that at the end of her speech she says, "I wol not serve Venus ne Cupide" and "Ye gete no more although ye do me deye!" (11. 652, 651). Could this be a criticism of the courtly game of love from the mouth of the figure of the idealized lady? She cannot decide among these three eagles because she sees through them, she knows they are using word play, posturing, and merely playing the game of Venus and Cupid. According to the rules of the game, she has remained in the background during the debates, but the implication is that she does not like playing this game. Perhaps like Blanche in The Book of the Duchess, by asking her three suitors to wait one year, she does not reduce the game to absurdity but continues to play it by postponement. In so doing, she is testing the seriousness of the game as well as of the players. I think that what Chaucer has done is to expose, to his audience, the static and rigid qualities that have become a part of courtly love. The formel eagle, although following the rules of the game, has made them flexible enough for herself, as she changes the rules of the game in order to suit her own needs. This is another instance where Chaucer "plays" on the expectations of his audience, for by having the other birds speculate on

the fate of the formel eagle, Chaucer asks his audience to speculate on the multiplicity of attitudes toward love. He attempts to open them up to more possibilities than a courtly game of love.

Finally, Nature proposes that the three suitors try to win the formel eagle's favor during the year by abiding by the rules of the game of love in order to win her:

> Be of good herte, and serveth all thre,
> A yer is not too long to endure. (11. 660-661)

She then assigns mates to the other impatient birds, the court is dismissed, and the garden scene ends in a joyful roundel praising both Nature and Saint Valentine. Chaucer allows the birds to manifest differing motivations in love, some sensual, some idealized.

An ironic undercutting of the courtly game of love may be seen operating throughout the parliament on the level of characterization. By lowering the stature of courtly love and the courtly debates to the level of mere fowls, Chaucer has played with and turned the whole system "up so doun." The entire parliament exemplifies the central paradox of the game of love: desired personal experience, a private game, is played out publically in a social activity.[24] Chaucer has demonstrated that courtly love is not necessarily ridiculous but the way in which people try to attain it frequently is.

I will not attempt to analyse this dream as one of social commentary on class distinction and the social order as many critics have done. Rickert and Douglas see the poem as a satire on the lower class and their sentiments against courtly love; Patrick, taking the opposite position, reads the poem as a satire on the upper class, thus sympathizing with the common fowls.[25] In the parliament, it is obvious that Chaucer's game structure includes a cross section of society representing various natural

instincts. We have extreme views of love represented in a contrast between the courtly, the eagles, and the middle class, the duck, cuckoo, and goose, attitudes toward love. Chaucer gives us a juxtaposition of idealism and practicality, and of artificiality and natural human impulse. Throughout all of this, Nature is a stabilizing force. As a representative of God, the "vicaire of the almyghty Lord" (l. 379), she balances these extremes and brings them to a harmony, symbolized by the music of the roundel. She has worked for the "commune profyt." Previously I mentioned that Chaucer's audience would have expected Venus to preside over this parliament and not Nature. It is obvious now why Chaucer used Nature instead of Venus in this garden of love. Venus would not have worked for the common good whereas Nature has. Chaucer is able to examine all aspects of love and human experience in terms of the dream. We have seen another view of earth much different from the "lytel erthe" of the opening section. The dream has shown the pleasure in the earth in direct contrast to Affrycan's contemptus mundi.

Finally, in the last section of the poem, lines 694-699, the "shoutyng" of the fowls as they flew away, awakens the Narrator from his dream. The conventional ending in a love-vision is used by Chaucer with a new twist to it. Chaucer's final irony is in these concluding lines:

> I hope, to rede so som day
> That I shal mete som thyng for to fare
> The bet, and thus to rede I nye nat spare. (ll. 697-699)

Stevens glosses these lines to be a "gambit in that game of love,"[26] implying that Chaucer purposely lets his Narrator speak these words for Chaucer's artistic advantage. The problem of experience and "auctorite" is present even at the end of the poem. Ironically, the naïve Narrator

awakens and is to continue reading, hoping someday to find "som thyng," a rewording of the "certyn thyng" referred to in the beginning of the poem. At the beginning of the poem Chaucer arouses the expectation of his audience as the Narrator searches for his "certyn thyng," but he now seems unaware of the meaning of his vision and the experience he has had and that this "certyn thyng" has already been seen in the views of earth and love. Muscatine believes the juxtaposition of Affrycan and the fowls is irreconcilable and views the "comic antithesis, [as] a joke at the expense of the Narrator, for his bookishness."[27] The Narrator misunderstands the meaning of his dream in the same way as the Narrator of The Book of the Duchess missed the whole intention of the Seyx and Alcyone tale. By the use of dramatic irony, Chaucer lets his audience perceive more than the Narrator. Baker suggests that this "thyng" refers to Chaucer's own role as a poet of human love. If so, we have a situation where we have an unreliable narrator with Chaucer the poet standing in the background laughing at his own creation. If Baker's assertions are true, then the poem affirms human worth and shows that the celebration of human love is the justification of the love poet.[28] The Narrator will return to "auctorite," his books, after having had first hand personal experiences which seem to be completely lost on him because of his lack of awareness. Affrycan has wasted his time in bringing the Narrator to the garden. The echoes of the opening lines of the poem present at the end further unify the poem. No doubt these incongruous lines brought a laugh from Chaucer's courtly audience, second only to that of the cuckoo, duck, and goose, in the garden of love, as Chaucer plays his final game with his narrator in his love-vision poems.

Notes

[1]Robinson, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer. In his notes to the text of The Parliament of Fowles, Robinson reviews many of these ideas.

[2]Sypherd, Studies in Chaucer's Hous of Fame, p. 21.

[3]Robinson, n. to l. 323, p. 795.

[4]H. S. Bennett, Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 89-91.

[5]Sypherd discusses the sources of this poem at great length in his full length study, Studies in Chaucer's Hous of Fame.

[6]Stevens, "The 'Game of Love,'" in Music and Poetry in the English Tudor Courts, p. 158.

[7]Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition, p. 119.

[8]Bennett, p. 51.

[9]Robinson, n. to l. 117, p. 793.

[10]Robinson, n. to l. 127, p. 793.

[11]John Ciardi, trans., The Inferno (New York: New American Library 1954), p. 42.

[12]Ciardi, p. 42.

[13]Ciardi, p. 43.

[14]Charles O. McDonald, "An Interpretation of Chaucer's Parlement of Foules," in Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Edward Wagenknecht, p. 311.

[15]Muscatine, p. 116.

[16]Moller, "The Meaning of Courtly Love," Journal of American Folklore, p. 42. Moller supplies the psychological reasons underlying courtly love in medieval society; Leyerle, "The Game and Play of Hero," in Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, pp. 49-81. This work is a valuable tool for an approach to a study of game and play in literature. Psychologically, Leyerle sees games, in Freudian terms, as the "unconscious drives for erotic satisfaction," (p. 63).

[17]Bowden, A Reader's Guide to Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 160; Robertson, "The Concepts of Courtly Love as an Impediment to the Understanding of Medieval Texts," in The Meaning of Courtly Love, p. 7.

[18]Chaucer is here following Aleyn's "Pleynt of Kynde" in his use of Nature (11. 316ff).

[19]Muscatine, p. 116.

[20]Stevens, p. 184.

[21]Robinson, p. 791.

[22]Donaldson, "The Myth of Courtly Love," Ventures 5, p. 20.

[23]Muscatine, p. 117.

[24]Stevens, p. 187.

[25]Robinson, n. to l. 323, p. 795; See also Donald C. Baker, "The Parliament of Fowls," in Companion to Chaucer Studies, ed. Beryl Rowland, p. 358.

[26]Stevens, p. 158.

[27]Muscatine, p. 122.

[28]Baker, p. 365.

Conclusion

In The Parliament of Fowles Chaucer has gone far beyond his treatment of love in The Book of the Duchess and The House of Fame. He has used a "blend of French and Italian styles coupled with what is by this time his own distinctive art and charm."[1] This is what T. S. Eliot says distinguishes the truly great artist from the mediocre ones, the artist's ability to pick and choose and use his material in a unique way according to his own poetic needs. Rather than merely follow traditional patterns as he had in The Book of the Duchess and impose his own ideas on poetry and its actual making in The House of Fame, in The Parliament of Fowles Chaucer takes the various patterns and expands them, opening up the tradition to its many possibilities and allowing various types of love, and not exclusively courtly love, to be viewed. He is sure of himself here, evidenced by the detachment of the narrator from the action. It would be erroneous to say that Chaucer abandons courtly love, but more to the point, he allows the audience to see some of the inadequacies of this form of love, while at the same time showing them the power of sexual and spiritual love. In The Parliament of Fowles, Chaucer examines from multiple points of view various motivations of love, sexual, instinctive, lustful, idealized, and spiritual.

Courtly love becomes Chaucer's tool in the game of love played in The Parliament of Fowles, as the game structures utilized in The Book of the Duchess and The House of Fame are fused and blended into the tapestry of The Parliament of Fowles. The game of love, its inadequacies, and the ridiculousness with which some people pursue it are under attack. The Narrator is far different from the narrators in The Book of the Duchess and The House of Fame. For most of the poem the Narrator is a detached

outside observer, while the characters are allowed to tell their own story much in the same way as in Chaucer's later work, The Canterbury Tales. The Narrator, therefore, is not so much the source of fun as is the courtly tradition itself. Chaucer demonstrates how lifeless some of the conventions have become as the rules have become static and restrictive rather than creative. In allowing the drama of courtly love to be completely played, Chaucer exposes the system, shows its faults, and decides there must be something more than mere games that play on the emotions of their players.

Ultimately the game elements used in all three poems have a common purpose, self-awareness. In The Book of the Duchess, both the Knight and the Narrator appear to gain awareness, even if it is limited. The Narrator's awareness in The House of Fame, even if incomplete, comes about through the series of games played by him and about him. But it is when Chaucer writes The Parliament of Fowles that he gains more control over the games he plays. In this poem, although the Narrator is given all the possibilities for awareness, these are completely lost on him. As Chaucer plays with the expectations of his audiences in all three poems, they too gain awareness by questioning the accuracy and value of their expectations and by adjusting them accordingly. The audiences gain an understanding of the meaning of the poems and as they do, they also become aware of how well the game has worked.

The game elements discussed throughout this study have been vehicles for Chaucer's attempt to impose order. The poems discussed are not "merely a communication from a poet to his readers, but . . . a mutual 'playing' with ideas and sensations of love."[2] I have stressed that Chaucer was no mere imitator but that he reconceived tradition in relation to his

own ideas. All too often games are seen as merely frivolous or pastimes, but Chaucer shows us that games can be, and often are, profoundly serious. They are also aesthetic, sociological, and psychological, whatever else they may be. Thu use of game structures was Chaucer's method of creating a form that he could best utilize to present to us his "world."

It would be erroneous to assert that Chaucer abandons the courtly love tradition. Courtly love as a tradition, a literary game, afforded Chaucer one method by which to explore the various facets of love. In the final analysis, the expansive view of love seen in The Parliament of Fowles opens up various ways of looking at love. Chaucer is a love poet, embracing the human and the divine. The experimentation with the love-vision in The Book of the Duchess, The House of Fame, and The Parliament of Fowles allows him to examine love from a multiplicity of views, as he continues to do when he writes his major works, Troilus and Criseyde and The Canterbury Tales. As a poet of love Chaucer is non-committal as to which type of love he favors, but as a poet of life, he exposes love in its various forms to be experienced in delightful and serious "play" by his audience.

Notes

[1]Bowden, A Reader's Guide to Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 155.

[2]Stevens, "The 'Game of Love,'" in Music and Poetry in the English Tudor Courts, p. 206.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akerman, Robert W. "Chaucer" in The Medieval Literature of Western Europe, ed. J. H. Fischer. New York: New York University Press, 1966.

Baker, Donald C. "The Parliament of Fowls," in Companion to Chaucer Studies, ed. Beryl Rowland. New York: Oxford Press, 1968.

Bennett, H. S. Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century. New York: Oxford Press, 1947.

Bennett, J. A. W. The Parlement of Foules: An Interpretation. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1957.

Benton, John F. "Clio and Venus: An Historical View of Medieval Love," in The Meaning of Courtly Love, ed. F. X. Newman. Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 1968.

Boethius. The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. Richard Green. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1962.

Bowden, Muriel. A Reader's Guide to Geoffrey Chaucer. New York: Noonday Press, 1970.

Briffault, Robert S. The Troubadours. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965.

Bronson, Bertrand H. "The Book of the Duchess Re-opened" in PMLA 57 (1952) 863-881.

_____. "In Appreciation of Chaucer's Parlement of Foules" University of California Publications in English, 3 (1935), 193-224.

Capellanus, Andreas. The Art of Courtly Love, trans. John Jay Parry. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941.

Ciardi, John, trans. The Inferno. New York: New American Library, 1954.

Coghill, Nevill. The Poet Chaucer. London: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Cox, Harvey. The Feast of Fools. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969.

Daiches, David. A Critical History of English Literature, 1. New York: Roland Press, 1970.

Davies, R. T. ed. Medieval English Lyrics. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964.

Delany, Sheila. Chaucer's House of Fame: The Poetics of Skeptical Fideism. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972.

de Lorris, Guillaume and Jean de Meun. The Romance of the Rose, trans Harry W. Robbins. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1962.

Denomy, A. J. "Courtly Love and Courtliness," Speculum 28 (1953), 44-63.

Dodd, William George. Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1913.

Donaldson, E. Talbot. "The Myth of Courtly Love," Ventures 5, 2 (1965). 16-23.

_____. Speaking of Chaucer. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1970.

Eliason, Norman E. "Chaucer the Love Poet," in Chaucer the Love Poet, eds. Jerome Mitchell and William Provost. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1973.

Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in Selected Essays. New York: Harcout, Brace and World, Inc., 1950.

Fleming, John V. "The Moral Reputation of the Roman de la Rose Before 1400," Romance Philology 18 (1964-1965), 430-435.

Frank, R. W. Jr. "Structure and Meaning in The Parlement of Foules," PMLA 71 (1956), 530-539.

Fromm, Erich. The Art of Loving. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1956.

Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

Green, R. H. "Courtly Love," New Catholic Encyclopedia 4, 393-399, New York: Mc Graw Hill, 1967.

Huizinga, Johan. Homo Ludens: A Study of the Paly-Element in Culture. Boston: Beacon Press, 1955.

_____. The Waning of the Middle Ages. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1954.

Huppé, B. and D. W. Robertson, Jr. Fruyt and Chaf: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

Kittredge, George Lyman. Chaucer and His Poetry. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970.

Knudson, Charles and Jean Misrahi. "Courtly Love," in The Medieval Literature of Western Europe, ed. J. H. Fischer. New York: New York University Press, 1966.

Koenigsberg, Richard A. "Culture and the Unconscious Fantasy: Observations on Courtly Love," Psychoanalytic Review 54 (1967), 36-50.

Kolve, V. A. "The Corpus Christi Drama as Play and Game" in The Play Called Corpus Christi. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1966.

Koonce, B. G. Chaucer and the Tradition of Fame: Symbolism in the House of Fame. Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1966.

Lawlor, John. "The Pattern of Consolation in The Book of the Duchess," in Chaucer Criticism II: Troilus and Criseyde and The Minor Poems, eds. Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1961.

Lewis, C. S. The Allegory of Love. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.

_____. The Discarded Image. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Lever, J. W. The Elizabethan Love Sonnet. London: Methuen and Co., 1956.

Leyerle, John. "The Game and Play of Hero" in Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, eds. Norman P. Burns and Christopher J. Reagan. Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 1975.

Lowes, J. L. Geoffrey Chaucer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934.

McDonald, Charles O. "An Interpretation of Chaucer's Parlement of Foules," in Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Edward Wagenknecht. New York: Oxford Press, 1959.

Mâle, Emile. The Gothic Image. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1964.

Miller, David L. "The Kingdom of Play: Some Old Theological Light from Recent Literature," in Union Seminary Quarterly Review 25 (1970) 343-360.

Mitchell, Jerome and William Provost. Chaucer the Love Poet. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1973.

Moller, Herbert. "The Meaning of Courtly Love," Journal of American Folklore 73 (1960), 39-52.

Muscatine, Charles. Chaucer and the French Tradition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

Neale, Robert E. In Praise of Play. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

Newman, F. X., ed. The Meaning of Courtly Love. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1968.

Nitze, William and E. Preston Dargan. A History of French Literature. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930.

Ovid. Metamorphosis, trans. Mary M. Innes. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1955.

Patch, Howard Rollin. The Goddess Fortuna in Medieval Literature. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1927.

Reiss, Edmund. "Chaucer's Parodies of Love," in Chaucer the Love Poet, eds. Jerome Mitchell and William Provost. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1973.

Robertson, D. W., Jr. A Preface to Chaucer. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962.

_____. "The Concept of Courtly Love as an Impediment to the Understanding of Medieval Texts" in The Meaning of Courtly Love, ed. F. X. Newman. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1968.

Robinson, F. N. The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957.

Rowland, Beryl. Companion to Chaucer Studies. New York: Oxford Press, 1968.

Ruggiers, Paul G. "The Unity of Chaucer's House of Fame," in Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Edward Wagenknecht. New York: Oxford Press, 1959.

Schoeck, Richard J., and Jerome Taylor. Chaucer Criticism II: Troilus and Criseyde and the Minor Poems. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965.

Shook, Laurence. "The House of Fame," in Companion to Chaucer Studies, ed. Beryl Rowland. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Silverstein, Theodore. "Guenevere, or the Uses of Courtly Love," in The Meaning of Courtly Love, ed. F. X. Newman. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1968.

_____. "Andreas, Plato, and the Arabs: Remarks on Some Recent Accounts of Courtly Love," Modern Philology 47 (1949-1950), 117-126.

Singleton, Charles S. "Dante: Within Courtly Love and Beyond," in The Meaning of Courtly Love, ed. F. X. Newman. Albany: State University of New York, 1968.

Slaughter, Eugene E. Virtue According to Love in Chaucer. New York: Bookman, 1957.

Spurgeon, Caroline. Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925.

Stevens, John. "The 'Game of Love,'" in Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Courts. London: Methuen & Co., 1961.

_____. Medieval Romance. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1973.

Sypherd, Wilbur Owen. Studies in Chaucer's Hous of Fame. New York: Haskell House, 1965.

Wagenknecht, Edward. Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism. New York: Oxford Press, 1959.

Wimsatt, James. Chaucer and the French Love Poets. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968.