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# A Critical Study of William Nevill's The Castell of Pleasure; the Delusions of Amor.

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A CRITICAL STUDY OF WILLIAM NEVILL'S

THE CASTELL OF PLEASURE:

THE DELUSIONS OF AMOR

A Dissertation Presented

By

THOMAS HARDY MILES

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
State University of New York at Binghamton

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Few English poems have been neglected more than William Nevill's The Castell of Pleasure. Following Henry Pepwell's reprint (1518) of Wynkyn de Worde's original edition, the poem has been reprinted only twice: in 1927, it was included (in extracts) by Eleanor Prescott Hammond in her anthology, English Verse Between Chaucer and Surrey; in 1930, Roberta D. Cornelius, under the direction of Carleton Brown, published an edition of the poem for the Early English Text Society (EETS, 179). Scholarly criticism of the poem is even rarer than are its editions. C. S. Lewis, in The Allegory of Love, is the only critic to discuss the poem, and his analysis is very brief.

Many students of late medieval literature would probably be more than content to let this poem remain unread and unstudied, tacitly agreeing with C. S. Lewis that Nevill's poem represents "the nadir of the whole genre" of dream visions,<sup>1</sup> a position which is merely an extension of a common indifference to English

poetry between Chaucer and Skelton. Although much of this poetry is passed over as either charming, antiquated or simply dull and metrically inept, this attitude is slowly changing as scholars realize the real competence and cleverly devised form of some of this poetry. For instance, variorum editions of James I's The Kingis Quair<sup>2</sup> and Hawes' The Example of Virtue<sup>3</sup> have recently appeared, facilitating more reliable work on these two poems. And the last five years have also seen a growing number of articles and dissertations offering detailed, textual analyses of many fifteenth-century poems.<sup>4</sup> In harmony with this revived interest, I have undertaken a study of The Castell of Pleasure.

C. S. Lewis is perfectly correct, from a historical point of view, in saying that Nevill wrote in the last period in English literature in which the dream vision form was still being used; but he is incorrect in judging, as he does, that Nevill exhibits the traits of some advanced stage of literary risor mortis. While The Castell of Pleasure is one of the last of its type, it should not be studied as a relic. Nevill no doubt inherited a large portfolio of literary techniques from The Romance of the Rose, Chaucer's poems and the poetry of the fifteenth century: the use of a dream vision to

present and discuss the problems of love; the use of Morpheus to initiate the dream; the search of the dreamer for his desired object, usually found in a garden of worldly delight; different qualities of the mind personified so that they appear to act out a literal story; the final satisfaction or frustration of the dreamer. But Nevill is no slavish copier of these techniques; rather, in each instance, he uses them for his own purposes, by expanding or changing them appropriately. As they occur in the text, I will analyze each technique from a historical perspective in order to determine how authors before Nevill have used it; then I will demonstrate the ways in which Nevill adopted the particular technique for his own use. This will provide both a historical perspective on Nevill's poem as well as a way to evaluate his originality.

One technique of prime importance is the use by Nevill of a fictional persona who dreams a vision and then comments upon it. The attitudes and desires of Nevill's persona should not be equated with those of Nevill himself. By writing the Prologue and Epilogue in a comic tone, Nevill distances himself from the persona who is engrossed in the delusions of amor. Ignoring this fact, C. S. Lewis wrongly equates the confused perceptions of the persona at the end of the poem with



those of Nevill himself and thus concludes that Nevill has an insufficient grasp of his subject matter. As I shall try to show in Chapter IV, Lewis makes the same error in discussing The Romance of the Rose and concludes that Jean de Meun is a "bungler"<sup>5</sup> because his persona does not make coherent sense out of what he experiences. What Jean de Meun does is to portray his persona as a cupidinous lover and thus incapable of true understanding. It is the same with Nevill's persona. By failing to perceive that Nevill uses his persona in a sophisticated way, Lewis judges incorrectly the meaning and the artistic quality of Nevill's poem.

Once the persona is seen as an emblem of cupidinous desire, his vision takes on a new meaning. The persona dreams a vision in which his amorous desires are satisfied. Desire, a personification of the persona's own frustrated amor, wins Beauty, after Pity and Disdain argue about the probable stability of Desire's affections. But Beauty accepts Desire under the controls of marriage; ignoring this control, the other lovers in the garden rejoice in their freedom, a result of the disappearance of Disdain. The music which accompanies their gaily, however, is an emblem of the chaotic music of Babylon, not the harmonious music of sanctioned marriage

and is therefore equated with a storm, which awakens the persona. Being troubled, he looks out his window in order to find the castle of which he has just dreamed; discovering that the real world does not correspond to his dream fantasy, the persona complains that all worldly affairs lead only to vanity and then, surprisingly, advises his audience to follow the commandments of love. His stubborn clinging to these commandments shows his confusion about the meaning of what he has experienced.

In addition to this use of a complex persona, Nevill has inserted a number of Ovidian stories at strategic points throughout the poem. These stories occur at the beginning, as the persona falls asleep; after the persona enters the gate and feels deep sorrow and pain; in the description of the flowers in the garden; in one of the arguments of Pity. In each case, the full meaning of the Ovidian fable is understood neither by the persona nor by the character who relates it. Berchorius' Ovidius moralizatus and Caxton's translation (with glosses) of the Metamorphoses will be used in order to determine the meaning which Nevill and his audience might have assigned these various stories. Selections from these two sources will demonstrate that each fable, if read correctly, is a comment on the frustrations and pains of amor. Being bound in love's chain, the persona

never realizes the implications of this simple doctrine.

The creation of this interesting persona and the use of the Ovidian material are two of Nevill's artistic merits. He handles the rest of his material competently. Although he is no master of his art, his ability as a poet should not be underrated simply because The Castell of Pleasure is an apprentice work. Nevill was young when he wrote his poem; though having no ability to forge new techniques, he had assimilated well much of the literature written since The Romance of the Rose and was able to borrow from it to construct a poem about a subject which interested him. Within the limits which he imposed upon himself by his choice of subject matter, Nevill created an interesting poem which pictures objectively a persona confused by the delusions of amor and which, at the same time, does not hammer at us with conventional moralizing. Confronting squarely the problem of what should be done with a fellow who asks a woman richer than he to have mercy on him, Nevill devises a unique solution by having the woman ask the fellow to marry her. (I will discuss the problems of this response in Chapter V.) This solution is startling from any point of view; in addition to the two artistic merits just mentioned, the request for marriage and its attendant problems indicate a degree of complexity which invites further investigation.

## CHAPTER II

## THE PROLOGUE

The Castell of Pleasure can be conveniently and naturally divided into five parts; Prologue, 1-49; Introduction, 50-121; Body, 122-854; Conclusion, 855-926; and Epilogue, 927-971. The Prologue relates the dialogue of Coplande and Nevill. In the Introduction, the dream persona reads a tale from Ovid's Metamorphoses; when night approaches, he falls asleep and Morpheus suddenly appears. The Body of the poem can be divided into eight separate scenes; the power of Morpheus, the god of dreams and fantasy, governs the action of this section. In Scene I, 122-145, Morpheus tells the persona about Desire's search for Beauty, and the persona gives himself up to Morpheus' power. In Scene II, 146-297, Morpheus and the persona ascend the mountain of courage, see the castle of pleasure, cross the river of stableness and humility, go through one of the gates and finally enter the castle. In Scene III, 298-481, Comfort welcomes the dreamer, and Kindness leads him to the garden of affection; Fantasy then leads him through a gate into

the garden and lectures him on love as they walk through the flowers; finally, Eloquence and the dreamer position themselves to hear the plea of Desire and the subsequent debate. In Scene IV, 482-585, Fantasy presents Desire to Beauty, and Desire makes his plea to her. Then, in Scene V, 586-753, Disdain and Pity argue over the merits of Desire's plea. In Scene VI, 754-801, Credence interrupts Disdain, and Beauty accepts Desire. The words of "thauctour" frame this scene. In Scene VII, 802-822, Desire praises Beauty. In Scene VIII, 823-854, the author relates the departure of Disdain and the amorous party in the garden. In the Conclusion, Morpheus vanishes; the dreamer awakens and indulges in extensive moralizing. Finally, in the Epilogue, the author takes leave of his poem, and Coplande speaks in the 'Lenuoy' section.

As Roberta Cornelius described in detail,<sup>1</sup> Nevill constructed his poem with careful stanzaic symmetry; this symmetry corresponds with the five part division of the action. The Prologue consists of seven rime-royall stanzas, and the French epigram "En passant le temps sans mal pancer" concludes this section. This is balanced by the Epilogue which consists of six stanzas; two ottava rimas, two rime-royalls in French, one ottava rima in French and one English rime-royall.



The French epigram which concluded the Prologue also concludes the Epilogue. As the Prologue and Epilogue balance each other, so do the Introduction and Conclusion. Both these sections consist of six stanzas, twelve lines each. The Body of the poem is written in octaves, except for three rime-royall stanzas, Scene VII, in which Desire expresses his great joy when Beauty accepts him.

The Castell of Pleasure begins with a dialogue between the printer Coplande and the author William Nevill, a dialogue which is the first of its kind in English poetry. There are no traditions or conventions to which we can refer it; "Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn" is irrelevant, since this piece refers to the peculiar medieval problem of the negligent scribe and not to the problem of a Tudor poet contracting to have his poem printed. That is, this dialogue is different in kind from the traditional appeal of an Orm or a Chaucer that a work be copied carefully. Because of the recent introduction of printing in England, the uniqueness of the dialogue is not surprising. Nonetheless, it is a new form and is used structurally to introduce the subject of the poem; this prologue is much more than just a clever addendum.

The authorship of this dialogue is uncertain.

Possibly it was written by Coplande and Nevill together and imitates a conversation which they may actually have had. Possibly Nevill wrote it alone in response to this imagined conversation. Or possibly, Nevill invented the entire dialogue himself. We will of course never know, though the last possibility seems by far the most likely. But, three things are clear: first, the style does not differ in any significant way from the style in the rest of the poem; second, the Prologue reveals a pervasively comic tone, a tone also found in the first two stanzas of the Epilogue; third, the Prologue parallels structurally the 'Ieruoyn' section at the end of the poem in subject matter, stanzaic pattern and French epigram. From a medieval perspective, this dialogue at least promises that "anonymous" will never be listed as the author of the poem.

In stanzas one through three (1-21) of the Prologue, Coplande praises Nevill and his poetic intention and then deflates this praise by reminding Nevill that the book, in all probability, will not sell widely because the buying public is interested more in fraud and monetary profit than in Beauty and the castle of pleasure. There is a thematic irony in these first three stanzas which continues throughout the Prologue. Coplande, a

bourgeois printer, is imposing his profit-making standards on Nevill, a landed aristocrat, who surely would have had little interest in the small profit to be gained from the printing of his book. (This is true, even though, as Cornelius notes,<sup>2</sup> Nevill, after his marriage in 1528 became impoverished and went into severe debt. At the time the poem was published in 1517, the poet was about twenty years old, unmarried and presumably still being supported economically by his father.) This conflict reflects larger problems, such as: what is the function of art now that the reading public has expanded to include all the mercantile class as well as the traditional aristocracy and very rich merchants and lawyers?; must the poet be forced to tailor his subject matter to the tastes of the buying public? To begin to answer these questions, let us analyze in detail each stanza of the Prologue.

In the first stanza, as in some others in the poem, close attention must be paid to punctuation and sentence structure:

Your mynde considered/~~&~~ your good entent  
 Theffecte regarded/in euery maner case  
 Your cyrcumstaunce/~~and~~ labour dylygent  
 Who wyll construe is of grete effycace  
 Your sentences morally tenbrace  
 Concerneth reason of lauryate & rauyte  
 Yonge tender hertes/~~talecte~~ with anyte  
 (1-7)

A full stop is needed at the end of line four; lines three and four must be read as: "Your circumstance and labour diligent are of grete effycace (for) whom (ever) will construe them." (From M.E.D., "circumstance" means "careful attention to propriety, utmost care, proper form," as in CT. Kn. A.2263.) Then, lines five through seven have as their subject "to embrace morally your sentences" and "concerneth" as the main verb. Copland implies both that the poem will be beneficial for men if they take time to "construe" it or to interpret it and that the poem has a high moral purpose, namely, to illumine young tender hearts by friendship (?). (It is probable that the word "talecte" or "talicte" comes from "aleghten" meaning "to illumine, to shed spiritual light on." It probably does not mean "allure," or "embrace, seize" as derived from "alacchen.") The word "sentences" also implies a serious moral meaning as does "reason of lauryate grauyte."

The second stanza states that the readers of the poem are the same age as the author:

Your age also flouryng in vyrent youthe  
 So to bestowe is pretly to commende  
 Bookes to endyte of maters ryght uncouth  
 Ensample gyuyng to all suche as pretende  
 In tharte of loue theyr myndes to condescende  
 In termes freshe/theyr courage to endewe  
 Not with rude toyes/but elegant and newe  
 (8-14)

Coplande says that Nevill is in "vyrent youthe." In 1517, Nevill would have been twenty years old, having been born on 15 July, 1497. Nevill's youth and Coplande's experienced attitude toward it set the tone of the stanza. While the stanza seems to praise Nevill as a young author, there are two phrases which undermine this complimentary tone. First, Coplande remarks that the subject matter of the poem is "ryght uncouthe," that is, "not well known" or "quite unknown or unfamiliar" (10). It is difficult to read this as a serious remark. Poems dealing with the amorous subjects of Pity and Disdain were by this time nothing new. This famous débat can be found in The Romance of the Rose, De arte honeste amandi, Troilus and Criseyde and The Temple of Glas, to name but the best known examples. In 1517, Coplande was a mature and experienced book printer, having been a helper of Wynkyn de Worde even before 1500 and would thus have been intimately acquainted with much of this literature.<sup>3</sup> Is Coplande imagined here as adopting a slight tone of paternalistic satire for our young poet? If so, the satire is certainly playful, not Juvenalian.

Yet, "quite unknown" or "not well known" is only the most obvious meaning of this phrase. "Ryght uncouthe"



can also mean "directly unknown" or "very unrecognizable," that is, "not straightforward." Nevill, through Coplande, may be implying that his poem's meaning is hidden and not obvious, that the poem is an allegory. If this reading is defensible, the real kernel of meaning in the poem will be the example (11) which the poem gives to lovers who lower their minds in the art of love. Since the "example" of the poem is its complete meaning, I will put off further discussion of it until the poem has been explicated.

Second, the sequence of verbs "pretende," "condescende" and "endewe" contains possible irony. Though "pretende" may here retain its neutral meaning of "to undertake, to venture," it may also have its contemporary meaning. Thus, those who participate in the art of love may be pretenders - men not engaged in real activity; the insubstantiality of the persona's dream and the possibility that this type of dream is a vicarious experience for young lovers may indeed corroborate this assertion. "Condescende" (12) is surely pejorative; for its alternative meaning of "to consent, to agree" does not work in this context. The principal sixteenth-century meaning of "condescende" is "to come down from a regal or higher position, to willingly lower oneself." The lover is lowering his mind when he ventures into the art of love. (The more neutral meaning of "condescende" should also be noted; the M.E.D.

gives one of its meanings as "to set one's mind on, to give attention to" as in CT. Mch. E.1605). Finally, in contrast to "condescende," "endewe" means both "to educate, to instruct" and "to invest with royal dignities." Both meanings are relevant here. If the latter is taken, "endewe" is in ironic juxtaposition to "condescende;" the lover is both losing and gaining some sort of rank at the same time. As the power of the mind is lowered (as reason is lost), the courtly heart is invested with dignity. "Courage"(13) is not to be read as "manly fortitude" but as "heart," from the French "corage". The instruction or the ennobling of the heart then will be the sentential end of the rhetorical "termes freshe."

Finally, there are two phrases of thematic importance in this stanza. "Ensample gyuyng" means that the poem will be a guide, a manual or handbook for young lovers by giving them examples of men who lower their minds in the art of love and apparently gain success. These examples, as we will discover, will lead lovers the wrong way ("wrong" in that they will learn that the "art of love" is actually painful, not pleasurable). The second phrase, "thart of loue," recalls Ovid's Ars amatoria and Andreas Capellanus' De arte honeste amandi, both Latin titles being loosely

translated as 'the art of loving.' Ovid's poem is referred to specifically in line 914, and Andreas' work may serve as one of the models for the debate between Pity and Disdain. It is also a parallel reference to "ensample gyuyngē," which the De arte honeste amandi does at length in its discussion of the various ways of seduction through clever rhetoric.

The third stanza(15-21) deflates the aureate praise just given to Nevill by involving his manual of love in the everyday world of buying and selling. Coplande states that Nevill's poem will sell very poorly because most men are interested only in getting money and beguiling their neighbor, not in seeking the castle of pleasure. Thus, two reading publics are implied; those who seek money and practice fraud versus those young nobles who seek Beauty. But what seems to be a real distinction in Nevill's Prologue between these two groups is actually no distinction at all. Both of these groups are cupidinous, idolators either of money or of Beauty. While the search for money and sensual pleasure seem to be on a much lower level than the search for earthly, womanly beauty, both searches are essentially the same.

This type of apparent distinction will be used again

in the poem: first in the decision which the dreamer has to make between the two gates and second in the significance attached to crossing the river, both of which posit illusory distinctions between good and evil. Indeed, the line "Lucre to gete/theyr neyghbour to begyle," which Copland applies to the mass audience as distinguished from the "gentyll people," can also be applied to the main action of the dream, if, for instance, one takes Disdain's point of view (a view socially acceptable to most, if not all, Tudor parents) that women should marry within their own social rank and not be beguiled by ("fall in love with") poorer nobles who could get financial as well as "estately" gains by the right marriage. From Disdain's point of view, Desire is attempting to beguile his neighbor Beauty and make financial gains by a marriage to her (see 674ff.). Ironically, then, Nevill has written a poem which appeals to both sides of this corrupt world, even though this is never admitted and even though one side of the world is given a veneer of respectability and virtue. While the searchers for Beauty seem to be praised and the searchers for gold to be reviled, Nevill implies that they are just two aspects of the same worldly search. Cupidity, after all, is a form of greed: a desire to obtain and keep some object external to you which you

do not already have. Even the search for Beauty, which is enshrined in the Prologue, will lead to despair, as does the desire for gold.

In stanza four(22-28) Nevill specifies the audience to whom this poem is addressed: they are the "gentyll people" and especially the youthful members of this group. Nevill emphasizes the moral qualities of these youths: they take part

In pleasaunt youth/with amorous dyleccyon  
Honour regarded/in clene cyrcumspeccyon  
Layenge a parte all wylfull vayne desyre  
To conforthe them that brenne in louynge fyre  
(25-28)

These are grammatically ambiguous lines. They can be read in two ways. First, "Honour regarded 'in pure heedfullness' (in order) to conforthe them that brenne in louynge fyre (by means of ) layenge a parte all wylful vayne desyre." That is, to lay aside willfull vain desire is to respect honor which has the ability to comfort burning lovers. The second reading is: "Honour regarded 'by careful caution,' (by means of) layenge a parte all wylfull vayne desyre/To conforthe them that brenne in louynge fyre." That is, men can preserve their honor only by giving up any attempt to comfort those fools who burn in the fire of love.

The subtlety of this double reading is that the

first reading could be a paraphrase of the position of Pity in the débat while the second reading could be the position of Disdain, who has no interest at all in comforting Desire. Which of these readings then is to be preferred? In terms of grammar alone, the second reading may be preferable because it has a simpler structure. But if this reading is accepted without reservation, the stanza as a whole is slightly confused in meaning; the "pleasure" of gentle folk is taken to be the point of this "boke of loue"(16,23). Now the "gentylls" certainly will not have much pleasure if they are left to burn without comfort in the fire of love. The preference then for the first reading (Pity's opinion) can be strengthened by referring to lines 41-42:

At leest way yonge folke/wyll gladly seke recure  
Beauty to sete in the toure of pleasure.

In these lines, "recure" is the important word. The O.E.D. defines it as "to bring back to a normal state of health, to remedy, to cure, to heal." If young folk can only be cured by getting Beauty in the "toure of pleasure" (notice that the figure of speech assumes that lovers are sick to begin with), then certainly that cure will be effected by comforting those who burn in love's fire. Thus, the first reading, though grammatically more convoluted, can be justified by thematic concerns.

Following this reading, the fourth stanza can be broken up into two syntactic groups of lines 22-25 and 26-28 in which line 23 parallels line 28; the pleasure of gentle people will be brought about by comforting those who burn in love's fire. Nevill has here given us a purposeful ambiguity which reflects the positions of both Pity and Disdain.

If the first reading is accepted, the poem becomes a consolatic for lovers. This idea, that reading books will comfort lovers, is expressed by the narrator at the beginning of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde:

But natheles, if this may don gladnesse  
To any lovere, and his cause availe,  
Have he my thonk, and myn be this travaille!  
(19-21)

Throughout the opening lines of Book I of Troilus and Criseyde, the narrator feels a duty to help lovers to complain, a duty to serve them and a duty to pray for their winning of heaven. The narrator implies that he can console lovers by writing about their woe; but this in turn will produce the same kind of self-indulgent verse which Boethius composes at the beginning of his prose-poem. Although this Chaucerian narrator cannot be cited as a source for Nevill's purposes in this Prologue, Chaucer, before Nevill, has used the idea that the book which he is writing can console the sorrowful lovers who are

reading his book, which depicts men much like themselves. That is, distraught lovers read books about distraught lovers and enjoy vicariously their similar melancholies. But Nevill does not follow Chaucer by giving a final heavenly vision. Nevill, to the contrary, assumes a narrator who is himself reading a book about a man who seeks Beauty; he makes no overt judgments about this narrator. Thus, seekers of beauty (young nobles) are asked to read a book about a seeker of beauty who himself is reading a book about seekers of beauty. But these lovers will not be consoled by their reading; reading books (or writing them) which concern men whose problems are similar to the reader's own and who see no way out of their troubles, will never console or cure the reader himself.

Coplande continues to address Nevill ironically in the fifth stanza (29-35). As a practical man of the world, he tries politely to tell Nevill that the marketplace is already flooded with books concerning love (ironic, because Coplande has said that Nevill's book deals with matters "ryght uncouth" (10)) and that men are interested in the love of gold, not the love of Beauty. As in stanza three, Coplande distinguishes between the social classes: "ladyes/and many a hardy knyght" versus "men and women." But the distinction is again blurred.



Even though the books of love do not describe ladies and knights who concern themselves with sensual folly (31), these ladies and knights work to prosper in love with all their might(32). That is, they, like the "men and women," have "theyr delyte/Onely for mede to do theyr appetyte." "Mede" here is Beauty (as well as money). As in stanza four, the respective positions of Pity(32) and Disdain(34-35 if applied to lovers) are implied here. Nevill has postulated two separate groups of men: one group of honorable knights and ladies who spend their time in Cupid's service and the other group of greedy, avaricious and fraudulent bourgeois men. In the debate, Pity would want to hold to this distinction and further Desire's plea. On the other hand, Disdain will argue that Desire, who Pity claims is in the first noble group, is really in the group of men who have their delight in satisfying their appetites for pleasure and for rewards (34-35). It is significant then that Nevill hints at this problem throughout the Prologue.

Nevill responds desperately (and thus somewhat comically) in stanza six(36-42) saying that Coplande should print the poem because it does no good just lying around in his chest. In an attempt to add some strength to this extremely weak argument, Nevill then states that:

To passe the tyme some wyll bye it algate  
 Cause it is newe/compyled now of late  
 (39-40)

Nevill implies that his poem will be an antidote to the idleness and possible boredom of the wealthy class. The poem will help men to while away their time. Lines 41-42 hint at the vicarious nature of this dream vision:

At leest way yonge folke/wyll gladly seke recure  
 Beauty to gete in the toure of pleasure.

Young folk will read the poem in order to take part fictionally in the seduction. The poem will be used to titillate the young, rich and idle generation and to keep their fantasy-life alive - a sixteenth-century Playboy:

In the last stanza of the Prologue(43-49), Coplande finally relents and promises to print Nevill's poem, although assuring him that the sale will be small because:

Men let theyr chyldren use al suche harlotry  
 That byenge of bokes they utterly deny  
 (48-49)

Instead of reading, young people play at dice and cards, drink wine and ale and play at backgammon, ninepins and balls. Coplande sees Nevill's audience as essentially young and calls them "chyldren"(25). (Since the games and drinking listed above obviously appeal to all ages, "chyldren" here is just a limiting noun.) Coplande says that even the younger audience who used to read books, like Nevill's, no longer do:

Bokes be not set by theyr tymes is past I gesse  
 (45)

There has been a decline in the reading public's desire to read books about love. Men have given up literature for sensual games. This is especially important because the poem as a whole seems concerned with the art and value of reading. As mentioned earlier, the dreamer at the end of the poem decides to read no more late at night so that his mind will not be troubled by his dreams. Rejecting most literature, the dreamer himself contributes to the decadent state referred to in lines 45-49. "Books be not set by" is a perfect description of the dreamer's attitude toward books at the end of his vision. Thus, we are confronted with an ironic situation: Nevill is trying to have published a poem whose dream protagonist vows never to read again and thereby implies that other men should stop reading if they wish to avoid painful dreams.

The Prologue (and the Epilogue) ends with a French proverb: "En passant le temps sans mal pincer." This proverb has two points of reference. First, it refers specifically to line 39: "To passe the tyme some wyl bye it algate." Young people will buy and read the poem in order to think about obtaining Beauty in the tower of pleasure; and it is suggested that this is a way in which to avoid thinking evil. At the same time, the

proverb introduces us to the dreamer, who is passing the time reading and thinking thoughts which cause his heart to be much troubled. And, ironically, in regard to line 39, he is troubled because he is thinking about someone trying to obtain an object of Beauty.

Let us review the main ideas which we have derived from this Prologue. The poem is being offered by a youthful artist to a youthful audience as a handbook in the art of love with the hope that the poem will give pleasure to youths and also will restore their health by showing them that Beauty can be attained in the tower of pleasure. Thus, the poem can console those who burn in love's fire. The nonproductivity or idleness of this audience is assumed and is contrasted to the financial world of greed and fraud. This poem then will appeal only to the élite few, since books of love are out of fashion with most people. The times are full of harlotry; liberal learning is despised. Second, on an implied level, the noble young audience is really just as corrupt as are the children of "men and women." They have their own object of greed, namely Beauty, and their tower of pleasure is comparable, on a moral level, to the games and drinking referred to in the seventh stanza. Third, when Disdain's position expressed later in the poem is understood, the fact that the noble youths

and the children of harlotry are two twigs on the same branch of sin and pain becomes clear. Thus we are intentionally misled here into postulating a good group (noble and literate) versus an evil group (base and unlettered); the trick then is to learn to see behind these illusory categories and likewise to see behind the claim made in line 23 that this poem will lead noble youths to a pleasurable state of mind. This reading, where the two groups of men, whose actions seem to be contrasted, appear to be motivated by similar desires, also supplies an understanding of the scene of the choice between two paths and the scene of the river crossing. Fourth, and last, while the poem claims to offer a way to cure lovers and their pain, the narrator of the vision, himself a frustrated lover, finds no cure or consolation whatever.

CHAPTER III  
THE INTRODUCTION

Huppe and Robertson remark at the end of their discussion on The Book of the Duchess that this poem "like all significant poetry, exists only partly in what it says. Its reality is a series of controlled developments touched off in the mind of the reader."<sup>1</sup> What they say about The Book of the Duchess holds also for The Castell of Pleasure. This explanation implies the need for an intelligent reader, one who is able to read imaginatively and one who is sensitive to the historical and literary traditions out of which the poem to be read has developed. If a poem can "touch off" a series of controlled developments "...in the mind of the reader," the reader must be able to let the poem work on his mind. But, for this to occur, the reader must be aware of the limits of the possibilities of interpretation which the work allows; that is, the reader must, as the historian Collingwood suggests, be able to reconstruct his mind so that it bears some similarity to the mind of a sophisticated reader of the time in which the poem was written.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, a proper reading

of much medieval poetry is often dependent on one's knowledge of the various literary traditions used by medieval authors. In the Introduction, we find two units of action which would have been familiar to Tudor readers: first, a narrator, or persona, who is troubled by sloth and who is reading a book; second, the arrival of Morpheus, who conducts the persona through his dream. To attempt to read this poem with historical awareness, the literary traditions and techniques which are its background must be studied.

As in The Book of the Duchess, the Ovidian fable being read and the persona's reaction to it introduce the subject matter of the poem. The persona carelessly flips through Ovid's Metamorphoses:

TOrnyng and trauersynge hystories unstedfaste  
 In Ouydes bokes of transformacyon  
 It was my fortune and chaunce at the laste  
 In ouerturning of the leues to se in what facyon  
 Phebus was inflamyd by inspyracyon  
 Of cruell cupyde to hym immercyable  
 Whiche of hym was worthy no commendacyon  
 Shewynge hymselfe alwayes deceyuable  
 Therefore I wolde gladly yf I were able  
 The maner playnly and in fewe wordes dysclose  
 How phebus and cupyd toger were comperable  
 Fyrst it to shewe I will me dyspose.  
 (50-61)

The persona calls the Metamorphoses "hystories unstedfaste" and "bokes of transformacyon." The key words here are "unstedfaste" and "transformacyon" for they describe the world of a book about change and Fortune. The way

in which he reads reflects this world. In contrast to men who read slowly and carefully and who may try to establish a steadfast or meaningful world deduced from their reading, our persona turns and traverses story after story, and his selection of one to read is governed wholly by chance. That is, he is thumbing through his Ovid late in the day and just "happens" to stop his cursory perusing midway through Book I. Fortune and Chance imply that the dream vision will be viewed from a worldly point of view, an Old Testament view (see the quotation from Ecclesiastes at the end of the poem), a view of the world devoid of supernatural consolation. Being governed by the dark world of fortune and chance, the persona reads a poem which itself deals with this world of mutability.

This sophisticated technique of a persona reading a book prior to his vision is not to be overlooked or taken for granted; for the use of this technique is noticeably lacking in nearly all the dream visions of the fifteenth century; poems such as The Golden Tarze, The Thrissil and the Rois, The Temple of Glas, The Complaynt of the Black Knight, Reason and Sensuality, The Assembly of the Gods and La Belle Dame Sans Merci use no such technique, even though they have subtlety in their own right. The only poem in the fifteenth century to use



this device is James I's The Kinris Quair, which opens with the persona reading Boece. The Consolation of Philosophy seems to be used structurally in James' poem to set its subject, which is the relationship between Fortune, Venus and Minerva and the consolation of the lover as dependent on his correct perception of the way in which these three forces operate in men's lives. The source for James I's use of this technique is most probably Chaucer's two poems, The Book of the Duchess and The Parlement of Foules. In each of these poems, as in The Castell of Pleasure, the reading of a book has two functions: first, it establishes the main concern or anxiety present in the persona's mind. As Huppé and Robertson have shown, the Seys and Alcyone story in The Book of the Duchess reveals the anxiety which the dreamer feels about the death of a loved one.<sup>3</sup> This concern is then reflected in the figure of the Black Knight, who is overcome with grief at the loss of a beloved object. Thus, the second use made of the technique of the book being read is that its action can be mirrored in the action of the dream itself. And the dreamer in The Book of the Duchess, like Nevill's persona, is reading from Ovid's Metamorphoses.

In The Parlement of Foules, the dreamer reads Macrobius' Commentary on the Somnium Scipionis. The general subject of The Parlement of Foules is the conflict between caritas and cupiditas, the lovers of "commune profyt" versus the "likerous folk." The dream vision mirrors the subject matter of Macrobius' text, which is the harmony of the universe and the natural scheme of the Creator's purposes. The dream vision concerns egotistic lovers versus the birds who have the ability to love according to Nature's will.<sup>4</sup>

There is a very basic and "realistic" psychological principle behind this. The persona reads material which most nearly mirrors what is of utmost concern to him and then dreams a vision which is triggered by his reading and constructed by his anxiety. Chaucer says as much in The Parlement of Foules:

The very huntre, slepyng in his bed,  
 To wode aveyn his mynde goth anon;  
 The juze dremeth how his plees been sped;  
 The cartere dremeth how his cartes gon;  
 The riche, for golde; the knyght fyght with his fon;  
 The syke met he drynketh of the tonne;  
 The lovere met he hath his lady wonne.  
 Can I not seyn if that the cause were  
 For I hadde red or Affrican byforn,  
 That made me to mete that he stod there;  
 But thus seyde he: "Thow hast the so wel born  
 In lokynge of my olde bok totorn,  
 Of which Macrobye roughte nat a lyte,  
 That sumdel of thy labour woulde I quyte."  
 (99-112)

The tendency among scholars however is to pass this off as mere "convention," a word which frequently serves to foreclose the possibility of perceiving deeper meaning. Note, for instance, in the 1930 edition of The Year's Work in English Studies, the reviewer of Cornelius' EETS edition of Nevill, says:

The Castell of Pleasure is a product of dying school of medieval allegory. It opens with the conventional machinery of the poet falling asleep over the story of Phoebus and Daphne "on Ovydes boke of transformacyon."<sup>5</sup>

"Conventional machinery" implies that reading a book and then dreaming must have been a common and stereotyped technique of medieval authors. Again, H.S. Bennett says that Nevill fails almost entirely to escape from the conventions he invokes."<sup>6</sup> This is simply not true. 'Reading a book' can not be called a convention in the same way as 'falling asleep and having a vision' can be. For the former technique was used by Chaucer and King James and then fell into complete disuse for one hundred years until Nevill revived it. Moreover, in reviving this, Nevill uses one of the most sophisticated techniques of the dream vision, a technique which his immediate forebears had either overlooked or found not to their taste.

Overlooking the use of this technique (and the

other complexities in the poem), C.S. Lewis says that "in the work of William Nevill we reach the nadir of the whole genre."<sup>7</sup> From the historical point of view, there is no doubt that Nevill's is one of the last love-visions in our literature; only The Court of Love, Barnaby Googe's Cupido Conquered and Alexander Montgomerie's Cherry and the Slae follow it.<sup>8</sup> Yet, he is no slavish copier of Lydgate or Hawes. Rather, Nevill seems to be trying to use techniques long neglected and to use them in a way which imitates the sophistication of Chaucer. Finally we should note that Marshall W. Stearns has refuted the long-held view of Sypherd, by claiming and proving that Chaucer virtually invented the technique of the persona reading a book before his dream begins. As he says:

An examination of Old French love-vision literature by the present author has revealed no further examples of such an occurrence...And it seems reasonable to conclude that the mention of a book was not a conventional device.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, there is no need to search through French poems to trace Nevill's source. He is imitating Chaucer and consciously reviving an older technique.

Turning to Ovid, the dreamer reads the Cupid-Phebus-Daphne story from the Metamorphoses, Book I, but fails to finish the fable and ignores its ending.

This episode of the dreamer reading and recounting incompletely to us this Ovidian fable serves two functions. First, it sets the subject for the entire poem: the pursuit of Beauty by Desire. Second, it gives an index to the persona's attitudes about the chase, the eternal hunt, as well as about the powers which he believes really control the world.

The first function is fairly obvious. From the persona's point of view, Phebus is an emblem of Desire, as we learn in line 85: "So that the more he desyred the more she dyd deny." Daphnys is slightly more complex; she is Beauty or the object of Desire under the influence of Disdain, who emblemizes the lack of mercy or pity for Desire and for his petitions.

This contrast is made very clear:

On thone with loue en thoder with dysdayne  
 Thone dyd fle thoder wolde optayne  
 Thone was gladde thoder was in wo  
 Thone was pencyfe and oppressed with payne  
 Thoder in loye cared not thoushe it were so  
 By fere and dysdayne she dyd hvm ouerzo  
 Lyke to an hare she ranne in haste  
 He followed lyke a grehounde desvre wrought hvm wo  
 (89-96)

This corresponds to the situation later in the poem when Desire's plea is reinforced by Pity and opposed by Disdain. Possibly the most significant addition to his source is the persona's description of Daphnys:

Her name was Daphnys whiche deuoyde of loue  
 By dame saunce mercy whiche made hym to  
 complayne

(86-87)

By stating that Daphnys is under the control of "dame saunce mercy," Nevill calls attention to the poem "La Belle Dame Sans Mercy," written by Alain Chartier and translated into English by Sir Richard Ros.<sup>10</sup> A short summary and analysis of this poem will reveal that its subject matter and tragic tone influence the tone of this section of Nevill's poem.

In Chartier's poem, a lover feels forced to translate Alain's book as an act of penance. He has just lost his lover by death and complains both that he cannot write verse and that his life is meaningless. At a party in a garden, he sees a man in distress dressed all in black who stares at his desired object: "but upon her beaute/He loked stil, with right a pitous face"(139b-140). The narrator soon realizes that this man is a mirror image of himself, leaves the party and hides behind a bush (Nevill's persona does this also in order to overhear Beauty and Desire). Soon the man and woman enter the garden and are identified as Lamant and La Belle Dame Sans Merci. They have a dialogue as follows: he states that he wants to serve her and love her honourably, that he will die if she

does not receive him, that he will give her his entire self, that he will always have hope of acceptance and that he is a good man and is not a boaster. To each of these she replies: that he is a fool and has been unduly deluded by his eyes; that he has lost his reason; that he exaggerates all his claims, that he really will not die; that she will never submit to any male; that if he must die, so be it; that Pity, once exercised, will lead only to hate later on; that he is really Faux Semblaunt; and that, "there hurteth you nothyng but your conceyt"(791). When she returns to the dance, he bemoans his fate and dies within two days. The 'Lenvoy' then recommends that all true lovers should flee the company of boasters and warns women never to treat deserving lovers as La Belle Dame Sans Merci has treated Lamant. The 'Verba Translatoris' recommends his 'litel book' to the public, apologizes for its lack of rhetoric and concludes:

Right thus I make an ende of this processe,  
 Beseching him that al hath in balaunce  
 That no trew man be vexed, causelesse,  
 As this man was, which is of remembraunce;  
 And al that doon their faythful observaunce,  
 And in their trouth purpose hem to endure,  
 I pray god sende hem better aventure.  
 (850-856)

The dominant tone of Chartier's poem is tragic; Lamant has been caught in love's chain and dies when he cannot

serve the goddess whom he has chosen; like our dreamer, he exists completely in the world of Fortune,

as he says:

And, sith Fortune not only, by her chaunce,  
Hath caused me to suffre al this payn,  
But your beaute, with al the circumstaunce,  
Why list ye have me in so greet disdayn?  
(273-76)

Nevill is greatly influenced by this tragic tone of Chartier's poem in his treatment of his own dream persona, who also ends in despair.

Since Nevill's persona has his vision in Fortune's world, it is no surprise that he reacts with despair to the Ovidian story which he reads. The dreamer sees Cupid as the most powerful force in the world, powerful enough to dominate even Apollo:

The stroke of his power who can or may resyste  
But he must obey/and to loue be agreable  
Constreyned by cupyd whiche may stryke whose  
he lyst....  
Cupyde in sondry wyse his power dyde proue  
(79-81,88)

This reveals our dull dreamer's view of the complexities of life; at the end of the poem, he himself is still under Cupid's power, as we know when he addresses us:

Therefore for your soules helth use vertue  
and dred shame  
And as to the worlde labour e alway for loue  
(895-896)

Yet, at the same time, he realizes that Cupid is cruel, and he even condemns him:



Of cruell cupyde to hym immercyable  
Whiche of hym was worthy no commendacyon  
(55-56)

The dreamer therefore confronts a tragically bleak world whose god is not humane. Men appear to be unwilling and deterministic servants of this cruel god and to be not wholly virtuous themselves. Following Ovid, the dreamer characterizes Phebus as a prideful fellow after his defeat of Python: "Phebus set on pryde and hault in corage"(62). It is Phebus' pride and his boasting and his insulting of Cupid that forces Cupid to take revenge; Apollo is hit with a golden dart so that he desires Daphne, she with a leaden dart so that she shuns Apollo's advances and becomes a lady without mercy for the lover. Finally, as she successfully flees from him like a hare before a greyhound, the persona says: "desyre wrought hym wo/But all was in wayne, his labour was but waste"(96b-97).

The persona believes that Phebus' labor is all in vain because he has clearly forgotten (or not read at all) the end of the Ovidian fable. During the chase, Daphne calls out to her river-father Peneus to save her intact, and he obligingly turns her into a laurel tree whose branches and leaves Phebus then adopts as his emblem; the laurel approves this decision with a

humble nod. Thus, there is more involved in this fable than the persona has realized. The fable itself has been frequently moralized as a tale which praises the preservation of virginity or the desire to live in a state of chastity. In his commentary on this fable, the sensus allegoricus, Caxton says that the perpetual greenness of the laurel symbolizes the virtue of preserved chastity.<sup>11</sup> (It is likely that Nevill would have read Caxton's translation of Ovid.) For Daphne was a maiden who wished to live in the state of virginity, and Apollo tried improperly to take her by force. This interpretation of Phebus as seducer and Daphne as a figure of virginity, and therefore of Christian saintliness, is also given by Petrus Lavinius, an earlier mythographer:

Daphne Penei fluminis filia; cum omnium virginum que in Thessalia essent speciosissima haberetur; adeo quidem ut deos pulchritudine sua caperet. Apollo cum eam conspexisset; forma eius expalluit. Quam cum necque pollicitis necque precibus adire potuisset; vim ut inferret instituit; et illa cursu conspectum eius effugere cupiens; patrem innocavit; ut Virginitati sue quam sibi permiserat; ferret auxilium; quam ille auditis precibus filiam deorum ut vim effugeret; in Laurum conuertit.<sup>12</sup>

To this, we may add Fulgentius, who glosses the laurel as the giver of true dreams: "laurum si dormientibus ad caput posueris, vera somnia esse visuros."<sup>13</sup> And

Berchorius in his Cvidius moralizatus echoes their interpretation while adding his own:

Phoebus iste potest significare diabolum;  
 Daphne animam christianam quia procul dubio  
 istam virginem; animam scilicet per  
 tentationes non cessat allicere ut eam per  
 malum consensum subluget et sublicitat et  
 per peccatum destruat et corrumpat. Sed ipsa  
 debet fuzere occasiones peccati; temptationes  
 vitando; et debet rogare deam terrae id  
 est christum ut eam de manibus eius eripiat;  
 formam aliam sibi dano. Et sic pro certo  
 debet fieri laurus id est religiosa persona  
 virtuosa et perfecta...Ista laurus significat  
 crucem...Cruz Christianorum spes; prauorum  
 victoria; caecorum dux; conuersorum via;  
 claudorum baculus; pauperum consolatio;  
 arbor resurrectionis; lignum vitae eternae.<sup>14</sup>

Though the end of this gloss displays the extensive but often frustrating encyclopedic power of Bersuire, the major section of the gloss is clear: Daphne is a christian soul whose virginity and purity are preserved. The laurel has a supernatural meaning: to cling to the laurel is to cling to virginity, godliness and of course, for Berchorius, monastic and contemplative values.<sup>15</sup>

By leaving out all mention of the transformation of the laurel, the persona has put aside all concern for preserved virginity and possibly even for true dreams. The dream vision itself concerns virginity successfully ravished; and it has no substantiality in the real world, as the dreamer realizes when he awakens. By reading incompletely and improperly, the persona has cut himself

off from the real significance of what he has read and from the possibility of true dreams, both symbolized by the laurel. Being himself under the power of Cupid, the dream persona is unable to read well.

In the story which he relates, the persona, following Ovid, describes Cupid as usurping the mountain of poetic inspiration:

Well well sayd cupyde it lyketh you to p̄este  
 This sayd/he assended to the mount pernaſsus  
 On the hyght his armes shortly abrode he keſte  
 And sayd I trust I ſhall this in haſte dycuſſe.  
 (70-73)

That is, Cupid, the power of physical attraction, hits Apollo while Apollo has abandoned his control over the traditional mountain of poetry, his mountain, on which is the well of Helicon. Thus, there is a relationship between the loss of poetic power and the possibility of succumbing to the power of cupidinous love. When poetry is powerless, amor is strong. Since the persona can not read well, he is overcome by love fantasies and erotic dreams. The wrong use of poetry destroys the reign of charity in a man's mind; bad reading leads to self-induced eroticism.

In relationship to this problem of reading and susceptibility to love fantasies, Ovid, in the Remedia amoris,<sup>16</sup> the companion piece to his Ars amatoria (a line from which the persona quotes at the end of the poem), recommends that men should not read love poetry, even

some of the poems which he, Ovid, has written (including, half-jokingly, the Metamorphoses):

Eloquar invitus: teneros ne tange poetas:  
 Summoveo dotes ipsius ipse meas...  
 Et mea nescio quid carmina tale sonant.  
 (757-758, 766)

Yet as Ovid implies, reading the right kind of poetry, namely, the Remedia amoris, can make men whole again:

Hoc opus exegi: fessae date sarta carinae;  
 Contigitus portus, quo mihi cursus erat.  
 Postmodo reddetis sacro pia vota poetae,  
 Carmine sanati femina virque meo.  
 (811-814)

Thus Ovid, and Nevill also, is setting up two ways of reading: with Apollo either deposed from his hill and thus under the power of Cupid or carrying the laurel branch and residing by Helicon's well. When our persona rejects reading poetry at the end of his vision, he is unaware of the second, enlightened way of reading implied above. Not to mention the laurel in his initial story is to admit that he lacks the key to reading poetry correctly, so that it promotes the reign of charity and the ennobling of Helicon's powers.

In lines 98-121, the persona finds himself alone. (Aside from their thematic importance, these lines reveal the high degree of poetic effectiveness of which Nevill was capable.)

The nyght drewe nye the daye was at a syde  
 My herte was heuy I moche desvred rest  
 Whan without confort alone I dyd abyde  
 Seynge the shadowes fall frome the hylles  
     in the west

Eche byrde under boughe drewe nye to theyr  
     nest

The chymneys frome ferre began to smoke  
 Eche housholder went about to lodze his rest  
 The storke ferynge stormes toke the chymney  
     for a cloke

Eche chambre and chyst were soone put under locke  
 Curfew was ronge lyghtes were set up in haste  
 They that were without for lodgynge soone  
     dyd knocke

Which were playne precedentes the daye was  
     clerely paste

Thus a slepe I fell by a sodayne chaunce  
 Whan I lacked lyght alone without conforte  
 My sore study with slouthe dyde me enhaunce  
 Myn eyes were heuy my tonge without dysporte  
 Caused many fantasyes to me to resorte  
 My herte was moche musynge my mynde was varyaunt  
 So I was troubled with this ungracyous sorte  
 That my herte & mynde to slouthe shortely  
     dyde graunt

About the whiche whyles I was attendaunt  
 Sodaynly came Morpheus & at a brayde  
 Not affrayd but lyke a man ryght valyaunt  
 Couragously to me these wordes he sayde.

The persona is now in the best possible position to be afflicted by frustrating visions of love. His dilemma consists of his sloth and his solitude, two situations which Ovid, in his Remedia amoris, says must be shunned by all lovers if they wish to avoid the pains of love and to destroy love's attachments. The first passage here warns against sloth, the second against solitude:

Ergo ubi visus eris nostrae medicabilis arti,  
 Pac monitis fugias otia prima meis....  
 Tam Venus otia amat; qui finem quaeris amoris,  
 Cedit amor rebus; res auge, tutus eris.  
 Languor, et inmodici sub nullo vindice somni  
 Aleaque, et multo tempora quassa mero  
 Eripiunt omnes animo sine vulnere nervos;  
 Adfluit incautis insidiosus Amor.  
 Desidiam puer ille sequi solet, odit agentes;  
 Da vacuae menti, quo teneatur, opus.  
 (135-136, 143-150)

Quisquis amas, loca sola nocent, loca sola  
 caveto!....  
 Tristis eris, si solus eris, dominaeque relictas  
 Ante oculos facies stabit, ut ipsa, tuos.  
 Tristior idcirco nox est quam tempora Phoebi;  
 Quae relevet luctus, turba sodalis abest.  
 Nec fuge conloquium, nec sit tibi ianua clausa,  
 Nec tenebris vultus flebilis abde tuos.  
 (579, 583-88)

The persona is actively cultivating these love-inducing situations as the poem begins, since he is alone, without fellowship and idle. The effectiveness of Nevill's stanzas lies in their power of contrasting natural fellowship and the warmth of the hearth with the persona's exile from these pleasures. Only the persona is "without comfort alone." It is implied then that Nature's way is different from the lover's. Whereas animals and healthy men greet the night as a source of rest and comfort from the day's toils, the dream persona acts so that his sleep will be nothing more than an intensification of his trouble during the day. Setting himself aside from real nocturnal comfort, he goes to

sleep with his misreading of the Ovidian fable uppermost in his mind. Being impressed with the vanity and waste of some labors of lovers, his mind is 'overcome with sloth because of his painful studying'(112).

According to Ovid, our dreamer has fallen into the dilemma of reading love poetry while himself being in a burning state of love (see line 289, where the dreamer says that he is "enflamed with lous fyre"). As a cupidinous lover and as a very poor reader, he has put himself outside the natural order of man and thus outside his comforts.

With a heavy heart (99), the dreamer falls asleep (110) in much the same way as he was reading (52), that is, by chance. He lacks light and repeats for emphasis that he is "alone without conforte"(111 and 100). In line 112, mentioned above, the persona states that his studying was painful. This means that his conclusion about what he read, namely that Phebus' labor was all in vain, was unpleasant to him. Lines 113-117 then describe in detail the internalizing of all his perceptions. His eyelids begin to droop, and his tongue is without pastime or diversion. This last phrase, "my tonge without dysporte," is very interesting; it probably implies either that our narrator had been reading out loud or that he had no one to talk to, unlike



the guest who is cheerfully housed in line 104. "Dysporte" implies "diversion," a state of idleness or sloth filled with purposeless activity; without the "dysporte" of idle and imperceptive reading, the dreamer would possibly never have been obsessed with idle dreams which serve as a pastime. As his tongue goes silent and his eyes close, "many fantasies" come to him. The dreamer never tells us what these fantasies are, but we may surmise that they are the thoughts which flit across one's mind just before falling asleep; this theory is partially substantiated in the next line: "My herte was moche musynge my mynde was varyaunt." This state naturally makes him feel troubled. Two basic experiences have led him to this unfortunate state of mind: his misreading of Ovid and his exile from the world of human fellowship. His sloth is a form of despair, a despair which will intensify as the poem proceeds.

Like Nevill's persona, Alcyone, in The Book of the Duchess, also despairs of finding consolation. Perhaps more than any other poem, The Book of the Duchess is the prime source for the beginning of Nevill's poem. In the beginning of The Hous of Fame, Chaucer lists as one of the causes of dreams "that som man is to curious/ in studye, or melancolyous"(29-30). This applies to the persona in The Book of the Duchess as well as to the

persona in Nevill's poem. In The Book of the Duchess, the persona is full of idle thoughts(4) and "Sorrowful ymagynacioun/ys alway hooly in my mynde"(14-15). Nevill's persona likewise has many "fantasyes"(114) which afflict his troubled mind. In lines 16-29, Chaucer's persona feels that his inability to go to sleep is extremely unnatural:

And wel ye woot, awaynes kynde  
 Hyt were to lyven in thys wyse;  
 For nature wolde nat suffyse  
 To noon erthly creature  
 Nat longe tyme to endure  
 Withoute slep and be in sorwe.  
 And I ne may, ne nyght ne morwe,  
 Slepe; and thus melancolye  
 And drede I have for to dye.  
 Defaute of slep and hevynesse  
 Hath sleyn my spirit of quykesse  
 That I have lost al lustyhede.  
 Suche fantasies ben in myn hede,  
 So I not what is best to doo.

He then reads Ovid's Metamorphoses, which he calls a "romaunce," apparently because it deals with the lives of kings and queens, in order to pass the night away and, after reading, falls asleep. (As in The Parlement of Foules, The Kingis Quair and The Castell of Pleasure, the dream occurs at night.) Nevill, like Chaucer, interprets the lack of sleep as unnatural. After reading his Ovid, Nevill's persona finds himself "without confort alone" and is overcome by drowsiness. There is no doubt then that Nevill is imitating Chaucer at least in a general way in this opening section, although the

lyricism with which Nevill describes the world closing up for the night is absent in Chaucer.

The type of sloth, accidie, which the persona has, has been described by Chaucer's Parson:

For soothly, whan the herte of a man is  
confounded in itself and troubled, and  
that the soul hath lost the confort of  
God, thanne seketh he an ydel solas of  
worldly thynges.<sup>17</sup>

This quotation describes the other psychological qualities of Nevill's persona. His heart is troubled (115) and he is seeking "ydel solas of worldly thynges." He does this first by reading Ovid in "passant le temps sans mal pence" which ironically leads him into his extreme despair at the end of the poem. He is completely shut off from the grace and light of God and cannot therefore read his Ovid properly. His reading thus does not comfort him as the Prologue has implied it should! As a result of his sloth and his reading, Morpheus appears to give the persona a vision which directly mirrors what he has been reading and which does not console his troubled heart.

CHAPTER IV  
MORPHEUS AND THE PERSONA

1

The Introduction ends with the sudden appearance of Morpheus. The mannerisms of Morpheus here are very striking, for he arouses the dreamer out of his lethargy and sloth. In contrast to our dozing dreamer who is in despair about Phebus' failure, Morpheus is "ryght valyaunt" and speaks "couragiously," with heart-felt vigor. Morpheus himself shows here none of his traditional sleepiness or lethargy ascribed to him earlier in The Book of the Duchess and later in The Faerie Queene. In Chaucer's vision, the messenger has great trouble arousing Morpheus but finally does so and convinces him to go on the mission for Juno:

This messager com fleyng faste  
And cried, "O, ho! awake anon!"  
Hit was for nocht; there herde hym non.  
"Awake!" quod he, "whoo ys lyth there?"  
And blew his horn ryght in here eere,  
And cried "Awaketh!" wonder hye.  
This god of slep with hys oon ye  
Cast up, aied, "who clepeth ther?"  
"Hyt am I," quod this messager.  
Juno bad thow shuldest goon"-  
And tolde hym what he shulde doon,  
As I have told you here-to-fore;  
Hyt ys no nede reherse hyt more-  
And went hys way, whan he had sayd.  
Anoon this god of slep abrayd

Out of hys slep, and ran to goon,  
 And dyde as he had bede hym doon;  
 (178-194)

Likewise in Spenser, Archimago's messenger has trouble  
 arousing Morpheus:

The Messenȝer approaching to him spake;  
 But his waste wordes retournd to him in vaine;  
 So sound he slept, that nought mought him awake.  
 Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with paine,  
 Whereat he ran to stretch; but he againe  
 Shooke him so hard, that forced him to speake.  
 As one then in a dreame, whose dryer braine  
 Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weake,  
 He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence breake.

The Sprite then ran more boldly him to wake,  
 And threatned unto him the dreaded name  
 Of Hecate: whereat he ran to quake,  
 And, lifting up his lompish head, with blame  
 Halfe anȝrie asked him, for what he came.  
 "Hether" (quoth he.) "me Archimago sent,  
 He that the stubborne Sprites can wisely tame,  
 He bids thee to him send for his intent  
 A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleepers  
 sent."

The God obeyde; and, calling forth straight way  
 A diverse Dreame out of his prison darke  
 Delivered it to him, and downe did lay  
 His heaue head, devoide of careful carke;  
 Whose sences all were straight benumbd and starke.  
 (Book I, Canto I, stanzas  
 XLII-XLIV)

Unlike the Morpheus in Chaucer who gets up and himself  
 brings the dream to Alcyone, Spenser's Morpheus just  
 gives the dream to the messenger and goes back to sleep.  
 In Nevill, however, Morpheus has none of this lethargy.  
 Nevill even abandons the hell-cave of sleep which  
 Chaucer uses to introduce Morpheus. Morpheus indeed  
 induces the dreamer to overcome his sloth and despair

and to go with him in order to see Desire supplicating Beauty (118-145). Even though this dream is an illusion, Morpheus here invigorates the dreamer. Unlike The Pook of the Duchess, Morpheus in Nevill appears directly to the dreamer as himself, not as a mask of some other person, as in Chaucer.

But to understand fully how Nevill is using Morpheus, let us review the significant criticism which explains this god of dreams. The reading of Ovid has induced the persona to fall into a state of sloth or simply added to sloth already present; as he sleeps, Morpheus appears. Thus, sleep, sloth, a troubled mind and the arrival of Morpheus are closely linked. Nevill did not invent this situation, and much has been written on this type of opening for a poem. B.G. Koonce, in Chaucer and the Tradition of Fame, and Huppé and Robertson, in Fruyt and Chaf (as well as in Fiers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition), have discussed it.

In commenting on Morpheus in The Hous of Fame (lines 66ff.), Koonce says:

His initial "devocion" to Morpheus, the pagan god of dreams, contrasts ironically with the preceding appeal to the Cross. The special force of the irony, however, stems from the meaning which Morpheus and his dreams have acquired in the mythography of the Christian poet. For Morpheus' dreams have little to do with the kind of dream Chaucer

is to relate; instead they are "illusions" or "fantasies," dreams of spiritual disharmony besetting the mind in a state of sloth. This meaning is mirrored in his "cave of stoon," an image of the mind devoid of the light of reason. A similar meaning is attributed to the river Lethe, the source of the "strem" on which the cave is located, a symbol of oblivion or the mind's forgetfulness of God. In adding that Lethe is a "flood of helle unswete," Chaucer perhaps reminds us of a connection between Morpheus' dreams and the illusions of Satan, a connotation strengthened by the location of the cave near Cimmeria, the mythical region of darkness where the sun never shines.<sup>1</sup>

Further, having cited Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition in which Huppé and Robertson discuss the idea of sleep as spiritual sloth, torpor or blindness and as a metaphor for undue concern for the treasures of this world, Koonce reminds us that, in speaking of Eph. 5:14,

Rabanus glosses sleep, in this instance, as the dullness (stupor) of the mind, whose alienation from the true way "is a kind of death from which it is reminded to awaker, so that, upon reviving, it will recognize the truth, which is Christ."<sup>2</sup>

And Koonce also refers us to The Book of the Duchess, lines 153ff., where the darkness of Morpheus' cave is compared to a "helle-pit." In the same connection, Huppé and Robertson, writing prior to Koonce, state this conclusion about Morpheus:

Alcyone is subject to "fantasy" in her solicitude and is therefore not in a position to heed any reasonable counsel her vision may suggest to her. As a result of her plea to Juno she falls into a "dead sleep," a sleep of spiritual torpor, reflected in the details of the dark vision of the rocky cave of Morpheus. If his habitation suggests the mind, it suggests one darkened by loss of the guiding light of reason. The approach to the cave is a valley between two rocks where nothing grows. The cave is dark as "helle-pit," it contains Lethean streams, and the figures within it are asleep.

Finally, they note that Morpheus often "appears to the dreamer in human form, with human speech and gesture" and can represent a type of "worldly solicitude."<sup>4</sup>

Morpheus, the god of sleep, appears to the dreamer in the form of a human being and generally shows a vision of humans acting. He lives in Cimmeria, a northern abode, like the Hell of Satan, and his appearance often implies that the dreamer has, by sloth, lost the power of reason and has forgotten the light of God. The dreams which he brings, as in the case of Alcyone, often drive the dreamer to suicide or some other form of despair. This complements the use of Morpheus in The Castell of Pleasure. The dreamer here is slothful(112,117); the vision which Morpheus brings shows characters acting and speaking in a human way; and the dream does not console the persona who is finally left in the same (or more intense) despair with which the poem began. In



the light of this background, the persona's dream can be described as a vision inspired by a hellish power, a vision which neither consoles nor brings pleasure. The vision is purely a product of Fantasy (as implied in line 114) and demonstrates excessive concern with worldly goods, namely, the seduction of Beauty.

Aside from The Hous of Fame and The Book of the Duchess, there are other references to Morpheus in post-Chaucerian allegories which should be noted. In Lydgate's The Assembly of the Gods, Morpheus appears frequently throughout the poem. In "the Interpretacion of the names of goddys and goddesses" at the beginning of the poem, Morpheus is called "shewer of dremes." This in itself seems to be a neutral category. In lines 1-36, we find a situation somewhat like the beginning of The Castell of Pleasure; the persona sits alone, is "musynge" (line 5) and finally goes to sleep; Morpheus then arrives. As in Nevill's poem, Morpheus here too presents a dream to a persona who is deep in thought. Then Morpheus' power is compared to that of the devil:

For he seyde I must yeue attendaunce  
 To the gret Court of Mynos, the iustyse.  
 He rought auaylyd ayene hym to syloxysse;  
 For hit ys oft seyde by hem that yet lyues  
 He must nedys go that the deuell dryues.  
 (17-21)

As a result of this, Morpheus takes the dreamer to the court of Pluto and Minos for the judgment of Eolus. So far, Morpheus seems to be the same kind of hellish figure which Chaucer has used. But Morpheus, though he is associated with the "helle-pit," is not really a part of hell here at all:

But as we thedyward went by the way,  
 I hym besought hys name to tell.  
 "Morpheus," he seyde, "thow me call may."  
 "A syr," seyde I, "than where do ye dwell,  
 In heuen or in erthe outhelles in hell?"  
 "Nay," he seyde, "myn abydynø most comonly  
 Ys in a lytyll corner callyd Fantasy."  
 (29-35)

In the context of this poem, "Fantasy" can best be glossed as the power to show a dreamer a dream which is appropriate to the problem uppermost in his mind; for the dreamer will be taught that reason and sensuality (his "problem" in line 6) can accord only in the fear of death. More important, we eventually discover that Morpheus, in this poem, is at the service of Virtue not of Vice. In lines 729-744, after Vice and his cohorts decide to assault Virtue, it is Morpheus who secretly steals away unnoticed from Vice's court to warn Virtue of the impending attack. Commenting on this action, Virtue says:

But Gramercy, Morpheus, myn owne dere frende,  
 Of your trew hert and feythefull entent  
 That ye in thys mater to me ward haue ment."  
 (740-742)

Thus, while Morpheus may have brought the dreamer to the court of hell, he generally aids the reign of Virtue. For this action, Morpheus is later rewarded by Virtue (lines 1282ff.), and the reward is glossed in lines 1849-1855:

And as for the keyes of the posterns fvue,  
 Whyche were to Morpheus rewardyd for hys labour,  
 Sygnyfy nat ellys but whyle man ys on lyue  
 Hys v inwarde wyttes shalbe every houre  
 In hys slepe occupied, in hele and in lançoure,  
 With fantasves, tryfys, illusions and dremes,  
 Whyche poetys call Morpheus stremes.

The streams of Morpheus then are the dreams which keep men's minds active in sleep; and Morpheus is thus the guard for the five gates of man's inward senses. However, the tone of this section may be humorous or ironic, since Morpheus does not seem to have significant power. The list in line 1854 is not exactly impressive. Yet, even though Virtue sees Morpheus as somewhat impotent, she does not condemn the power which he does have. It must be remembered that Morpheus has initiated this dream in which Virtue itself appears. Finally, in lines 1470ff., Morpheus conducts the confused dreamer to the school of correct doctrine so that he can understand better the significance of his dream. At the end of the poem in lines 2027ff., Morpheus kindly leads the dreamer back to bed after Doctrine vanishes and in line 2041 vanishes "sodenly" himself, possibly a source for

the sudden movements of Morpheus in Nevill's poem.

The Morpheus figure in Lydgate is a different sort of actor from the one which Koonce, Huppé and Robertson describe. Their statements about Morpheus complement the way in which Berchorius interprets him.

Somnus habet tres filios speciales inter alios quos nunquam nisi ad reŕes et nobiles duces mittit. Primus vocatur morpheus; secundus Icelus; tertius phantasos. Morpheus habet suum officium quod non efficiat in capite dormientis; nisi efficiam humanam cum gestu et loquela et caeteris pertinentibus ad naturam humanam... Excitat artificem simulatorem que figuræ Morpheæ non illo quisquam sollertius alter Exprimit incessus vultumque sonumque loquendi. Adicit et vestes et consuetissima quæque Verba; sed hic solos homines imitatur... Vult Quidius per hos tres filios somni intelligere triplex ænus sollicitudinis quam imittit diabolus in corda dormientium mundanorum per negligentiam vitæ suæ.<sup>5</sup>

The basic metaphor here is the traditional one of sleep and its connection with worldly solicitude. Like our persona, men under this power of Morpheus and infernal sleep neglect their own lives ("per negligentiam vitæ suæ"). Caxton complements Berchorius here by saying of Morpheus and his two brothers that: "In this mettier, they make the peple muse by vain illusyons, visyons, nocturnes."<sup>6</sup>

The helpful or virtuous Morpheus, whom Berchorius ignores, is also used by Stephen Hawes in The Example of Virtue (1504).<sup>7</sup> We again meet the slothful dreamer and then Morpheus who leads the dreamer to a "ryght fayre

lady" who is Discretion:

In a slombrynke slepe with slouth opprest  
 As I in my naked bedde was layde  
 Thynkynge all nyght to take my rest  
 Morpheus to me than made a brayde  
 And in my dreame in thought he sayd  
 Come walke with me in a medowe amerous  
 Depeynted with floures that be delycvous.

I walked with hym into a place  
 Where that grewe many a fayre floure  
 With ioye replete and full of solace  
 And the trees dystyllynge redolent lycoure  
 More swete fer than the Apryll shoure  
 And tary I dyde there by lonze space  
 Tyll that I sawe before my face

A ryght fayre lady of mydle stature  
 And also endued with great vertue...<sup>8</sup>

The poem continues with the story of the temptation of Virtue and his eventual marriage to "Cleanness" and their voyage to heaven. In Hawes, as in Lydgate, Morpheus introduces a dream in which the vision concerns the triumph of Virtue as shown to an originally slothful persona. Morpheus thus has the power to give a vision which should and does spur the dreamer on to a virtuous life.

Nevill uses Morpheus to dictate the entire course of the vision and thus employs him in a more extensive way than any poet except Lydgate. Only Nevill and Lydgate use Morpheus as a guide through an entire dream. Yet there is no doubt that Nevill does use Morpheus' meaning as derived from The Hous of Fame and not as derived

from Lydgate's or Hawes' Morpheus who helps the reign of virtue. Nevill then has carefully resurrected the Chaucerian use of Morpheus as a hellish power, a use which had been rejected by Lydgate and Hawes in favor of a Morpheus who contributes to the victory of Virtue. At the same time, Nevill used the Lydgatean technique of Morpheus as a guide in the realm of Fantasy and not merely as one who gives dreams.

At this stage of our analysis (through line 121), the theory that Morpheus gives untrue dreams cannot be proved from the text. For Morpheus seems to exert a positive force by jolting our dull persona out of his sloth; for the moment, the persona stops complaining about his lack of fellowship. But, as will be shown, Morpheus is directly linked to Fantasy and is himself merely giving a narcissistic, self-gratifying, wish-fulfillment dream to the persona. Thus, if Morpheus can be said to dictate the infernal vision of Venus' temple in Book I of The Hous of Fame, it is fitting that the persona, Geoffrey, cries out in lines 492-494:

"O Crist!" thought I, "that art in blysse,  
 Fro fantome and illusion  
 Me save."

The psychological movement of the dreamer in The Castell of Pleasure never progresses this far. Our persona never casts his eyes to heaven; he remains, throughout the poem, in the hell of cupidinous phantoms and illusion to which Morpheus has led him.

In The Allegory of Love, C.S. Lewis addresses himself to Nevill's persona and the literary tradition which formed him. He argues justly that The Romance of the Rose is the prime source for studying most medieval personae. But by oversimplifying the persona in The Romance of the Rose, he both misunderstands how the persona works in this poem and in poems which follow it. Lewis argues that de Iorris' persona is simply a "colourless teller of the tale."<sup>9</sup> From this, he argues that the narrator embodies the ideas of the author; proving then that these ideas, in de Meun's addition, are inconsistent, he concludes that de Meun was a "bungler,"<sup>10</sup> an artist who "could not fuse"<sup>11</sup> the disparate ideas in his own mind. Lewis has overlooked the fact that the persona in The Romance of the Rose is a creation of de Iorris and de Meun and that he is his own man, not just a convenient mask for the authors' ideas. Far from being a "colourless teller" of his tale, he has his own "personality" and his own problems. By misinterpreting this persona, Lewis also fails to understand that Nevill's persona is a fictional creation, an embodiment of cupidinous desire, and that he does not express the author's opinions. With this in mind, let us note the similarities and differences between the personae in these two works in order to disprove

Lewis' thesis and to clarify just how much Nevill is imitating The Romance of the Rose persona.

As The Romance of the Rose begins, the narrator, now twenty-five years old, recalls his experience of love which took place five years before, an experience which will be the subject of his poem:

When I the age of twenty had attained-  
 The age when Love controls a young man's heart-  
 As I was wont, one night I went to bed  
 And soundly slept. But then there came a dream  
 Which much delighted me, it was so sweet.  
 No single thing which in that dream appeared  
 Has failed to find fulfillment in my life,  
 With which the vision well may be compared.  
 Now I'll recount this dream in verse, to make  
 Your hearts more gay, as love commands and wills;  
 And if a man or maid shall ever ask  
 By what name I would christen the romance  
 Which now I start, I will this answer make:  
 "The Romance of the Rose it is, and it unfolds  
 Within its compass all the Art of love."  
 The subject is both good and new. God grant  
 That she for whom I write with favor look  
 Upon my work, for she so worthy is  
 Of love that well may she be called the Rose.  
 Five years or more have passed by now, I think,  
 Since in that month of May I dreamed this dream.....  
 In this delightful month, when Love excites  
 All things, one night I, sleeping, had this dream.  
 Methought that it was full daylight, I rose  
 In haste, put on my shoes and washed my hands,  
 Then took a silver needle from its case,  
 Dainty and neat, and threaded it with silk.  
 I yearned to wander far outside the town  
 To hear what songs the birds were singing there  
 In every bush, to welcome the new year.  
 Basting my sleeves in zigzags as I went,  
 I pleased myself, in spite of solitude.  
 Listening to the birds that took such pains  
 To chant among the new-bloom-laden-boughs,  
 Jolly and gay and full of happiness,  
 I neared a rippling river which I loved; 12



About the only real similarity between this and Nevill is that both narrators have a dream. Notice, more importantly, the differences. First, while the dream delights the deLorrisean narrator, the dream only serves to trouble the heart of Nevill's persona. Second, all the events in the one dream were actually fulfilled in the life of the dreamer; that is, he finally seduced his Rose physically. There is no hint at all of this in Nevill; for all we know, Nevill's dreamer is eternally without a woman and is eternally tormented by the lack of fulfillment of which he has dreamed. Third, while both poems claim to be about "the art of love," and to be about a new subject, the deLorrisean persona actually dedicates his poem to the woman whom he has seduced, while Nevill's dreamer, not having the good fortune to win a lady, addresses his poem to all young folk and does not have one to whom he can dedicate his services. Fourth, the deLorris narrator has waited five years to write of his vision, five years presumably spent in sporting with his Rose. His poem is thus all recall and a product of Dante's 'book of memory;' whereas, Nevill's dream is immediate action, and the narrator has little time to look back over his experience. Fifth, the deLorrisean narrator in The Romance is "jolly, gay

and full of happiness" at the beginning of his dream;  
and Jean de Meun describes him as even happier at the  
end:

But Reason I forgot, whose hortatives  
Had made me waste so many pangs in vain,  
As well as Wealth, that ancient villainess  
Who had no thought of pity when she warned  
Me from the footpath where she kept her ward.  
Thank God she did not guard that passazeway  
By which I made my entrance secretly,  
Little by little, notwithstanding all  
The efforts of my mortal enemies  
Who held me back so much, especially  
The guardian Jealousy, with her sad wreath  
Of care, who keeps true lovers from the Rose.  
Much good their guardianship is doing now!  
Ere I remove from that delightful place  
Where 'tis my hope I ever can remain,  
With greatest happiness I'll pluck the blooms  
From off the rosebush, fair in flower and leaf.  
This, then, is how I won my vermeil Rose.  
Then morning came, and from my dream at last  
I woke.<sup>13</sup>

But there is nothing of this happiness (even though it  
is misdirected joy) in Nevill whatsoever. Nevill's  
persona is disturbed and unhappy from beginning to end.  
Note, however, that both personae have lost their faculty  
of Reason, and their seemingly contrary states of  
happiness and misery are both on the side of cupiditas,  
the unfading joy of caritas not being considered on their  
temporal scale of joy and sadness. Sixth, since The  
Romance of the Rose is all a flashback, there are two  
levels to the narration. The first level we have already  
described; the second is the contrition of the dreamer

at his present age of writing (twenty-five years old), for the folly of his past sins (which he praises so highly in the passage which we have just quoted, experienced at age twenty). For instance, in Section 6, in discussing Narcissus and the Mirror Perilous, de Lorris has his narrator say:

Whatever thing appears before one's eyes,  
 While at these stones he looks, he  
     straightway loves,  
 Many a valiant man has perished thence;  
 The wisest, worthiest, most experienced  
 Have there been trapped and taken unawares.  
 There a new furor falls to some men's lot;  
 There others see their resolution change;  
 There neither sense nor moderation holds  
 The mastery; there will to love is all;  
 There no man can take counsel for himself.  
 'Tis Cupid, Venus' son, there sows the seed  
 Which taints the fountain, and 'tis there he sets  
 His nets and snares to capture man and maid;  
 For Cupid hunts no other sort of bird.  
 By reason of the seed sown thereabout  
 This fountain has been called the Well of Love,  
 Of which full many an author tells in books  
 Of old romance; but never will you hear  
 Better explained the truth about the place  
 Than when I have exposed its mystery.  
 Longtime it pleased me to remain to view  
 The fountain and the crystals that displayed  
 A hundred thousand things which there appeared.  
 But I remember it as sorry hour.  
 Alas, how often therefore have I sighed!  
 The mirrors me deceived. Had I but known  
 Their power and their force, I had not then  
 So close approached. I fell within the snare  
 That sorely has betrayed and caught full many a man.<sup>1</sup>

Second, in section 20, the de Meun narrator, self-consciously, though not in flashback as in the preceding quotation, says:

In a crazy fit was I, at least half mad  
 When foolishly I made myself Love's man.  
 Shame on the schemes of Lady Idleness,  
 Who led me to it when she harbored me  
 Within the pretty orchard, at my prayer!  
 If she'd been wise, she had refused me then.  
 Not worth an apple is a fool's request;  
 Betimes he should be censured and reproved.  
 I was a fool, and yet she trusted me!  
 She worked my will too well, but ne'er  
     increased  
 My welfare; rather brought me tears and grief.  
 Well warned by Reason, mad I must have been  
 When I took not the advice she freely gave  
 And did not quit Love's service right away.  
 Reason was right to blame me when I lent  
 Myself to Love, incurring grievous woes.<sup>15</sup>

Though this is followed by lines which state the impossibility of repentance, the point is well made. It should be noted here that this type of analysis is complicated by the problem of the two authors. For our purposes, we have assumed that de Meun was entirely aware of the possibilities latent in section 6 of de Lorris' poem and used them implicitly in section 20 of his addition. Naturally, we have not used any quotations from the 'Anonymous Conclusion' section.

There is nothing like the first quotation above in Nevill since his poem is not constructed by flash-back at all. But in lines 378-393, there is some momentary reconsideration on the part of the narrator:

Kyndnes departed yet her power was present  
 Alwaye with fantasy enclosed in her herte  
 Than fantasy in at the gate dyd sprent  
 I leped in after and sodaynly dyd sterte

When I sawe me enclosed about with a couerte  
 Set full of myrt trees the apple tre  
 appeared playne  
 Of pyramus and Thysbe dystroved by loues darte  
 Which made me ofte to wysse that I were  
 out agayne

Alas quod I what sodayne aduerture  
 I se this worlde is but uncertayne  
 I was late Ioyus as euer was creature  
 And now I folysshly haue locked me in loues chayne  
 I wene I be in laborinthus where mynotaurus  
 dyd remayne  
 A blynde Cupyde is this thy guerdon  
 Makest thou folkes blynde doest thou so entertayne  
 Suche louers as sewe to the for their padon.

That is, the dreamer knows, at least from this point forth, that something very basic is wrong with his vision. This self-consciousness parallels the dreamer's consciousness of his foolishness in section 20 of The Romance of the Rose. To say, however, that Nevill imitated this self-consciousness of the persona would probably be too strong a statement, since the final perspective of each persona is different. The twenty-five year old persona in The Romance of the Rose is much closer to a reasonable vision of love as expressed in section 6 than is Nevill's dreamer, who, at the end of the poem, still wants to play the courtier's game. And, The Romance of the Rose narrator has none of that final despair of Nevill's persona who at last casts away all his books.

While much of this analysis has provided only negative evidence (the ways in which the personae are different), it has been valuable since it forecloses the possibility of making inexact and general statements

about the influence of The Romance of the Rose on medieval poems. Stephen Hawes' The Pastime of Pleasure<sup>16</sup> provides an example of a poem contemporary with Nevill's and which has a persona similar to Nevill's. Thus in line 7, King Henry VII's rule has ensured that the sin of sloth, enemy of virtue, will be avoided; in line 44, one of the purposes of this poem will be to eschewe idleness (see also lines 5772, 5803-5816, which will be discussed in detail later); in line 71, Grande Amoure finds a path "by sodayne chaunce," resembling line 110 in The Castell of Pleasure; in line 75, "chaunce or fortune" in Hawes parallels line 52 "fortune and chaunce" in Nevill; in line 95, Grande Amoure is offered the chance to go to the "toure of fayre dame beaute;" in line 110, he is "musynge" and "all alone" as is our dreamer; lines 134-149 warn against sloth and show that the sloth of Grande Amoure is related to "deedly slombre."

This is the waye/and the sytuacyon  
 Vnto the toure/of famous doctryne  
 Who that wyll lerne/must be ruled by reason  
 And with all his dyllygence/he must enclyne  
 Slouthe to eschewe/and for to determyne  
 And set his hert/to be intellygyble  
 To a wyllynge herte/is nought Impossyble

Besyde the ymage/I adowne me sette  
 After my laboure/myselve to repose  
 Tyll at the last/with a paspyngge nette  
 Slouthe my heed caught/with his hole purpose  
 It vayed not/the body for to dyspose  
 Agaynst the heed/whan it is applyed

The heed must rule/it can not be denied

After this, Fame gives him a lecture on her power and then leaves; this section ends with Grande Amour, like Nevill's persona, feeling troubled:

When she was gone/full wofull was my herte  
 With inwarde trouble/oppressed was my mynde  
 Yet were the grehoundes/lefte with me behvnde  
 Whiche dyde my comforte/in my grete vyage  
 To the toure of doctryne/with theyr fawnyge  
 courage

So forth I went/tossvnge on my brayne  
 Gretely musynge/ouer hyll and vale  
 The waye was troublous/and ev nothynge playne  
 Tyll at the laste/I came to a dale  
 Beholdynge Phebus/declynynge lowe and pale  
 With my grehoundes/in the favre twylyght  
 I sate me downe/for to rest me all nyght

Slouthe vpon me/so fast began to crepe  
 That of fyne force/I downe by layde  
 Vpon an hyll/with my grevhoundes to slepe  
 Whan I was downe/I thought me well apayde  
 And to my selfe/these wordes than I sayde  
 Who wyll attayne/soone to his Iournays ende  
 To mouryssh slouthe/he may not condvscende  
 (318-336)

It is probable that Nevill knew Hawes' poem well and imitated the general style of his opening section. The connection between an oppressed mind and a mind troubled with sloth is clear here, as it is in Nevill. As seen in the section quoted previously from Hawes' The Example of Virtue, the effect of sloth was a problem which Hawes treats extensively. I suspect that a future study

of Hawes' The Comfort of Lovers<sup>17</sup> will reveal similar concerns.

111

Before following Morpheus and the dreamer into their vision of the castle of pleasure, let us assess, on the basis of our analysis so far, the ways in which the Prologue and Introduction are related and state the themes common to both these sections, themes which will carry us into the body of the poem.

In the Prologue we learned that this poem would concern "reason of lauryate grauyte" (line 6); that it would illumine young hearts with friendship; that it would give an example (line 11) to all who wished to practise the art of love and that its prime purpose would be to give pleasure (line 23) to gentil people by showing that young folk can obtain consolation or new health (line 41) by perceiving that Beauty can be obtained in the "toure of pleasure." Then, in the Introduction, we met a young man whose heart was not illumined by friendship but rather was depressed by unnatural solitude. He was without comfort and overcome with sloth because he had just read a story in which



Beauty was not obtained in the tower of pleasure. The narrator, as we first see him, is one of the "yonge folk" who truly needs to seek "recure." He is in desperate need of seeking the comfort given to those who burn in love's fire. Our persona is really an alter-ego of Phebus and sees his own solitude and lack of fellowship as parallel to Phebus' loneliness without Daphne. While the Prologue has promised to furnish a poem which can be read so that young lovers can pass their time without thinking evil, the persona passes his time misreading fables in such a way that his mind does turn to evil thoughts, namely, despair over the impossibility of comfort. Thus, since the Prologue has promised comfort and since the Introduction has given us nothing but pain, we, the readers, will turn to the main vision of the poem expecting at last to be comforted.

But at the same time, it has been implied that the art of reading itself, as well as the vicarious consolation of lovers which may or may not proceed from reading, is one of the central concerns of the poem and of its "maters ryght uncouth." For the "lau-yate grauyte" refers to the fact that Daphne is transformed into a laurel, symbolizing her eternal virginity. And since

all of this occurs with Cupid on Parnassus, at which time the ruler of poetry succumbs to lust, the laurel's meaning, or the "sentence" of the poem, has something to do with the preservation of virginity or chastity.

Second, the Prologue postulates two groups of men: one group which loves only gold, gambling and harlotry and which has its delight "onely for mede to do theyr appetyte" (line 35). It is this group which utterly forbids their children to buy books. The other, supposedly more virtuous, group seeks Beauty in pleasure's castle. Phebus, our dreamer and the expected readers of this poem supposedly belong to this last group of noble literati. But there are two major problems which show that this distinction postulated in the text is misleading. First, Phebus himself can be said to exercise his "appetyte" only for reward: the reward of a beautiful maiden. This applies likewise to Desire's search for Beauty. The egotistic "loue of golde" which "blyndeth the syght of men and women" is, in terms of the traditional Christian analysis of idolatry, the same type of egotism which makes Phebus "hault in corage" and which induces him to try to rape Daphne. Both are done for "mede." Second, our narrator, initially of the literati, finally condemns the reading of books, an act

superficially similar to the refusal of greedy parents to let their children buy books. The result is the same: books are no longer read. Thus, these two groups, who seem so different, are similar.

Third, the Prologue and Introduction are linked by a series of verbal repetitions of the word "herte." In line 7, "yonge tender hertes" and their illumination by "amyte" are shown to be one of the main concerns of the poem's "lauryate grauyte." In line 13, the "courage," having as its major meaning "heart," will be educated, instructed or ennobled ("endewe") by the fresh rhetoric of the poem. Notice here that "courage" meaning "heart" is put in parallel structure with "theyr myndes to condescende... theyr courage to endewe." This linking of heart and mind will recur throughout the poem. In line 62, Phebus is described as prideful and "hault in corage," or "arrogant in heart." Like the young Troilus in Book I of Troilus and Criseyde, Phebus mocks lovers and Cupid and his power; he is then mortally wounded. In line 99, the persona's "herte" is heavy with solitute and weariness; in line 115, as in lines 12-13, heart and mind are joined: "my herte was moche musynge my mynde was varyaunt;" and in line 117, his heart and mind give way to sloth. In contrast to his slothful heart,

Morpheus arrives suddenly and "lyke a man ryght valyaunt/  
Couragously to me these wordes he sayde." Morpheus  
speaks from the heart ("couragously") to a man whose  
heart is sick. Thus the action of the poem takes place  
in the heart. (This assertion will be proved when we  
investigate the mountain of "courage" in the next scene.)  
The heart is the faculty used in loving; it is the basis  
for amity and the seat of sorrow induced by solitude;  
and it is the psychological link between Morpheus and  
the dreamer. These repetitions of "herte/corage" at  
key points in the Prologue and Introduction serve to  
introduce the hill of corage in the next scene.  
And, to skip ahead one moment, this theme will culminate  
in the epigram following line 926: "Volunte ie ay  
mais ie ne veulx mon cuer chaunger." The heart is thus  
also the seat of resolution and determination. (The  
fuller meaning of this epigram will be discussed later.)

## CHAPTER V

## THE BODY: SCENES 1-1V

## 1

In Scene I of the Body of the poem (122-145), Morpheus tells the persona that Desire has taken an oath to love and to serve Beauty without end:

How Desyre in mynde hath made a solempne othe  
 Beaute to serue without resistance  
 So to contynue he doeth ryght well prepence  
 Durynge his lyfe with loue stedfast and sure  
 In parfyte loue to kepe one contynuaunce  
 It is his mynde to do her suche pleasure.  
 (124-129)

This sounds like a very high ideal: Desire will love only Beauty for his whole life with a steadfast love. Because of its continuance, his love is called "parfyte." His ideal of steadfastness will be developed again in Scene II when the dreamer sees the stones of steadfastness in the laver of lowliness and in Scene V where the crux of the debate between Pity and Disdain hinges on the real causes of steadfastness.

This theme of steadfastness had been fully developed by poets writing before Nevill in the fifteenth century. Having the unsteadfastness of Criseyde always in mind, Lydgate and others often praised steadfast lovers with the most aureate rhetoric. For instance, in The Temple

of Glas,<sup>1</sup> Lydgate uses this theme to define the major concern of his poem: can lovers establish a stable world in which to enjoy their love? In lines 433-435, Venus promises the disconsolate lady that she will have her lover without change:

For he þat þe haue chosen þow to serue,  
Shal be to þow such as þe desire,  
Wip-oute chaunge, fulli, til he sterue:

In line 493, the lady gives thanks to Venus that her lover will be subjected to her "with-oute chaunge or transmutacioun." In lines 1103ff., when Venus has the two lovers' hearts bound with a golden chain, she warns the lady to cherish the man because he has vowed never to change: "For he haþe vowid to chaunge for no new" (1128). Finally in lines 1292-1298, this steadfast love is praised as a means to overcome the world of change and mutability:

For he haþe worne hir þat he loueþ best,  
And she to grace haþe take him of pite;  
And þus her hertis beþe boþe set in rest,  
Wip-outer chaunge or mutabilite,  
And Venus haþ, of hir benygnete,  
Confermed all - what (shal) I longer tarie? -  
This tweyn in oon, and neuere forto varie:

And Venus, who knew

As she þat knew þe clene entencioun  
Of boþe hem tweyne, haþ made a ful bihest,  
Perpetuell, by confirmacioun,  
Whiles þat þei lve, of oon affeccioun  
Thei shal endure -

(1321-1325a)

Thus, for one imaginative moment, the traditional world of the mutable Venus is transformed into a world where the lovers are comforted forevermore. The world of Fortune is thus transcended, and lovers become eternal partners: two hearts become one. Venus is glorified not as a goddess of fornication or adultery but as a power who can lead affectionate lovers into stable marriage.

In The Flower and the Leaf, steadfastness is praised as a quality of one of the smaller groups of the Leaf:

And tho that were chapelets on hir hede  
 Of fresh woodbind, be such as never were  
 To love untrew in word, (ne) thought, ne dede,  
 But ay stedfast; ne for plesaunce, ne fere,  
 Though that they shuld hir hertes al to-tere,  
 Would never flit, but ever were stedfast,  
 Til that their lyves there asunder brast.<sup>2</sup>

These steadfast maidens are second in virtue only to those who serve chastity and Diana.

At the end of The Court of Love (a work chosen, because it, unlike the first two cited, was printed after Nevill's poem), the lover promises continual faithfulness to his earthly lover:

And here I make myn protestacion,  
 And depely swere, as (to) myn power, to been  
 Feithfull, devoid of variacion,  
 And her forbere in anger or in tene,  
 And serviceable to my worldes quene,  
 With al my reson and intelligence,  
 To don her honour high and reverence.<sup>3</sup>

These three quotations have been cited to demonstrate a climate of opinion about love and its properties with which Nevill would have been familiar. In these three poems, Cupid and Venus are shown to be the real powers of this earth (just as in the Cupid-Daphne-Apollo fable) but powers which can often be benign. Venus can in fact really bless lovers with earthly happiness in marriage. We are reminded here of the end of The Knight's Tale when the frustrated amor of Palamon, the servant of Venus, is transformed into a love harmonious with the marriage bonds. And, in these pleasant bonds, he continues to love and to serve Emily (3103-04) in marriage, a marriage to which Emily consents because of her pity for Palamon (line 3083). Chaucer presents steadfast marriage as a high ideal and as a way for lovers like Palamon to find real comfort. When Nevill has Morpheus describe a lover presently in woe who wants to be comforted by forming a steadfast love bond (124-129), our initial impression of this lover must be neutral, if not favorable. But he is looking for stability in an object whose inherent nature is instability, another lover's heart. For as we know from the end of Troilus and Criseyde, the only stable heart is that of Christ, even though Chaucer's Knight highly praises the most perfect kind of stability in a basically



unstable world, the institution of marriage. There is really no conflict between the advice at the end of Troilus and Criseyde and at the end of The Knight's Tale; for the perfection of marriage has, as its end, the love of Christ.

While hoping eventually to have a steadfast love bond, Desire, in lines 130-137, still has the conventional pain of all lovers who are without their desired object. He is in pleasure and in pain. Yet Morpheus compliments him in a very peculiar way:

Moche rule I ensure you hath nature and kynde  
 In hym as is possvble in one to remayne  
 He wolde fayne haue release and dare not  
 yet complayne

(132-134)

Though in pain, the lover is still ruled by Nature. Nevill's lover would like to be released from his woe, a desire which is somewhat untypical of medieval lovers who often state that they find a sweet pleasure in their lustful pain. (Chaucer's Troilus is a prime example of a lover who suffers this kind of mental paralysis by which he is reduced to inaction.) Nevill's lover, as presented through the eyes of Morpheus, is quite level-headed; he wants to declare his love and begin his steadfast union. For a medieval lover, there is some degree of sanity in this. Because of the rule of Nature

in him, Desire wants to get rid of his pain (caused by separation from the object of desire) and to live in pleasure.

In order to hear the plea which Desire will make to Beauty, the dreamer puts himself under Morpheus' control: "I must of duety holde me content/So ye supporte me alwaye when I haue nede." The dreamer looks to Morpheus for some support, feeling that he is not capable of taking the journey himself. Ironically, when the dreamer looks for Morpheus later in the poem, Morpheus will let others in the garden help him.

## 11

In Scene II (146-297), Morpheus and the dreamer begin their journey by ascending the mountain of courage. This ascent (146-185) is permeated by the great joy of the dreamer when he gets to the top of the hill. As the sun shines on both sides of the mountain and makes the valleys golden, the dreamer cannot contain himself:

But whan I to the toppe was nye auanced  
None of my Ioyntes coude togyder contayne  
For Ioye my herte leped and my body daunced.  
(151-153)

This joy is antithetical to the sloth which the dreamer felt before going to sleep and to the sorrow which he will feel as soon as he enters the garden and sees the "apple tre" of Pyramus and Thisbe. The beauty of mid-day and of the hill seems to have reinvigorated the dreamer, and he asks Morpheus what this hill is called. Morpheus says that this is the "mountayne of lusty courage," that unkindness, enmity and old age have been exiled from it, with only Disdain remaining, and that ladies watch their champions joust there. Looking around at the gargoyleed galleries where the ladies sit and at the mountain itself, the dreamer then says (172-173) that there has never been a mountain as good as this since the Incarnation; he is thus filled with joy and praises the mountain:

O puyssaunt courage chefe cause of conforte  
 Thou mayst well be nye the castell of pleasure  
 O hyll thupholder of all doughty dysporte  
 Of marcyall manhode thou arte the treasure  
 Out of thy bankes is woten the ure  
 That causeth the pastymes of parfyte prowes  
 O mountayne god graunt the lonze to endure  
 Syth thou arte lanterne of lastynze lustynes.  
 (178-185)

These lines give us the main clue to the meaning of the mountain. By placing "O puyssaunt courage" and "O hyll" in parallel structure, Nevill suggests that the hill is the heart (corage/herte). Line 178 thus

reads: 'O powerful heart, chief cause of comfort.'

The mountain then is an emblem or icon of the heart, and the landscape of the poem stands for the human mind and heart. For instance, the jousting and physical warfare of the champions prepare them for eventual verbal sparring with Disdain. And the journey itself emblemizes the way in which Desire, with the help of Pity (the part of Beauty's heart which favors his advances), wins Beauty against the objections of Disdain (the part of the lady's heart which upholds the rigid social structure in which she lives). This type of analysis explains the presence of "unkyndness/enmyte/dysdayne/and dotage" in line 157, qualities which could make very difficult the petitions of Desire; the source for this list of qualities is The Romance of the Rose. At the beginning of the de Lorris section, the lover comes to a garden wall on which is sculptured figures which represent qualities which lovers cannot have if they wish to enter the garden of Mirth, whose doorkeeper is Idleness. These qualities are hate, felony, villainy, covetousness, avarice, envy, sorrow, old age, hypocrisy and poverty. Of these, old age and hate are similar to Nevill's four qualities. Only Disdain remains, who is probably parallel to characters like Danger, Shame and Jealousy, the great enemies of Pity, as pictured

by Jean de Meun. All these qualities are, of course, traits of the human mind, the actions of which Nevill is describing. The abundant references to "mind" and "herte" in the first 300 lines emphasize the mental geography of the poem.<sup>4</sup>

The reference to the hill as the best one since the Incarnation is initially a puzzling one. Why this religious reference in a very worldly poem? Two possibilities, both stating the same metaphor, come to mind.<sup>5</sup>

First, Bishop Grosseteste, in the Castell Off Loue,<sup>6</sup> describes the body of the Virgin Mary as a castle of love into which Christ descends (665-700ff). More specifically, this castle of love:

He stont on he) roche and sound  
And is i-planed I-to þe zround.  
(677-678)

Finally, in lines 769-770:

þe roche þat is so trewe and trusti  
þat is þe maydenes herte...

Thus he refers to the rock itself on which the castle of love stands as the heart. As in Nevill, the rock itself is the heart. Again, in the Cursor Mundi<sup>7</sup>, which probably uses Grosseteste's poem as a prime source, we find the identical metaphor in lines 9975-9976:

þat roche þat es polist sa slȳht  
es maiden maria heit ful right.

As described in lines 9976-10094 of the Cursor Mundi, the foundation of Mary's castle is colored green, since the Virgin will last forever; the middle is colored india blue, emblematic of love, tenderness and truth; and the top is blood red, an emblem of holy charity. (The significance of the color blue will be seen when we study the two gates.)

These are the only references which I have been able to find that specifically relate the mountain and the heart and thus explain why this hill, the heart, is compared to the heart of the Incarnation, Mary's heart. References which link Mary with mountains are more common. For instance, in the Allegoriae in universam sacram scripturam, the author glosses Daniel 2:34: "Mons, virgo Maria, ut in Daniele: sine manibus, quod Christus de Maria natus, est sine virile semine."<sup>8</sup>

Mountains themselves have a specific meaning in medieval iconography. In the Reductorium morale, Berchorius states that mountains represent both saintly men and their virtues and that they are the path to tread in order to ascend to God; as an emblem of Paradise, mountains often have a river which cleanses man of his sins.<sup>9</sup> In discussing Mount Lebanon in

particular, Berchorius states:

Item est mons humiditatis; qui fluminibus  
et fontibus irrigat; et ab eo fontes et  
flumina emittunt....Mons iste est vir iustus et  
perfectus et maxime beata virgo maria<sup>10</sup>

In describing mountains as the way for good men to ascend to God, Berchorius, in this last citation, emphasizes Mary as the perfect type of the mountain and refers us to Canticles IV, in which the lover praises the beauty of his bride and asks her to follow him to his garden:

- IV. 1. quam pulchra es amica mea quam pulchra es...  
6. donec adspiret dies et inclinentur  
umbræ vadam ad montem murrae et ad  
collem turis  
7. tota pulchra es amica mea et macula  
non est in te  
8. veni de libano sponsa veni de Libano  
9. vulnerasti cor meum soror mea sponsa  
vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum  
tuorum et in uno crine colli tui  
12. hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa hortus  
conclusus fons signatus  
15. fons hortorum puteus aquarum viventium  
quæ fluunt impetu de Libano.

Berchorius mentions this passage because it deals with mountains and because he reads Canticles with the traditional understanding that the poem relates allegorically either the song of God to the Virgin Mary or the song of Christ to the soul of man. The details of the quotation from Canticles have a parallel in Nevill; the beauty of the loved one, the mountain, the garden and his great desire. Finally, line 153 in Nevill,

"For Ioye my herte leped and my body daunced," expresses the same emotion as Canticles 2:8: "vox dilecti mei, ecce iste venit saliens in montibus transiliens colles."

All these references indicate that, by using the image of a mountain and by connecting it with the Incarnation, Nevill is trying to draw our attention to the theological background implicit in this scene. The mountain and the incarnation establish an ideal set of references against which the action of the dream vision can be measured. The dreamer praises the beauty of the mountain in religious terms, thereby doing what medieval lovers have done long before even Troilus: describing their lover as a saint or comparing her to the Virgin herself. This religion of love cuts two ways. While the secular love-object is seemingly praised by being associated with a heavenly ideal, the praiser (the dreamer) is actually shown to have an up-so-down perspective on the world; for he has replaced the Virgin Mary in his affections with an object of Beauty which will fade. By using religious references, the dreamer, unknown to himself, shows the reader what the proper search for Beauty should be: a journey to the eternally stable heavenly Jerusalem. Our persona's attachments are similar to those of the persona in



Canticles if one reads this poem as a sensual love song; both personae are seeking a physical love and both are blinded to the true search for love.

Thus, the dreamer is on a vain and illusory search in an unstable world for the stability of Beauty which he honors in the Incarnation. As God desired the beauty of the Virgin as a temple for his son, the dreamer, who is the alter-ego of Desire, desires Beauty for himself. (The whole matter of the Virgin reference here also recalls the Phebus-Daphne story, which is a variant of the Canticles theme.) By referring to the Incarnation and its association with mountains, Nevill has cleverly given the reader a perspective on the action of the vision. The religious references point to an ideal goal, a Christian goal in which Beauty can be worshipped in its highest form. By contrasting this eternal religious world with the unstable world of the dreamer, Nevill indicates that the dreamer has misunderstood the relative worth of these two worlds.

Having ascended the mountain, the dreamer and Morpheus come to the traditional river which must be crossed in order to attain heavenly paradise or the earthly garden of pleasure. The rivers of Lethe and Eunoë at the top of the Purgatorio, the river in the

Pearl which cannot be crossed until death, and the stream at the beginning of The Romance of the Rose are examples of rivers (spiritual or sensual) which provide the background of allusion for the river in Nevill's poem. Nevill has simply borrowed this old tradition of the river-crossing as a major step in the realization of one's desires (be they spiritual or physical) and used it for his own purposes. As we learn in lines 186-217, Nevill's river is called the "lauer of lowlynes," and it runs over the "stones of stedfastnes." The "wylde wawes wauerynge with the wynde" will destroy men who try to cross the river if their minds are "chaungeable" and "oppressed with pryde." The river will swell so that these evil men cannot find the "steppyng stone" by which to walk across.

Having seen the river and learned its properties, the dreamer is eager to cross it: "Well passe this game I trust we shall in haste"(203). Interpreting this as a motion of pride, Morpheus severely counsels the persona:

Be not flowyshe but arme you with reason  
 How ye shall gete ouer in mynde afore well caste  
 To be to forwarde ye may soone make waste  
 (204-206)

This type of advice from a figure like Morpheus is somewhat unexpected; Morpheus almost seems to be capable of the good advice which he gives the dreamer in The

Assembly of Gods and The Example of Virtue. He counsels the dreamer not to be like Phebus, not to be hasty in action. Now, of course, Phebus, the dreamer and Desire are all 'playing the same game;' they all want to win the favors of a woman. But, on the basis of this passage, Phebus is simply playing by the wrong rules. The dreamer (and thus Desire) must learn "pacyent humyltye" in order to win his desired object. Having crossed the stream armed with this new virtue which protects one against imitating Phebus' haste, the persona looks back and praises the stream:

O lowly lauer slydynge ouer the stones of  
stedfastnes  
O ryall ryuer whiche proueth perfytelv  
All proude people that delvtes in doublenes  
Thou drownest them in thy stremys rywht shortly  
Thou hast a more praysable propety  
Then euer had the well of helycon  
The mother of mekenes conserue the perpetually  
Syth thou arte the mother water of vertues  
many one

(210-217)

There are three important matters here: the well of Helicon, the laver itself and the prayer to the Virgin. By mentioning the well of Helicon, the persona draws our attention back to line 71 and Cupid's hold on mount Parnassus, where the well of Helicon is located. His reference also serves to indicate his rejection of the values of poetry in favor of "the lowly lauer,"

the "ryall ryuer." The persona consciously chooses a world in which the virtues of meekness, humility and steadfastness are directed toward the attainment of worldly beauty and in which these virtues are more important than poetic inspiration. By rejecting poetry here, the persona prepares himself for his final rejection of reading at the end of the poem.

"Lauer," glossed by Cornelius simply as "stream," has a more significant meaning. The C.E.D. gives the definition of "lauer" as "basin, washing vessel, baptismal fount." That is, to cross the river is to be washed clean of sin. Just as no one can come to the baptismal fount who is still stained with pride, so no one can cross the laver of lowliness without accepting the virtue of humility. And the persona does seem to be genuinely transformed here since the irrational haste which he displays (203) turns to patient humility (207) under the corrective gaze of Morpheus, who seems so far to support the dreamer when he is in need (145).

Finally, the persona again invokes the Virgin Mary (216-217), as he has done before in line 172 in referring to the Incarnation. He asks the Virgin, the mother of meekness to preserve the laver of lowliness, since this laver is the mother-water of many virtues. This prayer ends his four religious references in this section: in line 172, he invokes the example of the

Incarnation; in line 184, he asks that God grant that the mountain of courage will endure for a long time; in line 202, he blesses God because Morpheus and he came at a good season in which to cross the river; and lines 216-217, we have just discussed. Moving ahead a moment, all these references culminate in lines 295-297 when the dreamer, in praising the castle, says:

Therefore castell Iesu the preserue  
Lest by some pery we myght be drvuen hens  
For durynge lyfe and helthe I entende  
the to obserue.

The irony of this final prayer is that it will be precisely a "perv," a "storm" which will drive his vision from him. Thus, our persona prays improperly and ineffectually. His prayers are ludicrous. He prays to the Virgin Mary for the virtue of meekness which he will use in order to seduce women, not to further at all the cause of proper virginity or even of fruitful marriage. And he prays to Christ to protect a worldly castle of the idle jet-set who merely "dysporte" discreetly all day. The contrasts here are significant and force us to reevaluate this scene. The persona seems to be learning about patient humility and steadfastness; but no such learning is actually taking place.

The scene has an ironic tone. We remember that

the stream will rise if any one who is changeable or proud of heart tries to cross it. And we assume that the persona is stable, since he easily crosses the stones of steadfastness. But this is not the case. After seeing the two gates, the dreamer says:

I am hereby moche troubled my mynde is  
unstable  
What remedy shall I fynde to make my  
mynde stedfast

(270-271)

Though he eventually chooses what appears to be the better of the two gates, the dreamer has not become more stable in mind by crossing the river. While the dreamer seems then to be progressing through rituals which should transform him, he remains the same confused person throughout.

The next stanza begins to qualify his initial joy:

I remembered that I had redde in many a boke  
That in this place of plesure were many  
a stormy blast  
Notwith stondynge & thought all perylles  
had be past  
When I sawe of this castell the royall gates  
Yet afore I knewe that pleasour coude not last  
There as dysdayne is in fauour with estates

(220-225)

The reference here to the stormy blast foreshadows line 296 (already quoted) and the real physical storm which ends the vision. The thought of the storm troubles the dreamer, and he retreats in the next line from this

unpleasant idea, hoping that all perils have been past. (This apparently refers to the river crossing.) Then he reminds himself that pleasure cannot last if Disdain has favor with the "estates." "Pleasure" here apparently means the joy of winning the woman of your choice: love and/or marriage out of affection and not from parental planning. The power of Disdain here is linked to the stormy blasts which can upset the place of pleasure. Later in the poem, Disdain will cause just such an emotional storm in her heated argument with Pity. But, ironically, the real storm will occur only after Disdain leaves and when pleasure seems to be flourishing. Thus, we are led to expect that the only storms for lovers are those caused by Disdain; but the dreamer has forgotten the more serious storm, the storm which shatters all illusions.

Approaching the castle, the dreamer notices its gargoyles in the form of beasts including the greyhound, tiger, elephant, lion, griffin and unicorn.<sup>11</sup> Nevill does not elaborate enough on these animals to lead us to believe that each one can represent a quality and that the sum of these qualities in turn will form one unit. The text itself simply does not warrant or demand a firm allegorical reading of these gargoyles.

Therefore, we can do no better than to accept  
Cornelius' literal reading:

Of the "beestes" mentioned in this passage, the lion, the greyhound and the griffin were much used in heraldry. Two greyhounds had appeared as supporters upon the seal of Ralph, Earl of Westmoreland, William Nevill's great-great-grandfather...The griffin figured as a supporter to the arms of some branches of the Nevill family. The unicorn was a well-known heraldic figure. The elephant was not common, but it had come into use before Nevill's time...The heraldic tiger appeared upon several standards of the early sixteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

Cornelius also refers us to two passages in The Pastime of Pleasure. Grande Amoure describes his first vision of the tower of doctrine:

Than to the toure/I drewe nere and nere  
And often mused/of the grete hyghnes  
Of the craggy rocke/whiche quadrant dyde appere  
But the fayre toure/so moche of rychesse  
Was all about/sexangled doubtles  
Gargeylde with grehoundes/and with many lyons  
Made of fyne golde/with dyuers sundry dragons  
(358-364)

The phrase "dyuers sundry dragons" indicates that these forms are primarily decorative, imitative of the lavish decorations of late medieval castles. Grande Amoure also describes the tower of chivalry:

Towarde this toure as I rode nere and nere  
I behelde the rocke of merueylous altvtyde  
On which it stode that quadraunte dyde appere  
Made all of stele of wonderous fortytude  
Gargeylde with beestes in sundry svmylytude  
And many turrets above the toures hve  
With ymages was sette full meruaylouslye  
(2955-2961)



Again, the beasts are assumed as decoration. But unlike Hawes, Nevill does use these animals as more than mere decoration. For Nevill has the persona project himself into the animals which he describes. For instance the tiger, like Cupid, is tyrannous; the lion, like lovers (289), is fiery. Most important are the elephant and the unicorne. The elephant bears a castle on his back. Is Nevill possibly suggesting that this mirrors the dreamer's condition?; for the dreamer himself is burdened with a castle of lust in his dream fantasies. The unicorne makes low moans and is also "desolate of lyuely creature." Lines 220-221, 224-225, 270-273 and 386-393 can all be regarded as low moaning; and in line 277, the dreamer complains that he is a "man alone."

In lines 234-297, the dreamer confronts two scriptures inscribed over two gates. The gate adorned with the gold scripture leads men to dancing, singing, worldly wealth, honor and riches; the one of india blue is for men who set their pleasure and delight in conjoining their fervent hearts steadfastly, in the love of Beauty, to a very white blossom(250-252) - they will thus attain to the high estate of Beauty. The gold gate leads to pleasure and wealth; the india blue gate induces men to be amiable(268-269). Comparing

his decision about which gate to choose to Hercules' decision between pleasure and virtue, the persona finds himself unable to decide; in line 272, he tries to conform himself to reason and finally decides that, since the golden scripture has damned the eyes of many men, he will choose the gate of love which lasts when all riches are gone. He chooses the way of beauty and ends by praising the castle.

The basic distinction between the two gates is the one which we found in the Prologue: the men of worldly wealth versus the noble, amiable ones who seek to serve Beauty. And here again, the apparent distinction breaks down because the example of Hercules, here used to gloss the persona's decision, does not really demonstrate what the persona thinks it does. The persona has misread another book which he has been reading, as he has already misread his Ovid.

Hercules' choice may be best illuminated by referring to Sebastian Brandt's The Ship of Fools, translated by Alexander Barclay and printed by Pynson in 1509. Its popularity is widely attested, and we can assume that Nevill knew it. Though The Ship of Fools is mostly a digest of moral platitudes and commonplaces, its reference to Hercules' decision to follow the way of virtue is not easily found elsewhere in medieval

literature before Brandt. In books about Hercules, such as Caxton's translation of the Recuvell of the Historves of Troye (printed in 1475), the sequence of adventures begins with the fight with the snakes in the cradle and proceeds to the twelve labors, and no mention is made of the two paths. However, (as Professor Weld has suggested), this story of the two paths becomes more commonplace by the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

The reference to Hercules in Brandt occurs in Volume II, page 287ff., in the section concerning the "stryuyngē bytwene vertue and voluptuosyte: or carnall lust." The section opens with a plea to readers:

But do thou so that vertue may subdue  
 Poule carnall lust whose pleasour is but wayne  
 Firste full of myrrh: endynge in bytter payne<sup>14</sup>

This parallels the persona's vision; it first brings him great pleasure but later, upon awakening, he sinks into sorrow. Next is related the Hercules exemplum:

Wyle Hercules lay slepvngē (as I rede)  
 Two wayes he sawe full of diffyculte  
 The one of pleasour: at ende xvuyngē no mede  
 The other of vertue auaunsynge eche degre  
 But of both these two wayes whan that he  
 Had sought the state: the ende, and the  
                 strayghtnes  
 The way he entred of vertue and goodnes<sup>15</sup>

The virtuous path which Hercules chooses is the path which avoids carnal lust and fleshly temptation. For Virtue says (page 298) that "Voluptuosyte" is "clene voyde of chastyte." Virtue, as presented here, consists of

chastity and of the search for eternal, heavenly joys (often mixed harmoniously, and with due proportion, with riches and honor.)<sup>16</sup> That is, the path of virtue which Hercules chooses is not at all the path which the persona calls the virtuous one. The path which the persona selects is a path of pleasure, desire and delight, as he himself says(250). The persona chooses the path of voluptuousness while thinking that it is virtue's path. It is obvious that this is not the way of virtue simply because it leads him to such pain and despair at the end of the poem; and only the road of sin can have this effect.

There are other passages in this Hercules section of The Ship of Fools which are relevant here. In discussing voluptuousness, Virtue says that:

And where as she can wanton youth oppres  
 She hym so rotyth in slouth and negli~~gence~~  
 That nede shall cause hym fall to all offence

Lust brakyth the mvnde; and as we often se  
 It blyndyth the vnderstondynæ and the wyt  
 From mannys hert it chasis chastyte  
 All mortall venym hath the chefe rote in it  
 None can be helyd that hath hir byt  
 But noble blode she most of all doth blynde  
 Whiche more on hir; than vertue haue theyr mvnde<sup>17</sup>

And:

By the, dull slouth doth pyteously oppres  
 The lusty bodves of many a great estate  
 Thou are destroyer of vertue and nobles  
 And youth descendvd of byrth of worthynes

When they theyr myndes to thy precept inclyne  
 To nought they varysse, so fallynge in ruyn<sup>18</sup>

Voluptuousness often afflicts the minds of young nobles with sloth. And this is exactly what is occurring in Nevill's poem. Our persona is a young nobleman, like the author himself, and is "enflamed with loves fyre" and overcome with sloth. Thus, even though he states at this point that he is choosing the path of virtue, we know that this is wrong.

The details of the description of Voluptuousness in Brandt are similar to those of the two gates. Voluptuousness (page 290) has a chapelet of gold, like the gold of the scripture over Nevill's gate of wealth and pleasure; this is of course the empty, superficial gold of worldly vanity and pomp, as Virtue says:

Shame them subdueth that them submyt to the  
 Thy beautye blyndyd is by mysrouernaunce  
 I sav nat nay, but favre thou art to see  
 And alway wrappyd in haltes of pleasaunce  
 Thy iven wanton, with wanton countenaunce  
 Thy here gyltynge or shynvngæ as golde  
 bryght

That many thousande destroyed is by thy syght<sup>19</sup>

Voluptuousness is one of the temptations which the persona thinks (but wrongly) that he has overcome by avoiding the gate with the golden scripture. (For she is "hye beautye," the goal of his search!) Also, Voluptuousness is surrounded by the color blue and thus

has one of the qualities of the other gate, which is inscribed in india blue. Let us look at this matter carefully.

Voluptuousness wears a "purple pall," wears azure stones in her hair net and smells of the odor of the violet flowers which she wears in her hair or in her bosom. These details show her to be an absolute inverse of the Virgin Mary, whose major liturgical color (outside of white, for purity) is blue. Many sources testify to this commonplace. Ferguson says that blue is the "traditional color of the Virgin"<sup>20</sup> and refers us to the following renaissance paintings which show the Virgin draped in blue: The Annunciation<sup>21</sup> by the Master of the Barberini panels; The Adoration of the Magi<sup>22</sup> by Fra Angelica and Fra Filippo Lippi; Madonna and Child in the Enclosed Garden<sup>23</sup> by the Master of Flemalle; and The Assumption of the Virgin with St. Jerome and St. Francis<sup>24</sup> by Andrea di Giusto. Second, in Dante's Paradiso, Canto XXIII, the Virgin Mary is seen as a blue sapphire and functions as a representation of the place of the Incarnation. Third, Father Egan has pointed out that blue can be the symbol of heavenly contemplation, divine truth, constancy, fidelity, loyalty, honor, virtue, hope and especially constancy and fidelity in love (either

secular or divine); he concurs that blue is also the color of the Virgin.<sup>25</sup> Fourth, the Cursor Mundi, in discussing the Virgin Mary as a mountain and castle into which Christ came, says of the battlements:

Þe toþer heu neist for to find  
 Es al o bleu, men cald Ind,  
 Þe midward heu es þat I mene,  
 To sight it es ful selcut scene.

Þe midward heu þat es of Ind,  
 It es naman mai fairer find  
 Þat es taking of al sothfast,  
 O tendernes and truth stedfast.  
 Sco served in vr laurd driht  
 In mikenes suet, bath dai and night.

(9919-9922, 9991-9996)

Here we have the specific reference to India blue as an emblem of the Virgin's steadfastness. In our poem, steadfastness is taken to be one of the qualities of those who enter under the India blue gate (line 251), although this steadfastness devoted to a worldly object of beauty only has the reality of a fading dream in contrast to the real steadfastness of a virtuous soul for Christ.

The azure stone which Voluptuousness wears is light purplish blue in color. Father Egan states that the azure implied eternal fidelity, this interpretation being based in part on Walter's gift of a gold and azure ring to Griselda for a wedding gift in The Clerk's Tale.<sup>26</sup> As an inverse, Voluptuousness never intends

marital fidelity at all. And the violet flower which she wears also has further implications. Ferguson states that the violet is a symbol of humility and that Bernard called Mary the "violet of humility."<sup>27</sup> As Virtue says of her, Voluptuousness is the opposite of humility: "In the is pryde."<sup>28</sup> And Virtue finally states that all this gold and purple adds up to worldly vanity:

Thy purpyll garlandes couchyd with precious  
stone  
Pure and resplendaunt is all thy apparayle  
Aleyd gayly with perles many a one  
Of purpyll colour of Tyre is thy mantayle  
With precious stones beset as thvycke as havle  
Thy gyrdyls gay, and rynges pleasaunt to se  
But what is this; but worldly vanyte<sup>29</sup>

Thus Voluptuousness is a combination of the gold and India blue gates, both colors being understood in their perverse sense: gold symbolizing unworthiness and superficiality; and blue symbolizing fidelity to a object of Fortune. The choice which the persona makes is inconsequential. Both ways lead to sorrow and enslavement in this world.

Finally, in relation to the Hercules reference, Voluptuousness or Lust introduces herself this way in Brandt:

Lo gorgays galantis; lo galantis here am I  
Lo here fayre lust; full enmy to vertue  
Clothyd in laurer; in sygne of victory  
The large worlde I hole to my subdue  
My stremynge standardes alayd with sundry hewe



In tryumphe shynyth bryghter than the sonne  
I all the worlds to my Empyre haue wonne<sup>30</sup>

Here Virtue is clothed in laurel, which we have already seen used as an emblem of perpetual chastity. Thus, by referring to Hercules, the poet again brings our attention to chastity and its values as opposed to lust. The dreamer misunderstands completely the Hercules example and the choice which he has to make. And he once again overlooks the importance of the laurel.

Believing however that he has made a wise decision, the persona praises the castle:

This castell then praysed I enflamed with  
loues fyre.  
O precyous palays of pryncely pulchrvtude  
Walled with admanten whiche draweth by violence  
Accordynge to thy power and thy stones fortitude  
All thynge of yron/so this castell by influence  
Draweth to hym hertes as I sawe & dyd prepeuce  
Therefore castell Iesu the preserue  
Lest by some pery we myght be dryuen hens  
For duryng lyfe and helthe I enterde the  
to obserue.

(289-297)

The persona's present state of being, "enflamed with loues fyre," casts doubt on the reliability of his earlier claims to being rational ("I wyll endeuer me to reason to be conformable"(272) and "my mynde thus establysshed"(282), since a mind enflamed with love's fire (lust) is not controlled by reason and does not perceive good with the eye of reason. His resolve to

use reason, then, is really a resolve to put his reason at the service of his lust. While he intends to conform himself to reason, he never overcomes his lust. In his praise of the castle, the persona's view of it is the same as his view of the waters of lowliness; he asks Christ to preserve this castle as he earlier asked the Virgin Mary to preserve the stream. Both requests are inappropriate. Christ will never protect a castle devoted to the preservation and seduction of worldly Beauty. But by asking Jesus to preserve his vision, the persona has shown that his faith is shallow and self-regarding and thus can easily fail him in need. And this is exactly what happens at the end of the poem; after the vision has faded, the persona curses all as vanity and finds no solace in Christ at all, though he has invoked both Him and his mother throughout the poem.

## 111

Scene III (298-481) describes the final approach of the dreamer to the castle, his entrance through the castle gate and his positioning of himself to hear the plea which Desire will make to Beauty. In

lines 298-321, the dreamer meets Comfort who conducts him eventually to Kindness. Comfort tells the dreamer what he will find in the castle:

Ye shall se here she sayd many goodly pastymes  
 Ye shall haue such Ioye as ofte hath not be  
     sene  
 As lutyng dauncynge balades and rymes  
 Synnyng ppyngge ye shall se at sondry tymes  
 All maner of gamynge ye shall se excercysed  
 And upon all quarelles troubles and crymes  
 Ryght slempne Iustes be here oft enterprysed  
 (307-313)

All this corresponds to the rewards of the path under the golden scripture which applies to those who "lyst be lusty lepe daunce and synne"(244). This is the garden of pleasure which the dreamer claims he has rejected in favor of "virtue." In line 315, we find references to the "hall" and to "beaute" which again seem to suggest the pleasure-virtue dichotomy. But the joys described in the stanza just quoted apply to both paths, and Comfort implies that this is true. Comfort then does what her name implies: by promising him sensual pleasures, she comforts the dreamer, who is in haste to talk to Desire and to see Beauty.

Like Dame Idleness at the beginning of The Romance of the Rose, Comfort is the gate keeper to the first court-yard of the castle (332). Having to return to her gate, Comfort turns the dreamer over to Kindness,

who quickly notices that he is "enflamed with loues fyre"(326) and is in haste(345). When Comfort leaves, the persona sorrows:

For sorowe wherof I was in maner dumme  
I was so mased...

(333-334)

This shows his unstableness of mind and his fear of being left alone, two of his major psychological qualities.

In lines 338ff., the dreamer tells Kindness that Morpheus had helped him over many jeopardies in order to get to the castle and that Fantasy had moved him "to come into these partyes"(338). The dreamer then describes the "gardyn of affeccyon" as a "paradyse delycate and delycous"(352). This garden is environed with stones: emeralds, diamonds, amethysts, sapphires and turquoises. Line 351 seems to indicate that this may just be a list of precious stones: "With many other stones I lacke connynge them to shewe," and the text itself discourages one from attaching symbolic meanings to the stones because of the brevity with which they are mentioned. But, on looking closer, some patterns emerge. First, as Cornelius points out, the "stedfast Saphyr" is glossed by Trevisa as representing a heart which was "stedfast in goodnes."<sup>31</sup> Here we are reminded

that the Virgin Mary appears as a sapphire. And the blue of the sapphire implies steadfastness. This blue sapphire is flanked in the list by the blue-violet amethyst and the blue turquoise. This prevalence of blue recalls the india blue scripture under which the persona passed in order to arrive at this garden of blue gems. If there is any richness in meaning to be ascribed to these gems beyond the references to blue, it is to be found only in extra-textual inference and thus can only be suggested as a meaning which is far from certain. I include the following interpretation merely as a suggestion.

In the Reductorium morale, Berchorius states the ideal character of each gem; this gem-characteristic describes the gem's properties as they relate to the 'real' world of Christ and virtuous men. Here again, as in the gloss of the Phebus-Daphne story, the persona is blind to the significance of the stones. About emeralds, Berchorius states:

Smaragdus est vir perfectus qui pro certo debet habere virorem honestatis...Vel per istum lapidem qui per ceteris virescunt intelligo puritatem nature angelice...Smaragdus est beata virgo propter virorem sue honeste conversationis; vel etiam qui libet vir perfectus;  
 qui pro certo suis verbis et exemplis visum aliorum recreat et delectat et in eis vitium luxurie refrenat.<sup>32</sup>

This helps to explain why emeralds give a "free proteccyon" to the garden: they restrain the sin of luxurie and provide a good example - they stand for the Virgin and for good men. The "percynge dyamonde" for Berchorius is also an emblem of the Virgin as well as a protection against undue concern with worldly vanities:

Talis est beata virgo que fuit parua firma  
 et stabilis atque fortis...Item valet contra  
 incubos, 1 contra luxuriam et contra phantasmata  
 et somnia contra mundi vanam prosperitatem  
 qui pro certo beata virgo adiuuat et supportat  
 hominem sibi deuotum ne ledatur vitiiis  
 supradictis. 33

Here dreams, lust and vain worldly prosperity are all linked; what a perfect description of the subject matter of Nevill's poem - a dream of lustful desire in which worldly goods and wealth are of prime concern in the seduction. Nevill's "amatiste amorous" is also glossed by Berchorius as a stone of love, but here of heavenly love:

Iste lapis significat charitatem que flammam bonorum exemplorum emittit et inter virtutes obtinet principatum...Numquam est amor dei otiosus. Vel potest dici de abstinentia et sobrietate que ebrietati et rulse resistere comprobatur; et hominem etiam vigilem efficit et somnolentiam repellit. 34

Caritas, instead of amor, is the true meaning of the amethyst. And since Nevill says that these stones form a "paradyse delycate," it is appropriate to note

that Berchorius refers to the amethyst's occurrence in  
Apocalypse XXI:

Iste lapis numerat in edificio noue hierusalem;  
qui vere boni habent esse de civitate superna  
paradisi.<sup>35</sup>

Nevill may have chosen his stones carefully. Finally,  
in regard to the sapphire, Berchorius strengthens our  
understanding of it by stating about Canticles VIII  
that:

Carbunculus est christus propter ardorem  
charitatis;  
saphirus est beata virgo.<sup>36</sup>

Again, the stone refers to the Virgin and the incarnation.  
If these citations from Berchorius show the spiritual  
meaning of the gems, then Nevill is using them all in  
their inverse meaning pointing to a worldly paradise  
of sensual love, instead of to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Having arrived at the garden, Kindness now gives  
the dreamer over into the care of Fantasy.<sup>37</sup> At this  
point, the dreamer has taken up one more characteristic  
of the frustrated lover; for "his colour is pale and  
wanne"(368). After Fantasy and Kindness mutually  
charge each other to attend to their respective duties,  
Kindness leaves but her power remains behind:

Kyndnes departed yet her power was present  
Always with fantasy enclosed in her herte  
(378-379)

Thus Fantasy retains the quality of Kindness "in her herte;" the power of Fantasy-Kindness will prevail in this dream as it did not in the Phebus-Daphne story which helped to initiate the dream. (This is parallel to The Romance of the Rose in which Cupid's "comforts" to the dreamer are "Sweet Thought," "Sweet Speech" and "Sweet Sight.") As soon as Fantasy and the dreamer leap through the gate into the garden, however, the dreamer becomes nervous and upset:

When I sawe me enclosed about with a couerte  
 Set full of myrt trees the apple tre appered  
     playne  
 Of pyrazus and Thysbe dystroyed by loues darte  
 Whiche made me ofte to wysse that I were  
     out awayne

Alas quod I what sodayne aduenture  
 I se this worlde is but uncertayne  
 I was late Ioyus as euer was creature  
 And now I folysshly have locked me in loues  
     chayne  
 I wene I be in laborinthus where mynotaurus  
     dyd remayne  
 A blynde Cypyde is this thy zuerdon  
 Makest thou folkes blynde doest thou so  
     entertayne  
 Suche louers as sewe to the for theyr padon.  
     (382-393)

The persona now fears that he is going to suffer the pains of lovers. According to Ferguson, the myrtle can be a symbol of love and therefore sacred to Venus.<sup>38</sup> It is thus a fitting tree to introduce this section on lovers and Venus' power. The dreamer then notices the



apple tree of Pyramus and Thisbe; but the tree in the Pyramus and Thisbe story is really a mulberry tree, as related in Ovid and the medieval mythographers. Assuming then that this is not just a careless error of Nevill's or of the printer, the apple tree may have added significance; as an emblem of the fall, the eating of the apple (malum) was the occasion of man's fall into sin (malum). By using this tree instead of the traditional mulberry, Nevill implies that the love of Pyramus and Thisbe may be an analogue to the fall of man, insofar as any sinful act recreates the fall in the individual sinner. Here, lust not tamed by marriage often leads to tragedy. At any rate, the sorrow of love's chain is also described by Caxton in his rendering of the tale when he says that the mulberry tree was a "tree of sorowe, of hevyness of mortal dolour."<sup>39</sup> The sorrow of this story reflects the sorrow of the Phebus-Daphne fable and serves as a comment on the dream itself; men can be destroyed by "loues darte." Lines 386-393 quoted above show the highest self-consciousness of the dreamer so far. He sees that he has foolishly locked himself in "loues chayne."<sup>40</sup>

Nevill has his persona state sorrowfully that, in getting himself in this state, he had forgotten two things: first, a poem of Alayn and second the verses of

Virgil:

I had forgotten the proces of alayne  
 I nothynke regarded the verses of vvrøvll  
 Whiche sayth to hyde colours is but vayne  
 The worst colour ofte taken the favrer abvdes styll  
 For these that be fayr ofte chaunge thevr wvll  
 (394-398)

Miss Cornelius is undoubtedly right in stating that these refer to Alain Chartier's La Belle Dame Sans Merci, already mentioned, and the Aeneid, Book II, lines 392ff..<sup>41</sup> when Coroebus urges the Trojans to change armor; they do this, rescue Cassandra and then are recognized by Ajax and his Greeks who force them to retreat to another part of burning Troy. To the persona, the Virgil excerpt proves that:

Al thynge as they shewe is not in substance  
 Which I perceyued now hath done me moche vll  
 (399-400)

What the persona is saying here is that the appearance of a thing is often different from its reality. That is, the garden which at first looked like a real paradise (because of the gems) has now proven to be a place of sorrowful, enchained lovers. And, by forgetting Chartier's poem, the persona has forgotten for a moment that frustrated lovers often die.

But the real cause of his sorrow is that he fears that he will not be entertained by the "pastymes" of luting and singing which he believes Comfort has

promised him. The persona thinks that he will be denied these sensual joys and that he is in a place of pain and has thus been misled. As an antidote, Fantasy states some conventional wisdom:

Doubte ye not but ye shall se thynges pleasaunte  
 If ye wyll be content to forbere a lytell space  
 For conforte aboute no man contynually is  
     attendaunte  
 None earthly creature shall styll stande in  
     her grace  
 Ioye reconcvled after anzre she foloweth apace  
 After a grete pery the wether semeth more clere  
 There is no man that hath ben in wofull case  
 But after that prosperyte is to hym more dere.

None erthly pleasure maye be atteyned without  
 payne

(410-418)

These maxims are expected to comfort the dreamer.

(The basic irony here is in line 415; for after the storm at the end, the weather does not clear. The wisdom which Fantasy gives then, in terms of the poem itself, is false. And, more specifically, the dreamer himself is in a storm of pain and sorrow at this present moment.) Having stated these superficial maxims, Fantasy then gives an exemplum to prove them: the Hippomenes-Atalanta story(419-445). Just as the Phebus-Daphne fable served to introduce the subject of the dream vision, so this Ovidian fable serves as Fantasy's introduction to the successful pleas of Desire for Beauty's favors; in itself, it is like the Phebus-Daphne story - an analogue of

Desire seeking Beauty. After narrating the fable, Fantasy glosses it:

Suche was his fortune by his wete boldnes  
 Though it were to his payne yet it wate  
 hym pleasure  
 For Venus in conclusyon doeth bolde louers redres  
 As ye may se dayly in ure  
 (442-445)

Fantasy can draw this fatuously optimistic conclusion because she has failed to "turn the page" and thus discover that Atalanta and Hippomenes are finally transformed into beasts. In the Argumenta Metamorphoseon Ouidii: Narrationes Fabularum, Lactantius states that the sin of the lovers was ingratitude to Venus and the performance of a sacriligious act in a temple; in light of the prophecies, Atalanta should have remained a virgin:

Atalante Schoenei filia, cum de conuizio sciscitata esset, et monita ut nulli jungeretur, quia omnium virginum perniciosissima erat, petentibus prociis leuam proposuit, eius conjugem futuram, qui se cursu pedum antecisisset, victo autem necem statuit. Quam cum Hippomenes Meareti filius ex progenie Neptuni intenso amore diligeret nec morem certaminis expavesceret, Venerem in malis habuit auxilio. Nam ex Amaseno agro, qui est in insula Cypro, ei tria mala aurea donauit, ut in cursu projiceret virginis futurum enim, ut cupiditate eius tardaretur impetus, ea dum peteret. Cuius monitis Hippomenes consecutus victoriam, postea ingratus aduersus deam cognitus est. Itaque impulsu eiusdem deae, matris deum lucum dum transgrediuntur, quem Echion terrae filius sacraverat, non tenuerunt cupiditatem qui in aduersus religionem in sacrato

concupuere solo. Quam ob causam ā dea in  
leones sunt conversi; unde deum matri  
ex illo leones sunt subjecti.<sup>42</sup>

Though Hippomenes "gate her to be his worldly make"  
(441), his and Atalanta's happiness was short-lived.  
When read through to its end, the fable cannot be  
interpreted optimistically.

Caxton also gives the fable a gloss which differs  
from that of Fantasy; Atalanta signifies the "delytes  
of the world chaungeable which allway flee without  
beynge ferme and faste. And they destroye them self  
that must put hem self to payne]trauayll to rete]haue  
it." Caxton goes on to describe this kind of person:  
"There is none that can so fast renne for to reteyne  
her, that may come and reteyne her in parfayt loye."  
These men who run after vain worldly joys finally  
"abandonne theyre goodes and theyre hertes to alle  
Inyquytes."<sup>43</sup> The Atalanta story describes men who  
engross themselves in worldly delights.<sup>44</sup>

Fantasy has misled the dreamer by implying that  
a painful life will eventually be transformed into a  
pleasureful one if a man has "feruent stedfastness"  
as did Hippomenes. The dreamer seems to forget his  
former woe because of Fantasy's promises, and he and  
Fantasy come to a garden of flowers. The rose, the

basic symbol for the object of love, presides over the flowers and is "moste in value." Next, the persona sees the marygold, the narcissus and the hiacynth. The stories of these flowers are presented in a series of one-or two-line condensations. Like the two major frame stories of Phebus-Daphne and Hippomenes-Atalanta, the fables of these three flowers are found in the Metamorphoses. The marygold and the hiacynth are flowers formed from two dead lovers of Phebus, and they structurally bracket the reference to Narcissus. The garden then is a memorial for dead lovers, like Daphne and Pyramus and Thisbe. But having been influenced by Fantasy's interpretation of the Atalanta fable, the dreamer finds this garden of dead lovers very pleasant: "This som thynge pulles up my herte & encreseth my confort" (458).

Caxton interprets the flowers in a way which reveals the blindness of the dreamer to the immediate issue. Caxton glosses Clytie, the marigold, as a "flour of loue," reflecting the sorrow of her death caused by the lack of Apollo's love.<sup>45</sup> The hiacynth, says Caxton, is "a flour in which is written Phebus' sorrow;" it is a "purple flour fayre;" and "in this flour was founden writon an intercession of sorowe."<sup>46</sup> These two stories of love, sorrow and death frame the

Narcissus fable, about which Caxton remarks:

Narcissus for his beaute was proude in  
so moche that in alle the world he þought and  
supposed he had none lyke to hym... And he  
beheld so much his vayne beaute that his  
death came to hym thereby and became a  
floure such as the psalmvste speketh that  
in the mornynge it flouryssheth and in þe  
euenynge it falleth and fadeth. How soone  
is come to noughte the vayn beaute of the  
peple. He is attrete foole for this  
beaute soone passeth leseth the Iove  
pardurable and seeth hym self in the derke  
peyne of helle.<sup>47</sup>

This fable is the archetype of Desire's search for Beauty and demonstrates that this garden, which honors Narcissus and his attachment to worldly beauty, can only be a place of sorrow and spiritual death. When Caxton says of Narcissus that "he þought and supposed that he hadde none lyke to hym... And he beheld so much his vayne beaute that his death came to hym thereby," he mirrors the traditional gloss of Narcissus as an emblem of amor sui (an interpretation used later by Ben Jonson in Cynthia's Revels I, 11, 89, when Echo calls Narcissus' pool the "Fountayne of selfe-Love.")<sup>48</sup> The passion of the persona and Desire also has its source in amor sui. Consequently, line 458, quoted above, demonstrates precisely the wrong response to what the dreamer has just seen and reflects his confused state of mind.

Having shown the dreamer the garden of flowers, Fantasy leads him to Eloquence who is found at the well of Helicon(463). In the next stanza(466-473), we learn that Eloquence is the servant of Beauty and that she knows of Desire's plea. Eloquence then leads the dreamer to an arbor where they can listen to Desire's plea but can see nothing, since the branches are bent tightly together. Thus the power of poetry, the well of Helicon, is now controlled and used by Venus' court; for Eloquence represents the rhetorical power of Desire's plea. As Cupid ascended the mountain of Parnassus at the beginning and as the dreamer praised the laver of lowliness above the well of Helicon, so now Helicon's powers have been diverted into the service of amor.



## iv

Scene IV(482-585) begins with Fantasy's appeal to Beauty to hear the plea of Desire who is now in deep grief. Beauty tells Fantasy that Credence and Eloquence must be summoned before she will hear Desire's plea "lest there happeth some offence." This implies that there are unstated rules of propriety for this plea which must be observed: the plea must follow certain rhetorical forms (Eloquence), and it must be genuine and true (Credence). These two forces act as a protective device against unjust pleas and preserve the dignity of Beauty, as Disdain says:

Quod dysdayne it is mete my lady haue preemyrens  
Lyke as becometh her estate and noblenes  
(496-497)

Disdain is interested in preserving respect for Beauty's social status. No country fellows or lowly people will be permitted to win Beauty. In spite of (or because of) this careful preparation, Desire's impatience causes him to act precipitously. Thinking that Fantasy delays too long in summoning Credence and Eloquence, Desire says that he fears failure because of Disdain(503-505); as he impatiently begins his advance, Disdain gives a warning cry:

Lo quod dysdayne se ye this sodayne chaunce  
Here is desyre what sodeyn smoke caused this  
Drawe the trauers quod Beaute let us here  
this utteraunce  
He entred and kneled downe and spake nothynge  
amyssse

(510-513)

By drawing open the curtain, Beauty, unlike the excitable Disdain, shows her willingness to hear Desire.

Desire then makes his plea: Beauty, you have your power under the auspices of Venus, and you control all lovers who wish to gather flowers in your garden; Cupid has "bewrapped myne herte so sore" that no earthly comfort remains in me; I cannot sleep and am very troubled; Cupid has hit me with a golden dart that pierced to my heart's root, and I have cried out to him; your Beauty is the cause of my pain, and I trust that your Pity may restore my health; therefore Beauty, please cure my woe. Desire ends his conventional plea with a reference to his lack of wealth and connects this lack to the need for Pity:

No worldly ryches to you I can promyse  
 Moste I can saye is that ye shall be my moste  
 conforte  
 But god which to al folkes after theyr merites  
 can deuysse  
 Rewarde or punishment moste esally he doeth  
 sorte  
 He is the lorde of pyte Iusques a la mort  
 Gyue you rewarde and preserue you at all houres  
 Of perfyte loue he bereth a pryncy porte  
 And to encrease my loye I aske no more but yours  
 (554-561)

Lacking money, the appeal for Pity becomes even more poignant (hilarious?) than it would usually be. He throws himself before Beauty as might a soul before his God, devoid of any worldly things which could help his plea.

The lover's redemption is based on the pity of the judge, the beloved. Therefore, in Scene V, Pity (that love in the lady which might seek to heal the lover's wound) will speak in Desire's behalf. Desire himself has said all he can say: "to encrease my love I aske no more but yours."

Disdain is quick to chastize Desire. She calls him a "proude presumptuous person" and predicts that his pride will have a fall(562-569). Disdain implies that Desire should have more respect for Beauty and that he will be put in his place along with other presumptuous lovers. Desire, just feeling the couraze of adventure, is astonished by this "sodayne rebuke" and humbly admits that he has been presumptuous but that he has trusted Hope and Fantasy and that they are really to blame(570-577). Perceiving that Disdain will never permit him to attain Beauty, Desire calls "hertly" out to Pity; "to dysdayne in open audyence then spake pyte"(585). Taking over the defense of Desire, Pity engages in a debate with Disdain, comprising Scene V(586-753).

C H A P T E R VI  
THE BODY: SCENES v-viii

v

Lines 586-614 are a prelude to the formal debate. Pity answers Disdain's "sodayne rebuke" by saying that Desire has spoken no "ungodly wordes" in the presence of Beauty and that he has not displayed any pride. To counter this, Disdain switches the blame which she had originally placed on desire to the "fyrst brynners," Comfort and Kindness(596). Having evaded Pity's argument, Disdain asks what the rules for the debate will be: "I wyll fyrst know your rule/what wote ye where ye be." Pity states elaborately that Beauty will weigh the reasons which each of them will put forth(602-609); the purpose of the "argument" will be to search out Desire's "true entent." Like Pity, Disdain also refers to Beauty as "my lady"(604,610) and agrees to submit to her judgment. Disdain pridefully emphasizes her feudal relationship to Beauty by stating that she owes no obligations to Pity: "But I owe to you no seruyce I holde of you no landes"(612). Disdain here reveals her social snobbery and consciousness of money; she believes that human relationships should be dominated and ordered by property and rank.

Having insulted Pity, Disdain states the first formal point of the debate: Desire has approached Beauty "without leue" and has therefore committed a "grete offence"(615-617). Pity replies that Desire intended no "dyspleasure," that he has ordered himself "by measure" and that he has not offended Beauty(618-625). Since Desire was not seeking "golde ne treasure," and since Cupid had constrained his heart ("his courage") to make haste, Desire did not ask permission to approach Beauty. The basis for this argument parallels the distinction already noted in the Prologue between the two classes of men: the greedy men and the lovers. Since Disdain has already revealed her respect for property rights, Pity emphasizes that Desire has sought Beauty for love and not for money.

Refusing to acknowledge the rebuttal of Pity, Disdain states her second objection: Desire should go to Venus if Cupid has caused his pain; he should not come to Beauty at all (626-633). Disdain in no way mocks or condemns the cult of Venus; for she calls Venus an "excellent goddesse." Nor does Disdain object unconditionally to her lady being loved. She merely demands that certain rules be adhered to in order to prevent the chaos which might occur if wealthy women were deluged by requests of love from men poorer than they.

Against Disdain, Pity makes three points.

Desire is to be commended because he approached Beauty directly and did not try to "compass" her "by more crafty wayes." "Compass" here means "to attain by crafty means;" the M.E.D. cites this use as common from 1351. Second, Desire has a "good courage" and thus dared to speak openly. Third, his "feruent loue" caused him to tell the truth regardless of consequences.

The next stanza(642-649) seems complicated at first. Since the stanza is headed by the rubric "dysdayne," we assume that it is all spoken by Disdain. But this is not true. Just as the persona speaks in a section which is headed by the rubric "Morpheus"(144-145) and just as Morpheus and the dreamer both speak in the same stanza without the guide of clear punctuation or rubric(203-205), so here needed punctuation is lacking. At the beginning of the stanza, Disdain casts sarcastic insults on Desire's fervent love:

Wene ye he be so feruente nay I waraunt you  
 he shall  
 Yf neuer more trouble came to his herte.  
 (642-643)

Since the next two lines defend the genuineness of Desire's love, they cannot be spoken by Disdain; rather, Pity speaks here:

Wene ye without cause he wolde to her loue gyue

Not knowynge her mynde to make hym so to smerte  
(644-645)

To refute this, Disdain accuses Desire either of deception and of feigned love or of being a victim of Cupid, an alternative which she does not disparage:

He can well ynoughe fayne loue Cuyde layde aparte  
De arte amandi whiche techeth one to loue  
Or els the squyer of venus dyd hym in the  
euenynge starte  
And so to cast his fantasy hym sodaynly dyd moeue  
(646-649)

As Professor Huppé has suggested, "aparte," being a variant spelling of "apert," means "exposed to view, open or public." The M.E.D. records this use from 1393. The phrase does not mean "laid aside." By reading Ovid's Ars amatoria, here loosely paraphrased as "de arte amandi," one can learn the techniques with which to feign the arts of love and may thus be successful in winning the love of a wealthy woman. The association between feigned love and Ovid's poem should be remembered, since the persona quotes from this work in the Conclusion.

Perceiving that Disdain fears that Desire is feigning his love and that Disdain will possibly accept an argument based on Cupid's power, Pity assures Disdain that Desire has not feigned his love: "He is not crystened that can suche countynauce fayne"(651). She then recounts the Ovidian fable of Jupiter and Danae as proof that Desire is being compelled by Cupid:

Iupyer whiche had subdued many to his empyre  
 As sodaynly with loue Cupyde dyd hym retayne  
 And whan he to danaes in a golden shoure dyde  
 complayne

His grefe considered and well known for a trothe  
 She graunted hym loue and caused hym to remayne  
 What wyll ye haue farther than sure promyse  
 and othe

(652-657)

Fity states that Cupid forced Jupiter to love the girl and that she granted him love because of his grief and his complaint, both of which were believed to be sincere. Thus, "promyse and othe" assure the genuineness of the plea. While this appears to be a harmless argument, Fity has chosen the wrong Ovidian fable to prove her point. The reference in Ovid's Metamorphoses is just a passing comparison: Acrisius denies that Bacchus is a son of Jove just as he also denies that Perseus is the son of the union of Jupiter and Danae (Book IV, 610ff.). There is here no mention of Cupid and no plea of Jupiter; it is just a conventional tale of Jupiter rapin~~g~~ a girl, with Juno's anger following in due course. Fity has embellished a story of rape so that it appears to prove the genuineness and reliability of promises and oaths. Caxton finds a kernel of meaning in the story, a kernel of which Fity is not aware. Caxton relates the story in this way:

Acrisyus had a ryght fair daughter courtoise  
 & wyse. there was none fairer in alle  
 Grece. This damoysele was named Danes.  
 her fader dyde doo enclose her in a tour for  
 to be kept...she sholde not be corrupte of



any man by prayer ne by yefte ne by force.  
 Jupyter loued meruailously the fayre Danes.  
 And seyde that lytel sholde he prevse hys  
 devte hys wytt ne his rychesse yf he myght  
 not have his wylle of her. Then Jupyter  
 made redy hys Ayer and transformed hym  
 in to rayne of golde And entred in to the  
 tour wher as the mayde was shette in wher  
 as the yatte was closed ¶ no wyndowe And ther  
 this god discovered hymself to the mayde And  
 Joyned wyth her carnally.<sup>1</sup>

He then glosses the meaning of the fable in his "sens hystorval"  
 section:

Jupyter for tacomplysshe his desyre of the  
 mayde was so largely of hys ryche tresoure  
 to them that kepte the toure and the keyes  
 therof that for the yestes and rycesses they  
 suffred hym to entre in to the tour wher dane  
 was. and lete hym have tyme and layzer to go  
 and speke to the mayde. to whom he dyde  
 so moche what by hys grete yestes and his  
 fair speche ¶ humble requeste. that he had  
 of her hys wylle ¶ playsyr. This fayre Danes  
 conceued of Jupiter whyche thynge myghte  
 not be long hyde...it is labour lost for  
 to shette and close up man and that it is  
 nothyng so strongly shette up but that a ryche  
 man may for ryches ¶ goods have it..as fer  
 as he be large of yestes.of honour and humble  
 in his requeste.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike Pity, Caxton does not mention Cupid; rather Caxton  
 states that any rich man can overcome any maiden, whose  
 father has enclosed her to protect her virginity, by riches,  
 gifts, fair speech and humble request. The story relates  
 the yielding of a girl to carnal pleasure because of a  
 desire for wealth. No "oaths" or "promises" are mentioned  
 here. Thus Pity uses a story which she thinks describes the

way the "gentil" men of the Prologue operate, while she is really using one which describes the greedy women who accommodate lusty men:

But loue of golde/these dayes blvndeth the syght  
Of men and women/hauynge theyr delyte  
Onely for mede to do theyr appetyte.  
(33-35)

Through this story, the two groups again are reduced to one group; a lover can seduce his woman by appealing to her greed. Neither Pity nor Disdain understand the meaning of this fable; Nevill has used this fable in order to alert the reader to the superficiality of Pity's understanding and the falseness of her arguments as well as to the deficiencies of Disdain's powers of perception.<sup>3</sup>

Disdain replies that oaths and promises are nothing but wind and refers to Paris' betrayal of Enone, after he had promised to marry her(658-665). Pity counters by claiming that Desire's actions, unlike the poverty-stricken Paris, will follow his words. Appealing to the standard of Love, Disdain then accuses Desire of laboring for riches:

Perchaunce that was more for ryches than for loue  
Or bycause of her prete parentage he dyd to her sewe  
So many one hath done as by experyence I can proue  
Whiche appereth so euedently that I need no  
exemples shewe  
Mo laboreth for lucre whan a thynge is fallen newe  
Than by feruent loue to attayne hault noblenes  
Whiche causeth oft ladyes in heuy case to rewre  
And be more ware to whome they theyr myndes  
expresse

(674-681)

Disdain does not condemn ideal "feruent loue;" she questions the purity of Desire's motives, while implying that his labour may be for money. (Again, two groups of men are referred to.) Pity refutes the argument of Disdain by saying that the actions of Desire do not show any fear of shame, fear which would have been apparent if he were looking for money; his actions do not bear out Disdain's suspicions. Pity claims that Desire has acted out of "pure loue" with no monetary motives tainting his actions.

Admittinꝝ defeat, Disdain switches the debate from the subject of the purity of Desire's motives to that of the stability of his "pure loue:"

Admytte it was for loue yet many are chaunꝛeable  
 Thoughe lonꝛe it hath contynued in approved kynderes  
 Was not Iason to Medea lonꝛe agreable  
 Yet after it chaunꝛed he refused her in proces  
 What cruell herte had he whiche for her gentylnes  
 In none other wyse dyd her recompence  
 (690-695)

To this, Pity cites the history of Pyramus and Thisbe to prove that lovers can be stable. Pity's use of this fable is unconsciously ironic, since this fable has previously caused the dreamer much grief. As he enters the gate, he sees the "apple tre" of Pyramus and Thisbe who were "dystroyed by loues darte"(384). Being reminded of the pains of lovers, the dreamer wishes that he had never entered the garden. Being unlike many medieval lovers

(like Troilus) who find a perverse pleasure in their amorous suffering, the dreamer sees this story as no inducement to continue to follow love's commandments. Pity's use of the fable is inappropriate. While trying to prove the steadfastness of lovers, she succeeds rather in recalling a fable of lovers who died because they were locked in "loues chayne."

Perceiving that this method of citing fables could continue indefinitely, Disdain proceeds to the core of the argument: what sort of love is most durable?

All these hystories are not profe suffycient  
 Seth hystories of bothe partes are ryght notable  
 Therefore with these reasons I wyll not be content  
 But I wyll you put a questyon good and reportable  
 Whether loue comynge by effeccyon be more durable  
 Or loue comynge by condicyons heron shall be  
     our argument  
 Me thynke loue comynge by condicyons is lesse  
     varyable  
 How thynke ye now speke shewe your mynde & entent  
 (706-713)

As stated here, the central problem with which the rest of the debate will be concerned is whether love from affection or love from "condicyons" is more stable. Though it is implied that one type of love is preferable (just as the dreamer believed, but wrongly, that the two gates really led to two different paths), neither Pity nor Disdain reject Cupid as their lord; Disdain says of her ideal lover that:

So durably he trustes that loue wyll last

He weneth that Cuypde be so contynuall a lorde  
(744-745)

Therefore, the problem is not whether cupidinous love should be encouraged; rather, we are to decide what source of love will lead to the most stable form of cupidinous attachment. The debate is about means, not ends.

Pity defends the stability of her type of love by claiming that affectionate lovers can revive their affection after a long absence whereas lovers "by condycyons" cannot:

Loue is a conioynynge of two hertes for a season  
Thoughe perauenture they contynue not longe in a place  
Yet in their absence suche loue encreaseth a pace  
Where as yf it came by condycyons it coude not reuyue  
But yf so were they myght be in suche case  
That they myght contynue togyder all their lyue.  
(716-721)

That is, absence makes the true heart grow fonder.

Disdain refutes this plea for passionate love by saying that her lovers can overcome long absences because the "remembraunce" of their past joys while together will revive their former happiness:

Yes the remembraunce therof remayneth in memory  
And contynueth longe to theyr grete conforte  
In what frendely maner and how gently  
His loue to hym dyd at sondry tymes resorte  
Fyndynge with hym goodly pastymes and dysporte  
Hauynge no lust frome hym to dysseuer  
Me thynke of suche as are of this sorte  
Loue sholde contynue and last for euer.  
(722-729)

This is a description of an affection centered on warm companionship between equals. Disdain argues persuasively by claiming that the remembrance of these quiet joys can be just as powerful a force for the revival of love as can the sorrows of passionate lovers when separated. This is Disdain's strongest argument to this point. For the first time, her position seems very attractive; the ideal of love given here seems to be a more mature one than Pity's ideal of infatuation. Disdain's exit from the garden at the end of the vision may imply that Beauty and Desire can never attain this kind of love, even if they are married. For their marriage will never be one between equals; it will rather be one based on a servant-lady relationship.

Knowing that she cannot refute Disdain's claim, Pity states that "love by effeccyon entreth the herte more depe" and that it is therefore more stable. Disdain argues that her type of lover believes that the "condycyons" are in none other as "substancyall and stedfast" as in the woman whom he loves. This is an appeal to the "substantiality" of the "condycyons" or personal qualities of the woman and is intended to refute Pity's claim that lovers by "condycyons" are attached only to external circumstances:

Where is thoder yf one suche corne dyd repe

He wolde to her be aswell agreable.  
(736-737)

Disdain claims that the attachment to the lover's "condycyons" is just as real as the affection of the heart which Pity's lover has. Since the conditions are not merely products of Fortune's wheel, no storms can blast the love:

So that all worldly stormes can not blowe downe  
his mast  
Not Eolus yf he came with his moost stormy blast  
Nor thesiphone cōde cause betwene them dyscorde  
So durable he trustes that loue wyll last  
He weneth that Cypde be so contynual a lorde  
(741-745)

Disdain here accepts the value of stable love operating under Cupid's power. The reference to "thesiphone" recalls Chaucer's use of the "cruwel Furie" in Troilus and Criseyde. In the first two stanzas of Book I, Tisiphone is called a "goddesse of torment," and Chaucer, himself a "sorrowful instrument," asks the aid of her painful laments in helping him to help lovers to complain. But in Troilus and Criseyde, the discord which Tisiphone can bring is directly connected with the cupidity of the lovers: their pain is like that inflicted by a hellish fury. If the same argument holds for Nevill's poem, then, since the lovers praised by Disdain are under Cupid's power, they too will suffer the pains of Tisiphone. This would be true despite Disdain's confident denial that Tisiphone could cause them discord. Unknown to herself, Disdain

is inviting the pains of Tisiphone upon lovers who depend on Cupid.

Pity finally replies to Disdain that her theory of "condycyons" is simply incorrect, implying that "condycyons," as functions of external fortune, are not stable and that when they vanish, so will the love which was based upon them:

Consider the gronde and than it dyscus  
 Where the gronde fayleth can be no suraunce  
 Cessante causa cessat et effectus  
 Take awaye the condycyons where is the remembraunce  
 All is clene gone but where effeccyon doeth enhance  
 There is no change but loue perpetuall  
 No dyspleasure can dyspoynnt theyr desyred dalyaunce  
 But be entred in the boke of fame to be memoryall  
 (746-753)

The nonspecificity of "gronde" frustrates all attempts to define precisely what sort of causes could fail and thereby cause the "condycyons" and "remembraunce" to disintegrate. But I suspect that "condycyons" most probably refer to monetary wealth, youthful beauty or any number of such things. C.S. Lewis may be correct in seeing this love as dependent on "community of tastes and interests, and companionship."<sup>4</sup> Pity believes that her type of love is more stable and substantial because it comes from an affection which is not grounded on some external quality of the loved one. Disdain defends lovers who base their love on gentility, friendliness, good manners, pastimes and "dysporte" (724-726); there is no personal infatuation at the origin of their union. (Also, "loue comynge by



condycyons " does not refer to arranged marriages, since the concept of marriage is not compatible with the gist of Pity's argument in the stanza just cited: marriage, unlike a "condycyon," cannot be dissolved under normal circumstances.)

After Pity's last defence, Disdain is eager to continue but is interrupted by the arrival of Credence. From Disdain's point of view, the debate is not finished. If left uncontrolled, Pity and Disdain would wage continual war. There is no possible reconciliation between these two principles of love from infatuation and affection versus love inspired by outward circumstances. Each of these positions is deficient in itself; neither side has a complete, workable way to approach living in the world. Though they both have agreed that Desire's love is genuine and not feigned, they disagree about how probable it is that his love will continue and be stable.

vi

Scene VI, 754-801, narrates the arrival of Credence and Beauty's acceptance of Desire; the words of "Thauctour" frame this section. The arrival of Credence emblemizes

Beauty's decision that Desire's plea is credible and her belief that his love is not feigned; she decides that he is not simply following Ovid's Ars amatoria as a lover's handbook. Credence apologizes for not coming immediately, saying that she did not wish to give "hasty credence." Beauty thanks Credence for coming in "good season" and tells her that "Betwene Pity and Dysdayne hath ben a sore argument." This apparently has been unpleasant to Beauty because she commands them to argue no more: "But I commaunde you two to cese your plees and warre." This verbal war has been an externalization of the working of Beauty's mind which resulted in her final decision. When Beauty decides that Desire's pleas are credible, Credence arrives; Beauty then can cease her inner struggle, emblemized by the arguments of Disdain and Pity. By making up her mind, Beauty momentarily reestablishes order in her "garden of affeccyon." By transcending their controversy, Beauty establishes the possibility of restructuring human relationships and presents a proposition of which neither Pity, Disdain nor Desire has conceived:

And you desyre I wyll to my fauour take  
 Syth me to please aduenture so well ye darre  
 I were to blame yf I sholde you forsake

Forther I wyll that ye enioye and procede  
 The moost parte of this gardyn of affeccyon  
 Yf ye lacke ony thynge ye shall haue it at nede  
 And for the tender zele amyte and dyleccyon  
 That I haue to you ye shall haue proteccyon  
 Ouer me and myn durynge my mortall lyfe

I wyll moreouer be subdued to your correccyon  
 If it lyke you to mary me & haue me to your wyfe  
 (783-793)

The cruces of this speech are Beauty's attitude to love and the way in which she requests Desire to assume a new and unexpected relationship to her. Her speech is rational and calm, unlike Desire's initial speech to her (514-561), in which he complains of his pain caused by love's dart. She accepts Desire into her favor because he has dared an adventure in order to please her. This is a very humble and unexpected action because Desire had originally requested that Beauty do something to please him, to ease his pain. In his first speech, Desire approaches Beauty as an empress, a goddess who could redress his woe (548) and save him from great jeopardy. He never claims that he is doing something to please her because this would have been interpreted as a prideful remark. Beauty thus removed herself from the pedestal of courtly affection on which Desire had placed her with his subservient tone.

Beauty does this as a preparation for her reversal of the "courtly" roles (in which the woman is a goddess sought in a demeaning fashion) and for her transformation of this "courtly" code, about which Disdain and Pity have just been arguing. Beauty declares that she has "tender zele amyte and dyleccyon" for Desire; that is, her affection for him is superior in kind to Desire's

cupidinous infatuation and somewhat similar to Disdain's description of the type of affection which her ideal lovers have (722-729). She forbids Desire to continue his immature infatuation and his impassioned pleas by requesting him to accept a role as her husband and the protector of herself, her family and her property, a role in which this infatuation would be more comic than it already is. Marriage, a possibility never raised by Disdain or Pity (or, if suggested through the implication of "loue comyng be condycyons," never discussed) and an idea not specifically entertained by Desire in his first plea, has now been proposed as the only rational solution to Desire's dilemma.

## vii

In Scene VII, 802-822, Desire expresses his pleasure. The rime-royall stanzas serve to break the octaves which we have been reading and to lend a dignified tone to Desire's thankfulness. In the first stanza, Desire claims that he is thankful even though he does not fully comprehend her kindness.<sup>5</sup>

O precyous pryncesse of preelecte pulcrytude  
 I can not compasse your compassyble kyndes  
 Whan it hath pleased your benygnyte & gratytude  
 That I myght entre your gardyn my mynde to expres  
 I am of no suche abylyte as ye make my doubtles  
 But syth ye haue enhabled me of your benygnyte  
 God rewarde you that it hath pleased you to  
 enhance my dygnyte.

(802-808)

Desire also claims that he does not have the ability which Beauty thinks he has but is joyous that she has ennobled him and increased his dignity. Only in these lines (807-808) does Desire express any reaction to the marriage proposal which Beauty has just made. But even here, Desire does not respond to the way in which marriage, as a sacrament, could transform their relationship; rather he sees it as an incidental aid to his possible rise in social rank.

In the next stanza, Desire reveals his sensual interests:

O what worlde brougth forth your body delycyouse  
 What parentes gate suche one to be so amerouse  
 Your countenaunce doeth reloyse me & encreseth  
 my myrthe  
 Your vertue proueth your parentage to be of  
 noble byrthe

(812-815)

In view of these excellent qualities, Desire promises to be eternally under Beauty's control. His diction and sentiments are Petrarchan and are probably meant to be read lightly:

As longe as the flodes renne with water vyolent  
 As longe as shadowes shall about hylles appere  
 And whyle there shall be ony sterres in the fyrmament  
 So longe shall your loue my herte and body stere  
 Your honour and name shall be expressed without fere  
 Syth ye be not varyaunt but stedfast and substancyall  
 Therefore god you acqute with loye perpetuall.  
 (816-822)

Desire still has not assumed any control over himself or over Beauty; he has not yet begun to be a man by whom Beauty can be "subdued." Having been presented with a marriage proposal, Desire continues to speak like a "lover" who is subject to the guiding direction of his lady's love. He makes no attempt to begin to play the role of "housbonde and lorde." Furthermore, the irony of committing oneself to the "unvarying and steadfast" object of Beauty, which fades within the hour, marks Desire as a fool. He is not transformed by the possibilities of the offer of marriage which Beauty has made to him.

His apparent lack of interest in the marriage proposal can also be understood in terms of his name. Since Desire is Lechery and since marriage is theoretically the cure for this sin, a proper marriage to Beauty could mean the death of Desire. If satisfied, he would cease to exist, Lechery being dependent on frustration. Therefore, instead of conforming himself to the demands of Beauty's proposal of marriage, Desire continues to speak to Beauty with rhetoric proper only to a servant of Cupid.

Because she actually speaks so little in the debate, it is rather difficult to make specific comments on the nature of Beauty. Basically, she is a personification of a desired object. In so far as she has to make a decision between the claims of Pity and Disdain, she has some relevant parallels in medieval literature written prior to and contemporary with Nevill. An analysis of these parallels will give us a perspective on Beauty which the text itself does not offer, except in an oblique way, since her decision, in favor of Pity and Desire, leads to a chaotic party in the garden. This fact implies that Beauty might have done well to reject Desire.

In The Book of the Duchess(1144-1297), the Knight relates his two attempts to gain "the noble yifte" of his lady's mercy. At first, he approaches her as an object of worldly beauty; he says that she was "so semely on to see." Huppe and Robertson state that in his first supplication to her, "he is asking for a wrongful mercy which in fact signifies surrender to desire."<sup>6</sup> When she answers "nay" to his plea, the Knight momentarily becomes idle and full of sorrow:

I durste no more say thertoo  
 For pure fere, but stal away;  
 And thus I lyved ful many a day,  
 That trowely I hadde no ned  
 Ferther than my beddes hed  
 Never a day to seche sorwe;

I fond hyt redy every morwe  
 For-why I loved hyr in no gere.  
 (1250-1257)

Recovering from this, the Knight now reformed in desire, asks for and receives her mercy. Huppe' and Robertson explain this action:

In his enforced separation from her, when the desires of the flesh have been refused, he has learned to love her for her virtue; he has come to a realization of the nature of true love; he is no longer moved by simple natural desire, but has made a rational selection of an object worthy of love....Instead of his earlier foolishness, the Knight wished now to defend the lady's name, to keep her from shame, and to serve her. The relationship he desired was not physical worship but spiritual direction. He wished her to become his spiritual overlord. Seeing that he meant no harm, the lady granted his wish, allowing him to serve her.<sup>7</sup>

The power of mercy must be carefully used. It must be withheld if the person requesting it has only egotistic desires. But, if he wishes to serve someone other than himself, then the other person (the lady) can give him her mercy and take him into her service, thus soothing his pain. In Nevill, Desire is like the Knight when he first seeks the mercy of the lady; he is mostly interested in her "body delycouse"(812). Arguing from this example in The Book of the Duchess, Beauty would have been more than justified if she had rejected Desire. In giving her mercy to one interested in sensual desires, she has



misused her mercy, a complementary quality to her beauty. Here, though, the parallels with Chaucer's poem end. The lady, Blanche, never makes an offer of marriage to the Knight; rather the relationship remains one of Lady and servant, not Lady and Lord.

In The Parlement of Foules, a lady also refuses to grant her mercy to a suitor. Having been beset by the cupidinous rhetoric of the three male eagles, the formal asks that Nature give her a year in which to decide and refuses to serve Venus or Cupid:

"I wol nat serve Venus ne Cupide,  
Forsothe as yit, by no manere weye."  
(652-653)

Huppe and Robertson comment on this section:

Perhaps she hopes that the tercelet will abandon romantic passion in favor of simple mating. Unaware of the full implications of the situation, and unable to remove Venus and Cupid from their control of man's desires, Nature grants the formal's request.<sup>8</sup>

As the rest of their analysis shows, the tercelts, servants of Cupid and Venus, frustrate both the natural sexual drives and marriage itself. Chaucer here demonstrates that it is wrong for ladies to take pity on cupidinous lovers. In Nevill's poem, Beauty might have done well to treat Desire just as the formal treated the tercelts.

In Merciles Beaute, a poem of questionable

Chaucerian authorship, the first two parts of the triple roundel are a conventional complaint of a lover to a beautiful woman whose pity no man may attain. In the third part of the roundel, the lady mocks the foolishness of the pained lover by saying that she is free from all the sickness of love (a sickness which induces leanness):

Sin I fro love escaped am so fat,  
 I never trow to ben in his prison lene;  
 Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.  
 (27-29)

Beauty treats the lover for what he is: sick, foolish and thin. Cupidinous love is an object of mockery and scorn. Though numerous other examples could be selected from Chaucer to indicate his scorn of the unnatural lover, these three are sufficient to establish his opinion.

In La Belle Dame Sans Merci,<sup>9</sup> the same detached and scornful attitude is assumed by the lady toward the lover. Early in the poem, La Belle Dame tells Lamant that no lady ever seriously listens to the clever rhetoric of suitors:

Ladies be nat so simple, thus I mene,  
 So dul of wit, so sotted of foly,  
 That, for wordes which sayd ben of the splene,  
 In fayre langage, paynted ful plesauntly,  
 Which ye and mo holde scoles of dayly,  
 To make hem of gret wonders to suppose;  
 But sone they can away their hedes wrye,  
 And to fair speche lightly their eres close.  
 (325-332)

Having proclaimed her superiority to the lures of rhetoric, La Belle Dame proceeds to argue much as Disdain

does in Nevill's poem: she is against submitting to a male simply because he is in pain. La Belle Dame suspects that Lamant is Faux Semblaunt, a character who, after winning her favors, will ruin her reputation by gossip and whose affection will not be stable. She finally reveals her "marble herte" by showing Lamant what the source of his pain is:

My hert, nor I, have don you no forfeyt,  
 By which ye shulde complayne in any kynde.  
 There hurteth you nothing but your conceyt;  
 Be juge your-self; for so ye shal it fynde.  
 Ones for alway let this sinke in your mynde -  
 That ye desire shal never rejoyced be!  
 Ye noy me sore, in wastynge al this wynde;  
 For I have sayd y-nough, as semeth me.  
 (789-796)

By putting the blame for his sickness on Lamant himself, La Belle Dame makes a proper use of her Pity and her Reason. It is true that Lamant eventually dies of grief and that the poem ends with an appeal to women not to be pitiless like La Belle Dame; but the poem seems rather to demonstrate the sickness of love and its disastrous consequences.

In addition to these four poems, The Interlude of Calisto and Melebea,<sup>10</sup> a play roughly contemporary to Nevill's poem (it was printed circa 1530), shows a concern with the problem of denying one's favors to a lover. In this interlude, sometimes named Beauty of Women, Calisto, through the craft of the bawd Celestina, seeks to win the

physical love of the maiden, Melebea. Having consented to receive Calisto in bed (902-913), Melebea is visited by her father, Danio, who tells her of a dream which he has had (950ff.) in which a "foule rough bych" (961) leads Melebea to a pool of "foule stynkyng water" (956). Perceiving that the "bych" is Celestina, Melebea confesses to God that she improperly "dyd consent/In mynd" (1021-1022) to Calisto's sexual desires. Danio assures his daughter that she will receive God's grace and forgiveness and ends the interlude with this moral:

Lo here ye may see what a thyng it is  
 To brynge up yong people verteously  
 In good custome/....  
 Wherefore ye vyrgyns and fayre maydens all  
 Unto this example now take good hede  
 Serue god dayly the soner ye shall  
 To Honeste and goodnes no dout procede  
 And god shall send you euer his grace at nede  
 To withstand all euyl temptacions  
 That shall come to you by any occasions  
 (1044-1046a, 1051-1057)

He concludes by saying that fathers, mothers and rulers should guide strictly young folk so that they are occupied "in some good bysynes/Not in idell pastyme or unthryftnes" (1061-1062). The example of this interlude shows that authors other than Nevill were concerned with the problem of the preservation of chastity. Here, though, Melebea, the beautiful object, is saved from misusing her Pity; Beauty in Nevill is not as fortunate.<sup>11</sup>

These examples demonstrate that beautiful and desirable women can, quite properly, refuse to take pity on a lover in pain and distress. In fact, not to do so would be to submit oneself to the lover's cupidity. A correct use of Pity, in harmony with Justice, can occasionally reform the lover and show him the misguided nature of his passion. On the other hand, if the lover is totally submerged in idolatry, the refusal of the lady may kill him; a lover like Troilus can be driven by the loss of his beloved to seek death. There are at least three alternatives to this death or unhappiness: the lover can be transformed into an admirer of his beloved's virtues instead of her physical body and be accepted into her service, as in The Book of the Duchess; the lover can overcome his cupiditas in marriage, as Palamon does in The Knight's Tale; the lover can be inspired by the virtues of his lady to seek communion with God (the source of her virtues), as in La Vita Nuova. In Nevill's poem, Beauty attempts to comfort Desire by suggesting marriage. But Desire continues his role as lover. It is probable that Beauty has simply misjudged her man and that she is extremely naive about what he seeks and about the way in which to use her Pity. If the marriage were to be respectable, there would be no reason for Disdain to leave at the end of the poem and no reason for

the dream to end, symbolically, as a tempestuous storm.

viii

In Scene VIII(823-854), the formal action of the dream vision ends. At the command of Beauty, Desire advances to her chair; Disdain becomes envious and angry and leaves the court of Beauty saying:

I wyll nolenger tary I wyll go hens  
 Syth that as soone is auauanced a man of  
 yesterdaye  
 Hauynge no good property as one that without  
 offence  
 Hath contynued from yonge aere in seruyce alway.  
 (827-830)

Her final words emphasize her concern with property and wealth. She objects to Desire because he is poor and because his love is new, and therefore not necessarily stable. She believes the young, rich long-attendant lover should be given preference.<sup>12</sup> This hypothetical young lover is probably one of whom she would approve and one who has "loue comynge by condycyons;" her real objection to "loue comynge by effeccyon" is that its origin is often too recent to promise stability of the affection.

Pity gloats over Disdain's departure by parodying one of her early arguments - that Desire has advanced

"without leue"(615):

Than pyte sayd what sory grace  
 Where is dysdayne is she gone without leue  
 For sothe that were a very heuy case  
 Yet I trust it sholde not many folkes greue.  
 (835-338)

All lovers in the garden are glad to be rid of Disdain;  
 her departure is heralded by "Noyse rumour and fame" and  
 encourages the lovers to lose their fear. They begin "to  
 complayne to theyr ladyes they went all alone"(842) and  
 finally make their 'moan:'

And some were sped and went out at the gate  
 Where as afore there coude not haue passed one  
 Fantasy stode alwaye so contynually thereat.  
 (844-846)

With Disdain gone, the successful lovers can freely leave  
 the court which she has been dominating. The departure  
 of Disdain leads to the departure of Fantasy(846). But  
 why should Fantasy and Disdain now be shown to be so  
 closely associated and why should their departures  
 coincide with the disappearance of Morpheus, of which we  
 learn in the next stanza?

Whiche lyberty encreased amonxe them suche Ioyes  
 That me thought I herde the sownynge of many an  
 instrument  
 Whiche prete tryumphe & penytrable noyse  
 Caused Morpheus to vanysse incontynent  
 Because it was not necessary he sholde be present  
 But auoyde from thens where is noyse and company  
 Whan he was gone I waked and sodaynly dyd sprent  
 So astonyed I knewe not where I was perfytely.  
 (847-854)

With Fantasy and Disdain gone, those left in the garden engage in a sort of Bacchic revelry; being freed from the Apollonian strictures of Disdain, the lovers revel in their new freedom and speed out of the garden gate. They find themselves no longer confined in the illusory world of unending courtly pleas which are always thwarted by Disdain, a world of Fantasy, where only the wish, not the act, is real. But this liberty has little to do with the marriage contract which Beauty has offered to Desire; the lovers in the garden seem totally unconcerned with marriage. For their world, in which cupidinous pleas are now readily accepted, is just as much a world of illusion as the one over which Disdain and Fantasy had ruled. In the corrupted earthly garden in The Parlement of Foules, Chaucer describes the kind of figures who rule the lovers in Nevill's garden of affection; these figures are described in the group with Cupid, Venus and Priapus:

Tho was I war of Plesaunce anon-ryght,  
 And of Aray, and Lust, and Curteysie,  
 And of the Craft that can and hath the myght  
 To don by force a wyght to don folye -  
 Disfigurat was she, I nyl nat lye;  
 And by hymself, under an ok, I sesse  
 Saw I Delyt, that stod with Gentillesse.

I saw Beaute, withouten any atyr,  
 And Youthe, ful of game and jolyte;  
 Foolhardynesse, Flaterye, and Desyr,  
 Messagerye, and Meede, and other thre -  
 (218-228)



Chaucer here shows Desire and Beauty at their worst: both are associated with the "Craft" that leads men to folly, that is, cupidinous desire and its clever ways of finding satisfaction. Now that Nevill's lovers have been freed from Disdain and her frustrations, they can induce their own set of fantasies and follow their own "Craft."

Finally, the music, the noise, "the sownynge of many an instrument" and the "company" cause Morpheus to leave; on the literal level, sleep is impossible when loud noise is heard. Allegorically, the tumultuous sounds destroy the vision. The loud noise signals both the climax and the simultaneous destruction of the vision; that is, the culmination of the illusory vision in this loud noise destroys the vision itself. When fulfilled, the dream becomes self-destructive and cannot be maintained. Its dissolution is part of its very nature.

## CHAPTER VII THE CONCLUSION

In the first stanza of the Conclusion, the persona awakens and tells us the real cause of the noise and minstrelsy in the garden:

The daye was comyn and kest a dymme lyght  
The sonne under clowdes by weder tempestyouse  
Oryble thonder & lyghtnyng sore troubled my syght  
And therewith a betynge shour a storme rygorouse  
Waked me out of slepe it was so leoperdouse  
And where as I wened I had be waked with mynstrelsy  
It was contrary whiche made my mynde so troublouse  
That I coude no waye rest neyther syth stande  
  ne lye  
Than I remembred all my dreame and fantasy  
Sayenge for the remembraunce of this sodayne chaunze  
I entende to wryte the maner nerof ryght shortly  
That folkes may consyder this worlde is but straunge  
  (855-866)

Far from being harmonious music, the "sownynge of many an instrument" is actually the dream equivalent to a tempestuous lightning storm. Physiologically, the storm awakens the dreamer by its noise. In the early morning, the light is dim, the sun hidden by violent clouds. The great joy and song caused by the "lyberty" in the garden is a horrible storm. Ruled by Pity and her joys and free from the limitations of Disdain, the revelry in the garden of pleasure is a light-obscuring storm in the consciousness of man. The vision of the garden has not been a positive force.

The significance of the inharmonious music in the garden may be clarified by recalling a classic instance of the imagery, as, for instance, at the beginning of The Knight's Tale where Theseus and Hippolyta are welcomed into Athens with harmonious wedding music:

And thus with victorie and with melodye  
 Lete I this noble duc to Atthenes ryde.  
 (871-872)

This music occurs again at the end of the tale in celebration of another marriage:

And thus with alle blisse and melodye  
 Hath Palamon ywedded Emelye.  
 (3097-3098)

The music complements the blessedness of their marriages. In contrast to this harmony, the "sownynge of many an instrument" in Nevill, being parallel to a storm, reveals that Beauty's marriage proposal has been frustrated; Desire remains a lover and never becomes a good husband.

This music and noise should also be seen against the background of Chaucer's The Parlement of Foules, which provides a wider range of reference than The Knight's Tale. In the earthly garden of paradise, all sounds are harmonious:

On every bow the bryddes herde I synge,  
 With voys of aungel in here armonye;  
 (190-191)

Of instruments of strenges in accord  
 Herde I so pleye a ravyshynge swetnesse,  
 That God, that makere is of al and lord,  
 Ne herde nevere beter, as I sesse,  
 Therwith a wynd, unnethe it myghte be lesse,

Made in the leves grene a noyse softe  
 Acordaunt to the foules song alofte.  
 (197-203)

Of this, Huppé and Robertson state:

The garden is filled with the sound of stringed instruments, harmonizing with the sound of the wind flowing through the leaves and with the song of the birds. The harmony, like the music of the spheres, is that of God's creation....The garden mirrors Paradise in its fullness of heavenly light and harmony.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the poem, the birds sing after they are mated. Though, as Huppé and Robertson have pointed out, the mating of the birds and their song praising St. Valentine cannot be compared with human marriage and wedding music, the song (680-692) expresses the highest degree of natural harmony of which the birds are capable.<sup>2</sup> But since this joy may represent "the joy of the worldling which "slit so yerne"", the song ends in shouting:

And with the shoutyng, whan the song was do  
 That foules maden at here flyght away,  
 I wok, and othere hokes tok me to,  
 To reede upon, and yit I rede alwey.  
 (693-696)

Huppé and Robertson state:

As the song of the birds which is heard in the earthly paradise is a harmonious song in praise of God, the discord and cackling which we hear in the assembly of the birds is a sign of the corruption of that harmony.<sup>3</sup>

In Chaucer's poem, the music becomes shouting; in Nevill it becomes, and symbolically is, a storm.

Thinking that he has been awakened by minstrels, the persona discovers that the real cause is a storm. This realization troubles his mind so that he can not sit, stand or lie; he is totally disoriented. He promises to write down his vision and the remembrance of its "sodayne chaunge" to show men that "this worlde is but straunge." His poetic purpose reveals his ignorance. To any one familiar with medieval philosophy, the statement that "the world is strange because things can suddenly change" would be dismissed as uncharacteristic of this period; sudden and unpredictable change was understood to be part of the providential plan for a world existing within time and subject to sinful powers. The persona is magnificently naive in implying that change is a "straunge" phenomenon. However, this remark might also be read in a straightforward manner; the world is "straunge," wondrous, extraordinary or apparently not rational as proved by the fact of change. In this sense the statement would be commonplace and proverbial. But, as we find in the next stanza, the persona is troubled essentially by the cessation of his vision; the "sodayne chaunge" which he observes is the change from the seemingly paradisaical garden to the storm, the change from viewing an illusory world of heart's desire to viewing the real, empirical world.

In lines 866-878, the persona goes to his window to look for the castle of pleasure and its inhabitants:

Yet to the wyndowe I walked a softe pace  
 Ofte syghynge and sobbynge with an heuy herte  
 To se where I coude espye of pleasure the palace  
 Or of thynhabytauntes therof perceyue ony parte  
 (866-870)

Seeing nothing of this castle, he exclaims:

I loked for all these yet I sawe none alas  
 Whiche brought to mynde wordes of salomon of  
 wysdome recorder  
 Vanitas vanitatum & omnia mundi vanitas.  
 (876-878)

The persona has confused his dream world of heart's desire with the real world. That is, the substance of his vision, that poor freemen can court and marry rich ladies, has no existence in the world. But perhaps the meaning is even more precise than this. For the storm is really not a function of the marriage proposal of Beauty, but rather is part of the libertine actions of the lovers in the garden. When Beauty accepts Desire, she does it under the sacramental control of marriage. But the lovers in the garden use these pleas with no mention of marriage. Though attempting to establish Desire as her head and thereby to transform his humble and painful pleas, Beauty apparently fails to change him or the lovers in the garden. While she is right in insisting on marriage as the answer to cupidinous pain, she indirectly destroys the power of Disdain, which has its place, if not misused, as a protector

of wealthy women against greedy, poorer suitors; she thus lets 'pity run in gentil hearts' unchecked by Disdain. The lovers' liberty becomes a chaotic storm; reason is abandoned. By using her power of pity in a naive but well-meaning way, Beauty inadvertently lets cupidinous forces gain control of her garden. The persona understands none of this and misses the importance of the marriage proposal. He also overlooks the fact that the music which accompanies the lovers is, symbolically, a storm (though he recognizes the relationship of the storm and the music on a literal level). By this failure, he reasons that, since his vision has vanished, since freedom to indulge in cupidity does not exist in his world, and since Bacchic revelry seems to be a vanishing illusion, all is vanity.

This conclusion is the height of folly. Not only has the persona ignored the real meaning of his vision; he has also concluded that all is vanity simply because cupidinous desires are satisfied only in one's dream world. In Christian terms, the cessation of cupidinous desires or a realization that their satisfaction is always insubstantial is a great blessing and shows one that they, the desires, are full of vanity to begin with. But "all" is not vanity just because the satisfaction of these particular desires is insubstantial.

The persona glosses his dream incorrectly. He goes on to compare the death of his dream world to the death of famous men; since all worldly things die, all is vanity, he reasons. In lines 879-890, he gives a long list of dead heroes and their skills. The comparison between the death of these men and their work with the death of his cupidinous dream is inappropriate and illogical. While the persona is theoretically correct in perceiving that all works of this world pass away, he fails to understand the other part of this proposition, namely, that some earthly work positively serves God's purposes (though, theoretically, all acts, a priori, serve God's ends).

In relationship to the value of one's work in the world, the persona has compiled a list which does not form a coherent whole. Different examples in it mean different things. For instance, the strength of Sampson, the prudence of Solomon, the chastity of Lucretia, the four doctors of divinity and the philosophy and logic of Aristotle really have served to further the reign of charity on earth, if perceived correctly. The eloquence of Ulysses and the orations of Cicero can possibly be used for Christian purposes, though they are capable of misuse. The riches and opulence of Crassus are proverbially emblems of greed. Alexander's conquests were used by medieval authors both to praise the crusading and missionary



spirit and the spirit of martial order and to condemn excessive war and conquest, depending on the particular argument of the author citing the example. The persona's use of these examples is too simplistic. Just to say that all is vanity because all men die is too facile; it is not an adequate response to the complexities of man's life or the uses he makes of his abilities. It is ludicrous to compare the worth of the writings of the four fathers to the egocentric dream which the persona has brought upon himself. The worth of one obviously far surpasses that of the other. The persona has failed to distinguish between good and bad works, between Christian and pagan work. From this basic confusion, the muddled thinking of the next two stanzas proceeds.

Lines 891-902 express the persona's final view of work in the world:

Be not all these departed frome this transytory lyfe  
 Yet theym to dyuers places our creatour dyd name  
 With exall iugement without debate or stryfe  
 Accordynge to theyr merytes he dyd rewarde or blame  
 Therefore for your soules helth use vertue & drede shame  
 And as to the worlde laboure alway for loue  
 That ye may perpetually reyne in good fame  
 It shall be to you all ryches aboue  
 As by experyence oftymes it doeth proue  
 Of suche as haue had subjets without loue thm to drede  
 From they be of power than they do theyr mynde remoue  
 And so theyr maysters fayle whan they haue nede.

Since all men die and are judged, therefore men should be virtuous and dread shame and labor for love in order

to reign perpetually in good fame which is above all riches in real value. As a logical statement (based on a "therefore" proposition) following from lines 855-890, this last stanza is confused. While the moralizing of lines 891-898 seems correct, if somewhat conventional, it is internally inconsistent. For we have already been told that all the great works of the men of the past are full of vanity; now we are asked to labor for another vain earthly reward, "good fame." From a medieval point of view, what should follow from the vanitas list is a call to a life of prayer, not a call to labor for earthly good fame.

The major problem of this passage is the exact meaning of the phrase "as to the worlde labourer alway for loue." The persona recommends that we should labour this way for our "soules helth." The reason for the obscurity of this passage (which has a sense of rhetorical holiness about it) is again the basic confusion of the persona about the ways and uses of love. "As to the worlde" reveals the persona's entire point of view. As a parallel phrase to "Worchyng and wandryng . as the worlde asketh" in Piers Plowman (I, 19), which can signify either the plowman who works hard and devotedly as the world requires or those men who "putten hem to pruyde" (I,23) and whose work does not bear fruit, "as to the worlde" could theoretically mean that men should labour lovingly in order to praise God.

But the persona uses the phrase "labour alway for loue" to mean "labor always in order to get love" or "labor always for Venus." This interpretation is strengthened by the subject of the next stanza: how to win and keep a mistress' love. The persona does not use "loue" as a synonym for caritas. If he had done so, he would have said "labour alway with loue;" he sees the labor of love not as an end in itself as a praise of God but as an action which will result in "good fame," an egotistic concern.

"Shame"(895) is a worldly concern which the devout Christian should be willing to ignore; it is also associated with the cult of love(903-914). And the example(900-902) which the persona chooses to define his position also reveals a worldly regard: 'as experience proves, in regard to masters who have subjects who dread them without love, these subjects will turn their minds away from their masters when the latter are out of power so that they will fail their masters when their masters are in need'.<sup>4</sup> Thus the persona tries to prove that love of subjects will lead to the good fame of the loving lord who will be helped by his subjects if he is out of power; therefore, good fame (as a product of love) is more worthwhile than riches which, like power, can fail. "Loue" again is linked to the earthly welfare of the one who

loves and to his personal good fortune.

The problem of "loue" here is connected directly with that of "good fame" and "shame," which unquestionably are concepts of the human, earthly world as distinguished from God's heavenly kingdom, where men are interested in "salvation" and "guilt." (Men dealing with men speak of shame; men dealing with God speak of guilt.) B.G. Koonce has clearly delineated this problem of fame:

True fame is heavenly fame, which has its beginning and end in God. God's own fame, or glory, expresses his perfect goodness and is manifested in the praise given him by his creatures.... In man's pristine state of innocence, no distinction existed between heavenly and earthly fame. As long as Adam lived in harmony with God, his own fame was fame in heaven, his actions and speech a glorification not of himself but of God and the divine image within. But with the Fall human fame acquires new meaning; for Adam's sin, symbolizing the mind's turning away from God to the world, involved an irrational confusion between temporal and eternal glory. Unlike heavenly fame, which lies in the opinion of God, earthly fame comes to mean the opinion of man's fellow creatures, whose judgments may be equally impaired as a result of Adam's sin.... Man's life since the Fall is portrayed ideally as a pilgrimage from Babylon to Jerusalem, from the false glory of the world to the glory of the heavenly city. Fame, like other temporalia such as honors and riches, is a gift which God allows man in making his journey. When sought for its own sake, it leads to idolatry, a glorification of God's gifts as objects of worship. When based upon charity and good works, it is a means of glorifying God and achieving salvation.... Although fame acquired through charity and good works may be manifested in human praise, its

value is established not by the outward acclaim of men but by an inward relationship between man and God. Therefore, says John of Salisbury, echoing Augustine, if praise is won in the right manner it rests upon a foundation laid by the individual himself. When properly achieved, earthly fame is an "accident" or "shadow" of virtue (virtus).<sup>5</sup>

Our persona seems to be interested both in heavenly reward, since he speaks of judgment(891-894) and also in earthly fame(895-902). The problem is that he never reveals any understanding of fame as a gift from God to man and always seems to relate the concept of fame to well-being in this world. Finally, the persona does not understand that earthly praise and fame given by men is just as full of vanity and just as transitory as Ulysses's eloquence or Alexander's conquests. The persona displays a superficial philosophy: while saying that all men's works are full of vanity in the face of death and judgment, he nevertheless recommends that we labor for love so as to reign always in earthly good fame, a fame which is itself part of the transitory world. All this moralizing (which in another context might be more sound) has been inspired by his despair over the disappearance of his dream world of heart's desire. While there may be some conventional wisdom here, its genesis is from a sinful source, despair; therefore, its application is confused.

In apparent contrast to his despair over the vanity and transitoriness of all human endeavors, the persona

finally explains what he means by the phrase "as to the worlde labourē alway for loue." Having not understood at all that the libertinism of the garden is a tempestuous storm and exists only in the fantasies of dreams, the persona now advises his readers to become lovers like Desire: "lovers of ladyes amyable." He then gives his list of love's statutes(903-914):

1. Lovers must be diligent and not slothful.
2. Lovers must be agreeable to the pleasures of their ladies.
3. Lovers must "fyxe" their minds; they must be attentive to their ladies.
4. Lovers must be secretive, stedfast without mutability, bold and courageous.
5. All commandments of ladies must be fulfilled with quickness and hasty speed.
6. Lovers must have ability.
7. Lovers must be continually present or else, as Ovid says, "an absent love vanishes and a new one takes its place."

This list is ultimately based on Ovid's Ars amatoria (Book II, 156-730) and has its parallels in De arte honeste amandi, The Temple of Glas and The Court of Love. The Ars amatoria is a manual which attempts to instruct men in the winning and keeping of mistresses. It has nothing to do with marriage. By quoting from this text in line 914 (a line taken from Ars amatoria, II, 358), the persona shows that he has learned nothing at all from Beauty's submission to Desire, a submission theoretically based upon marriage. Thus, in line 908, when the persona recommends that the love relationship be kept secret, he is necessarily speaking

of extra-marital affairs, which demand secrecy. As Andreas Capellanus has stated in Rule XIII (Chapter VIII): "When made public love rarely endures."<sup>6</sup> And Marie de Champagne says that 'love' cannot exist within marriage.<sup>7</sup> Through the use of Ovid and the echoing of Capellanus, Nevill's persona shows that he has no interest at all in marital love and is like the lovers in the garden at the end of his vision: neither gives any attention to Beauty's plea for marriage.<sup>8</sup> Speaking comically, Ovid gives much the same advice as our persona (who speaks seriously): in the Ars amatoria II, 156ff., Ovid satirically advises that in order to win the desired mistress, the lover should do all she commands (197ff.), never be sluggish (229ff.), be close to her constantly (336ff.), and should do everything secretly (639ff.) so that all his love is a "furtivum...opus" (730). If all this advice is followed, the persona implies, lovers like Desire will always be successful.

But not only is this success extra-marital; it is also a success against which Disdain has preached:

He can well ynoughe fayne loue Ouyde layde aparte  
De arte amandi whiche techeth one to loue  
(646-647)

The persona advises the use of the very book which Disdain has ridiculed and which Pity has stated that Desire did not use, since his love was genuine. By recommending a book whose use even Pity has rejected, the persona shows

his insensitivity to the debate and his superficial understanding of the dream vision; he also tacitly gives his approval to the reign of libertine chaos in the garden, a chaos resulting from the successful application of Ovid's rules. Finally, the persona's use of Ovid(914) undermines one of the major justifications for "loue comynge by effeccyon;" if one's lover is out of sight, a new lover can easily make his advances. This moral emphasizes the superficiality of an infatuation which does not run deep into the soul. That is, this warning reveals the limitations of the type of love for which he has just advised us to labor.

In the last stanza of the Conclusion, the persona reveals his confused state of mind:

These reasons reuolued in my remembraunce  
 When that sorowe was somthyng modefyed  
 Than grete trouble my mynde dyde enhaunce  
 What sholde be cause that I had be occupied  
 With this dreame yet shortly I aspyed  
 That this amerous study of Cypyde and Phebus  
 Was cause therof whiche coude not be denyed  
 Therefore in mynde I dyd playnly duscus  
 That I wolde study nomore and specyally thus  
 I wolde muse no more in the euenynge so late  
 But conclude this shortly in wordes compendyous  
 Lest I sholde be as I was erste in miserable  
 estate

(915-926)

Having experienced the great melancholy and sorrow expressed earlier in his vanitas appeal, the persona now condemns his whole experience of studying-dreaming-



despairing as a painful and useless act. He decides never to study or read again and never to muse so late in the evening. The persona's position is directly antithetical to Chaucer's position at the end of The Parlement of Foules. In discussing the ending of this poem, Huppé and Robertson state:

The lesson of the poem is like the lesson which African learned: the vanity of the world and of the lovers of the world. Having seen this vanity clearly, Chaucer repeats the avowal he made at the beginning of the poem:

Of usage - what for lust and what for lore-  
On bokes rede I ofte, as I yow tolde.(15-16)

Now he says,

I wok, and othere bokes tok me to  
To reede upon, and yit I rede alwey.  
I hope, ywis, to rede to som day  
That I shal mete som thynge for to fare  
The bet, and thus to rede I nyl nat spare.  
(695-699)

Reading is the symbol of the good life. It delivers the mind from the spears of desire and lifts it to the truth of heaven. Chaucer hopes to follow this wisdom.<sup>9</sup>

In a footnote, they add:

In devoting himself to reading, Chaucer is, in effect, avoiding the operations of "Cupide, oure lord," and staying well away from the Temple of Venus with its jealous sighs and Priapean frustrations. It was reading which enabled him in the first place to see these things in their proper perspective and to describe them for his readers. That is, the final statement about reading is thematically an integral part of the poem and is neither merely decorative nor merely autobiographical.<sup>10</sup>

Our persona's rejection of reading as an integral part of right living reveals his final ignorance; he does not know how to make good use of the things of this world. And he remains blind to the fact that it is not reading and studying in themselves which have brought on his sorrow but rather his own incomplete and incompetent reading. The persona refuses to see that it is he himself and his perceptions of what he has read that have induced the dream. As Ovid says in his Remedia amoris (757-758, 766, quoted above), love poetry can induce painful and frustrating visions. This is exactly what has befallen our persona. The cure for this pain, says Ovid, is not to stop reading but to read books which will cure your sorrow. This is similar to Chaucer's advice at the end of The Parlement of Foules; but Chaucer also sets up reading as more than a cure. He presents it as a way of life. To refuse to read and to think is a type of intellectual suicide which our persona assents to as a misguided cure for sorrow. This position follows inevitably from the persona's confused application of the vanitas motif, itself a kind of thinking which can lead to despair (accidie) if not balanced by Christian consolation. As the persona has formerly cut himself off from human companionship, so now he separates himself from all intellectual endeavor. He ends up alone and

with no integrated vision either of himself, of his relationship to the world about him, or of his dream.

Professor Francis X. Newman has described the usual characteristics of a dream vision and of its persona:

The typical structure of the dream poem is analagous to this ultimate comic pattern. At its beginning we meet an ordinary man alone and confused in an incoherent world. In the course of his dream this hapless wanderer is gradually initiated into an imaginative world which, under its fictive veil, reveals a wider and more coherent sense of experience than the dreamer has previously known. The dream world is... the same world the dreamer began in, the only world there is, but now appearing as a place of meaning to which he can begin to perceive his relationship. From the dream world he is returned to the world of experience, but this world is now no longer simply opaque or baffling. By virtue of the insight of the dream, he can now see in this world and, seeing, can begin to act in a directed and vital way. The movement of the dream poem is thus circular, but it circles back to a fresh beginning. It is a movement from isolation to the possibility of incorporation, from confusion to coherence, from lethargy to act, from death-like stupor to the rebirth of life, from woe to weal - in short, comedy.<sup>11</sup>

The actions of Nevill's persona and his total dream experience do not conform to this paradigm. In Nevill, there is no movement from isolation, there is no rebirth. The poem ends, as it began, with the persona in a state of intellectual lethargy and stagnation. In trying to

avoid his original "miserable estate," the persona merely slips into a deeper stage of this unhappiness. In contrast to the comic pattern outlined above by Newman, Nevill's poem follows a "tragic" pattern, but one devoid even of the realization, by the damned, of their real state, as in Othello. For the persona remains blind to his real predicament: that it was his own self, "enflamed with loues fyre", which drove him to read love poems and to dream his vision. By blaming his reading, the persona fails to go to the cause of his motivation to read, his own troubled heart, itself a slave of Cupid. Having seen a seemingly paradisaical vision which faded, the persona rejects reading and dreams and thereby consigns himself forever to the hellish realm described in lines 903-914, the world of the cupidinous idolator seeking to win his mistress' favors.

The finality of his blindness is echoed in the French epigram following line 926: "Volunte ie ay mais ie ne veulx mon cuer chaunger" ("but I resolved that I did not wish to change my heart"). Desiring to transcend the transitory and insubstantial quality of dreams, the persona decides to remain just the way he is: controlled by a heart "enflamed with loues fyre." Having resolved never to change his heart, he cuts himself off from all possibility of salvation from his despair.

## C H A P T E R VIII

## THE EPILOGUE

For a proper view of the Epilogue, the relationship between the Introduction, Body and Conclusion of the poem and the Prologue must be stated. Desire's successful courting of Beauty has disappeared like the illusion that it is, and the blind persona, looking out into the real physical world for his vanished vision, has failed to find it and has indulged in despair, confused moralizing and questionable advice for lovers. He finally decides to reject reading and thereby hopes to avoid a future occurrence of the painful vision which he believes his reading has induced. The persona nevertheless counsels lovers to continue to act like Desire; that is, he hopes that the cupidinous actions in his vision will be continued in the real world.

While this indicates the pervasive confusion of the dreamer, it also sharpens our understanding of the Prologue, the tone of which is basically comic in contrast to the despair and stoic resignation of the dreamer at the end. The Prologue has offered the following ideas about the poem to be read:

1. the poem will illumine young hearts with friendship(7);
2. it will relate matters unknown and give examples to all who intend to practice the art of love(10-12);
3. the poem will give pleasure to gentle people(23-24);
4. it will "conforte them that brenne in louynge fyre"(28).

The final despair of the dreamer and the insubstantiality of his vision completely frustrate the completion of these promised aims. Just as the dreamer finds no comfort, so lovers, like him "enflamed with loues fyre," will also find only frustration.

Thus the dream vision does not correspond to the claims made for it in the Prologue. This fact strengthens our previous reading of line 10. "Bookes to endyte of maters ryght uncouth" refers to the fact that the meaning of the poem will not be related in an unambiguous manner but rather in a way which is "very unrecognizable" and "not straightforward." This theory of writing in which the meaning (fruit) of the poem is veiled or hidden and therefore must be searched out "beneath the surface" has been thoroughly discussed by Huppé and Robertson.<sup>1</sup> Speaking to an audience of lovers, Coplande uses "maters ryght uncouth" to emphasize that these matters cannot be simply the arts of love, arts which would not be unknown to such an audience. To become more perceptive, the lovers must see that the cupidinous rhetoric of the poem is just

chaff. If they, like the dream persona himself, are misled by the surface rhetoric of the poem and if they fail to pierce this outer shell, they will end up like the persona - blind and confused. But if they recognize that this shell of rhetoric leads only to frustration, they may find the fruit of the poem, this fruit being simply a restatement of the traditional knowledge that cupidity can only lead one to a state of despair, a state in which one uses wrongly the things of this world.

By promising a consolation which does not literally occur, the Prologue is distanced from the dream vision and the persona's reactions to it. The distance of the Prologue, strengthened by the comic debate of Nevill and Coplande, carries over to the Epilogue, especially the first two stanzas, which also have a comic tone. In both these sections, Nevill presents himself as a poet serving demanding audiences; his role here as a humble poet distinguishes him from the bumbling, confused narrator of the dream vision. In his Epilogue, Nevill, the author, uses the "envoy," a form common in many medieval poems. Chaucer used the form extensively. At the end of Troilus and Criseyde, he sends his tragedy out into the world: "Go, litel bok, go, litel myn tragedye" (V, 1786). Though this stanza is not marked by an "envoy" rubric, the form is clear. Chaucer also advises his poem to have

humility: "But subrit be to alle poesye" (V,1790).

He then expresses concern for the preservation of his meter:

And for ther is so gret diversite  
 In Enghlissh and in writynge of oure tonge,  
 So prey I God that non myswrite the,  
 Ne the mys metre for defaute of tonge.  
 (1793-1796)

The three standard parts for the "envoy" section are here used: sending the book out; advising it not to be proud in face of all the poetry of the past; hoping that the style and meter will be preserved. Chaucer uses the "envoy" section in other shorter poems. In "Fortune," it begs that men may have better success in the world. In "Truth," it advises all men to begin their pilgrimage and to cease being a thrall to this world. In "Lak of Stedfastnesse," it gives moral advice to Richard III. In "The Complaint of Venus," it asks excuse for the author's poor rhyming because of his old age. Thus, Chaucer's "envoy" can advise morally and make excuse for poor poetry. A survey of the "envoy" in the fifteenth century will show a considerable variety in the use of this convention.

At the end of The Temple of Glas, Lydgate uses the "Go, litel book" formula in a section not marked off by a formal "envoy" rubric:



Nou go þi way, þou litel rude boke,  
 To hir presence, as I þe comaund,  
 And first of al þou me recomavnd  
 Vnto hir & to hir excellence,  
 And prai to hir þat it be noon offence,  
 If eny woorde in þe be myssaide,  
 Biseching hir she be not euel apaid;  
 For as hir list, I wil þe efte correcte,  
 When þat hir likeþ againward þe directe;  
 I mene þat benygne & goodli of face.  
 Nou go þi way & put þe in hir grace.  
 (1393-1403)

The poet humbly claims that his book is "rude" and gladly offers to correct any offensive parts. This contrasts with Chaucer's plea that no one mismeter his lives.

In The Kingis Quair, James I assumes an exaggerated tone of humility in his address:

Go litill tretise, nakit of eloquence,  
 Causing simplese and povertie to wit;  
 And pray the reder to have pacience  
 Of thy defaute, and to supporten it,  
 Of his gudnese they brukilnese to knytt.  
 And his tong for to reule(n) and to stere.  
 That thy defaultis helit may ben here.  
 (1352-1358)

The tone of this stanza is significantly different from Chaucer's in Troilus and Criseyde. For Chaucer pleads that no one "myswrite the." But James I theoretically welcomes revisions of his rude poetry by anyone who is able. In the "Verba Translatoris" section in La Belle Dame Sans Mercy, Sir Richard Ros, translating Chartier, imitates Chaucer and the humility of James I:

Go, litel bok! god sende thee good passage!  
 Chese wel thy way; be simple of manere;  
 Loke thy clothing be lyke thy pilgrymage,  
 And specially, let this be thy prayere  
 Ur-to hem al that thee will rede or here,  
 Wher thou art wrong, after their help to cal  
 Thee to correcte in any part or al.  
 (829-835)

At the end of The Pastime of Pleasure, Hawes gives his "envoy" section a unique title, which might well be adopted as the formal name for this topos, which is usually referred to as an 'apology.' Hawes calls it "The excusacyon of the auctore." In the second stanza in this section, Hawes speaks of the art of writing as a way to avoid the sin of idleness:

Go lytell boke I pray god the saue  
 Frome mysse metryng/by wronge impressyon  
 And who that euer lyst the for to haue  
 That he perceyue well thyn entencion  
 For to be grounded withoute presumpcion  
 As for to eschewe the synne of ydlenes  
 To make suche bokes I apply my besynes  
 (5803-5809)

This emphasis on writing books as a way in which to avoid sloth is a significant addition to the fifteenth-century tradition of the "envoy." In the next stanza, Hawes says that Lydgate, his "mayster," avoided sloth by writing:

Whiche in his lyfe the slouthe dyde eschewe  
 Makynge grete bokes to be in memory  
 (5814-5815)

Nevill begins his "enuoye" by departing from the traditional "Go, litel bok" phrase:

Go humble style submytte the to correccyon  
 Be not so bolde to presume to the presence  
 Of ony but suche as be enuyronde with effeccyon  
 Let them arrect theyr eeres to rebuke thy negliyence  
 To them thou perteynest of due congruence  
 Let them more curvously thy rurall termes affyle  
 How thou sholdest be amended they have best  
     intellygence  
 Therefore submytte the to theym my poore &  
     humble style

(927-934)

This extensive concern with rhetoric marks this envoy as different from any previously encountered in the fifteenth century. Nevill directs the poem to those who are "enuyronde with effeccyon," "the yonge tender hertes" of the Prologue. He says that his poem may be guilty of "negligence" and desires that this audience of lovers 'polish skillfully his rural terms,' his "poore and humble style." While this may sound like a traditional "excusacyon," it recalls and contrasts with the Prologue in which Coplande praises the elegance of Nevill's rhetoric, stating specifically that it is not "rude:"

In termes freshe/theyr courage to endewe  
 Not with rude toyes/but elegant and newe  
 (13-14)

a promise apparently borne out, though not consistently, by the aureate diction of passages such as lines 802-822 and apparently denied by the plain style of passages such as lines 98-109.

In the next stanza, Nevill takes a new tack. Although he continues to assert his use of "low style," he does not

suggest that readers polish it; instead, he defends it as appropriate:

Yf ony that be more sad delytynge in grauyte  
 And yf forther age wolde awayne the gyue euydence  
 Sayenge they were well occupied that were  
     troubled with the  
 Wrote not Cuyde in as low style whiche yf  
     they prevence  
 They may thynke that I to auoyde of slouthe  
     the vyolence  
 Made this without cloke or rethorycall language  
 Thynkynge that I ougth not of due conuenance  
 Wryte the in so hyghe style as wyse storyes  
     and sage

(935-942)

Speaking to men "more sad delytynge in grauyte" - to the more philosophically minded - he claims that he has avoided the "hyghe style" which is appropriate only to "wyse storyes and sage" in order "to auoyde of slouthe the vyolence," a sloth which can lead one to indulge improperly in "cloke" or "rethorycall language." The low style is appropriate to stories about love, like his dream vision and Ovid's Ars amatoria. This defense of a low style contradicts the advice just given to the lovers, who were supposed to polish his rural terms. The fact that Nevill gives different advice to different audiences suggests that he is consciously mocking both audiences for their artistic prejudices and thereby forcing the truly perceptive reader to a conclusion which goes beyond the limited points of view of both these groups.<sup>2</sup> His mockery of both audiences lies in the fact that he

fictionally rejects all claims of moral seriousness for his poem(492), thereby refuting Coplande's claim(6) that the poem "concerneth reason of lauryate grauyte;" if it included this, then it would be a 'sage' story. By trying to ingratiate himself with the opposing tastes of two audiences, Nevill indicates that he respects neither and that he is trying to write a new kind of poetry: a poetry of mixed style which has wisdom in it. Again Nevill has posited two major groups and shown that they both expect the wrong thing. Whereas, in the Prologue, Coplande contrasted the lovers and the greedy men (a contrast which suited his pecuniary interests), so here Nevill contrasts the lovers and the men who like serious, philosophical poetry. As an omniscient author, Nevill approaches these groups from a distanced perspective, seeing the limitations of each group.

He claims that the poem is not a wise or sage story, since it has a low style. This complements the statement in the Prologue that the poem will "conforte them that brenne in louynge fyre"(27). The author implies that a handbook for lovers or a work which will console their pains cannot be considered on the level of heroic or moral stories and should be compared therefore to the amorous subjects of Ovid and his plain style. But, as already proved, the vision itself does not console at all.

Therefore, because of this discrepancy and because there do exist in the poem passages of high rhetorical language, it is not improper to conclude that the author is lying, fictively, to us through his pose as an "apologizer" to the serious readers. This lie or "cloak" implies that we are to search for a deeper meaning concealed by the mixed style of the poem and by the poet's feigned appeal that the poem has no wise meaning. Since the poem does not fulfill its expected function of consolation for lovers, what does it mean? Does it have a sage meaning?

In speaking of the eloquence and obscurity of the prophets, Augustine writes:

It is therefore incumbent upon me to say something of the eloquence of the Prophets, where many things are obscured by tropes. The more these things seem to be obscured by figurative words, the sweeter they become when they are explained.<sup>3</sup>

This doctrine has two parts: the meaning of Old Testament literature is often obscured by eloquence; to see the meaning by piercing through the obscurities and the rhetoric is a pleasurable mental occupation. (I have alluded to this theory before in the citation to Fruyt and Chaf.) At several points in his poem, Nevill has inserted difficulties into the story (the Ovidian fables, the two gates, the river crossing, the final orgy) to alert the reader to the fact that the dream persona

understands none of these difficulties and is therefore blind. This forces the reader to search out a meaning in the poem beyond the feeble powers of the persona. And by means of the inconsistencies implied in the two stanzas which we have just discussed, the reader is led to look behind the eloquence of the poem. But in contrast to Augustine's understanding of the prophets and their message (a result of special grace given by God), there is no explicit doctrine of charity to be found in Nevill's poem even when the rhetoric is pierced. This itself, however, is the only comment needed on the vision and the dreamer. At the end of The Miller's Tale, the forces of chaos and lust dominate; Nicholas and Alisoun have enjoyed themselves and have convinced the community that John is insane. The conclusion is the comment on and meaning of the story: it is a tale of lust, craft and gullible superstition cleverly exploited for egotistic ends. In Nevill's poem, the bleakness of the ending is more obvious than in The Miller's Tale, which has ribald humor as its dominant narrative tone. Nevill's persona falls into despair, recommends endless courting and finally refuses to read or study; he blindly advises us to follow actions, which, in terms of the dream, have been found to be illusory. There does not need to be any cleverly hidden kernel of charity in the text in order for us,

as Christian readers, to evaluate the persona's mental condition.

Thus, the advice given in the last two stanzas is ironic. If the lovers seriously apply themselves to polish up the "rurall termes," they will begin to read carefully and will finally perceive the self-destructive nature of their desire. They will find comfort only if their lustful fires are extinguished. Likewise, Nevill satirizes the intellectuals who refuse to read anything unless its surface story points to traditional wisdom. To these, Nevill playfully recommends his humble style, hoping that it might at least persuade them to read his poem once, if they have ever read and enjoyed their Ovid.

The last 29 lines of the Epilogue contain little of note, except that this is the first instance in English poetry of such an Envoy which goes into detail about the process and difficulty of printing. In lines 943-949, the "Lenuoy de Robert Coplande lymprimeur" sends the book to Nevill and hopes that he will graciously overlook any mistakes caused by ink not quite dry. Then follows a stanza praising Nevill and one praising Henry VIII. In the last stanza Coplande himself reappears from the stanzas of the Prologue and asks Nevill's pardon for his incorrect French and for the entire "envoy" section which he has included without asking Nevill's



permission. He pays indirect homage to Nevill's education and refined skill in versifying by saying that, since he, Coplande, has not been formally schooled, his speech is "homely" and "not fine." While this is mainly a show of proper humility, it also recalls Nevill's reference to his "poore & humble style" (934). Coplande uses this as a good defense for himself against any objections of Nevill, though these are highly improbable.

The Epilogue ends like the Prologue, with a French proverb: "En passant le temps sans mal penser." This is intended to be a final comment on the persona in the poem. 'To pass the time without thinking evil' is exactly what the persona has not done. He has dreamed a vision in which cupidity momentarily finds satisfaction. Upon seeing this disintegrate, he falls into despair and advises men to continue their attempts to secure a mistress. His vision and his reactions to it are tainted with evil thoughts, thoughts devoid of any idea of proper marriage and imprisoned by the rhetoric of cupidity.

The persona's final state of mind is his own just reward. The "Ballade royalle" to Henry VIII ends with the old proverb: "Et honny soit qui mal y pense." By dreaming cupidinous visions and finding their insubstantiality upsetting to his mind "enflamed with loues fyre," the persona receives evil for thinking evil. He becomes an icon of eternally frustrated desire, devoid of books, thoughts and friends.

APPENDIX

Since The Castell of Pleasure was first published about 1517, we may assume that it was written no more than two years before this, when Nevill was eighteen or nineteen years old. Though the following is not offered as any type of biographical criticism, it gives a sense of the concerns of the times which may have contributed to Nevill's subject matter. In his book Skelton: The Life and Times of an Early Tudor Poet, H. L. R. Edwards, in introducing Skelton's relationship to the Howard family, relates the following story about Thomas Howard II and his marriage to Elizabeth Stafford, daughter of the Duke of Buckingham:

So at Shrovetide 1513 Lord Thomas was a guest at the stately castle of Thorrbury, covertly sizing up the Stafford sisters in the intervals of riding over the Duke's three parks and assisting him at his favourite sports of horse-breaking and relic-visiting.

Almost at once Thomas's choice fell on Elizabeth. Barely nineteen to his forty, she was so much more sprightly and intelligent than the others that it was hardly a question of choosing at all. But there was a snag. Girl as she was, Elizabeth was already bespoken. In her own blunt phrase, written twenty-four years later, the Duke 'had bought my lord of Westmoreland for me.' This was little Ralph Neville, later the fourth Earl. In Thomas's

eyes it was of far less moment that this was also a love-match - that indeed, according to Elizabeth, 'he and I had loved together two year.' Possibly Elizabeth was exaggerating; it was a way she had. And there is something to be said for Thomas's scorn of a passion which began when the boy was scarcely twelve and the girl seventeen. All the same, the romantically inclined will be pleased to note that, after the eventual wreck of her marriage, Ralph Neville was the only man who stood by his boyhood sweetheart when all her family - even her own children - turned their faces against her.

However, as we have more than once had occasion to observe, Tudor love-affairs had nothing to do with marriage. For Lord Thomas the only obstacle was her father's contract with the Nevilles. The rest was mere childish folly. So, in his plausible way, he set to work on Buckingham. What arguments he used we do not know; but they ended in his carrying off the desolate girl, together with a dowry that would to day be nearly £ 50,000, plus a goodly share of the Stafford wardrobe and jewelery, and an assured income for his bride of 500 marks or, in modern money, £10,000 a year. It seemed an excellent bargain - until he settled down to live with a wife who hated him.

(pp. 201-202)

William Nevill could only have been a distant cousin of Ralph Neville, Ralph being a Westmoreland and William being a Latimer. (It should here be noted that The Dictionary of National Biography makes Ralph Neville only one year, not five years, younger than Elizabeth. And, further, Ralph, at the time of the marriage of Elizabeth to Thomas Howard II, was still a ward of Elizabeth's father, Sir Edward Stafford and soon after married Elizabeth's younger sister, Katherine.) Nonetheless, William was only

two years older than Ralph and it is not impossible that they had met. For William's grandfather (Sir Humphrey Stafford) on his mother's side (Anne) was a relation of Sir Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, "the richest man in England," as Edwards says (p.201). Due to Buckingham's fame, it is likely that William Nevill had heard of the marriage problem of Ralph Neville. In fact, it would be very surprising if he had not heard this bit of social news, William's father being a trusted courtier of Henry VIII and prominent enough a man to attend Wolsey's reception of the cardinal hat in 1515. Thus William was the second son of one of the most prominent men in England and assured of access to court and national news.

It is of interest to establish the possibility that William Nevill would have heard of Ralph Neville's misfortune, since this misfortune and the social problems which surround it, namely, whether people should marry out of personal infatuation or by family contract without regard to personalities, are treated extensively in The Castell of Pleasure. In the figures of Pity versus Disdain, the poem investigates the claims of lovers versus the claims of wealth and family, a common Tudor problem and one which is still somewhat familiar to us 'moderns.'

## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 253.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen Robert Knafel, "A Variorum Edition of The Kinz's Quair," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1969), DA 28:3147A-48A.

<sup>3</sup>Betty Jean Morley, "A Critical Edition of Stephen Hawes' The Example of Virtue," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1966), DA 27:4227A.

<sup>4</sup>In particular, see entries in the Bibliography for the following authors: Aswell, Bain, Brown, Fox, Freeman, Gluck, Lane, MacQueen, Markland, Preston, Rohrberger, NonHendy.

<sup>5</sup>Lewis, The Allegory of Love, p. 141.

## CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>William Nevill, The Castell of Pleasure, ed. by Roberta D. Cornelius (London: Oxford University Press, 1930; for EETS, 179), pp. 34-36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 55-72.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

## CHAPTER III

- <sup>1</sup>B.F. Huppé and D.W. Robertson, Jr., Fruyt and Chaf (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 100.
- <sup>2</sup>R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 218, 282-334.
- <sup>3</sup>Huppé and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, pp. 35-41.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 147-148.
- <sup>5</sup>The Year's Work in English Studies (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), XI, pp. 136-137.
- <sup>6</sup>H.S. Bennett, RES, VI (1930), pp. 462-464.
- <sup>7</sup>Lewis, The Allegory of Love, p. 253.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 256-259.
- <sup>9</sup>M.W. Stearns, "Chaucer Mentions a Book," MLN, LVII (1942), 28-31.
- <sup>10</sup>Alain Chartier, La Belle Dame Sans Merci, trans. by Sir Richard Bos, in Chaucerian and Other Pieces, being Vol. 7 of The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. by W.W. Skeat (2nd ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1935), pp. 299-327.
- <sup>11</sup>Ovid, Metamorphoses, Englished by William Caxton, 1480. (New York: George Braziller, in association with Harvard College, Cambridge, 1968), Vol. I, 32 sheets in.
- <sup>12</sup>P. Cuidii Nasonis Metamorphoseos: Libri moralizati cum pulcherrimis fabularum principalium figuris (Lyons, Iacobus Mareschal, 1519), (IC/EM v.CLXXVII, p. 433), Pxxiiii<sup>v</sup>.
- <sup>13</sup>Auctores Mythographi Latini, ed. by Augustinus van Staveren (Lugd. Bat., Samuelem Luchtmans, 1742), (IC v.142, p. 68), p. 640.

14 Petrus Berchorius, Ovidius moralizatus, being a separate edition of Reductorium morale Lib XV, cap. 11-xv (Utrecht: uitgegeven door het Instituut voor Latijn der Rijksuniversiteit, 1962), pp. 41-42. The Ovide moralisé complements the basic gloss of this tale as an example of virginity preserved (Ovide moralisé: Poème du commencement du quatorzième siècle publié d'après tous les manuscrits connus par C. De Boer (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, Februari, 1920)). The Phœbus-Daphne story is discussed in Tome I, Livre I, lines 2661-3260. The "Sommaire" section states: "Dane, fille d'un fleuve, c'est à dire douée d'un tempérament froid, représente la virginité; elle finit par être changée en arbre, parce que la parfaite pureté ne connaît plus aucun mouvement charnel, et cet arbre est un laurier, qui, comme la virginité elle-même, verdole toujours et ne porte pas de fruit. Le rôle donné à Phœbus est ici peu clair; l'auteur a suivi "l'intérement" qui l'appelle "dieu de sagesse;" mais la façon dont le commentateur latin se représente le rapport de ce dieu avec la virginité figurée par Daphné est obscure pour nous et l'a été pour son imitateur. Celui-ci ajoute d'ailleurs, de son cru, une "autre sentence": Dane représente la vierge Marie, aimée par celui qui est le vrai soleil: Apollon se couronne du laurier qui est Dane: c'est Dieu qui s'enveloppe du corps de celle dont il fait sa mère." Thus, all these mythographers agree in seeing Daphne as an emblem of virginity (or the Virgin Mary herself). In Lydgate's Reason and Sensuality, lines 2468ff., it is said that Daphne was turned into a laurel by the gods so that her virginity would be preserved. These references begin a series of references to virginity throughout the poem. As we shall see, the Virgin's color, blue, is important in connection with the gate which the dreamer chooses. Also, the fables of Danae and Atalanta are often glossed by referring to the Virgin. When put together, these oblique references form a matrix of meaning; by understanding the nature of the Virgin, we can see more clearly the cupidity of the persona and of Desire, a cupidity which is to be contrasted with the purity of the Virgin.



<sup>15</sup>Notice also the use of the verb "allicere" to imply a condition of being seduced into evil acts. This may add to our understanding of the use of "talecte" in line 7 of the Prologue: "Younge tender hertes/talecte with amyte." Though "talecte" probably means "to illumine" (as already pointed out), there may be an implication here that to be illumined with friendship is the same act as to be seduced by friendship. In any case, "talecte" may imply some type of sexual seduction.

<sup>16</sup>Ovid, The Art of Love and Other Poems, with a translation by J.H. Mozley (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 177-235.

<sup>17</sup>Geoffrey Chaucer, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. by F.N. Robinson (2nd ed.; Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1957), p. 251, line 739.

#### CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup>B.G. Koonce, Chaucer and the Tradition of Fate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 55-56.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 143, n14.

<sup>3</sup>Huppe' and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, pp. 40-41.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 40, n10.

<sup>5</sup>Perchorius, Cvidius moralizatus, pp. 161-162.

<sup>6</sup>Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. by Caxton. Vol. II, 63 sheets in.

<sup>7</sup>University Microfilm Reel #134. STC #12947.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., copied from the beginning of the poem.

<sup>9</sup>Lewis, The Allegory of Love, p. 118.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 141.



<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>12</sup>Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun. The Romance of the Rose, trans. by Harry W. Robbins (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1962), pp. 3-5 (Section 1, lines 14-34).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 463-464 (Section 100, lines 60-78).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-33 (Section 6, lines 106-134).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 92-93 (Section 20, lines 49-64).

<sup>16</sup>Stephen Hawes, The Pastime of Pleasure, ed. by W.E. Mead (London: Oxford University Press, 1928; EETS, 173).

<sup>17</sup>In my recent correspondence with Roberta Cornelius, she has given me two places in England to which to write for assistance in securing a copy of this un-reprinted book.

## CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup>John Lydgate, The Temple of Glas, ed. by J. Schick (London: Oxford University Press, 1924; EETS, 60).

<sup>2</sup>Chaucerian and Other Pieces, ed. by W.W. Skeat (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 376, lines 484-490.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 445, lines 1338-1344.

<sup>4</sup>"Mind" alone is mentioned eighteen times in lines 1, 12, 115, 117, 124, 129, 130, 136, 176, 195, 205, 238, 254, 258, 262, 270, 271, 282.

<sup>5</sup>Roberta Cornelius, in her dissertation, The Figurative Castle, lists both these references. Unfortunately, I found them in her dissertation only after spending much time finding them myself.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Grosseteste, Castell off Loue, ed. by Richard Francis Weymouth (London, 1864).

<sup>7</sup> Cursor Mundi, ed. by Rev. Richard Morris (London: Oxford University Press, 1874; EETS, 59).

<sup>8</sup> Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina Prior (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1881), Vol. 112, p. 1001.

<sup>9</sup> Petrus Berchorius, Reductorium morale (B. Rembolt for Claudius Chevallon), Lib XI, F CCXXXVII. "Tales [such mountaine] sunt viri sancti et perfecti; quia vere versus celum eriguntur per contemplationem/spem et affectionem.... Mons est vir perfectus; qui pro certo potest fieri mons tribus modis: scilicet per terremotum divini timoris et sui discussionis per mare et per amaritudinem penitentiae et contritionis; per flumina lachrymarum et devotionis scientiae vel compassionis.... Mons iste est religio vel status perfectionis .... Mons est paradisus; ubi est lux aeterni splendoris et perfecte cognitionis.... Sedebit populus meus in pulchritudine pacis in tabernaculis fidei in requie opulenta."

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Lib XI, F CCXXXIX<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> To see if this group of animals has significance, one's initial impulse would be to consult standard bestiaries, discover the significance of each animal and expect that their combined implications might add up to some total meaning which would define precisely the nature of the castle which they adorn. But in the standard bestiary, the meaning of each animal either can be one of several things (usually pointing to some quality of Christ) or can be nothing specific at all (in the case of the tiger). We thus are forced to select one of a multitude of possible meanings or create a meaning of our own; and both these possibilities are undesirable. Like White's translation of The Bestiary, Renaissance emblem books like Alciati's Emblemata cum commentariis amplissimis are not helpful. For instance, Alciati does not discuss the tiger, unicorn or griffin. He identifies the elephant with pix, but the elephant which he describes is not the elephant with a castle on his back which we find in Nevill (p. 734). He

glosses leo as custodia, terror, ira and dominatus (p. xlviI, 86), and none of these suggestions help to elucidate Nevill's list. Other medieval sources like Dante also do not seem helpful. Dante uses the lion in Inferno I to describe the sin of violence, but this surely does not help to explain the lion in Nevill. And, in the heavenly pageant on the top of Purgatory, the griffin appears as Christ, a suggestion likewise not applicable here.

<sup>12</sup>Nevill, The Castell of Pleasure, p. 121.

<sup>13</sup>In regard to the subject of Hercules and his choice, refer to Erwin Panofsky, Hercules am Scheidewege und andere antike Bildstoffe in der neueren Kunst: Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, XVIII, Leipzig and Berlin, 1930. More recently, see Theodor E. Mommsen, "Petrarch and the Story of the Choice of Hercules," JWCI, XVI (1953), 178-192. Mommsen corrects Panofsky's failure to mention the choice of Hercules as Petrarch uses it. Outside of this, he agrees with Panofsky's statement that (as Mommsen paraphrases it) "the great popularity of the theme in antiquity as well as in the Renaissance and afterwards is striking in contrast to its complete absence from the work of medieval writers and artists. According to Panofsky, "the topic was revived in literature only around the year 1400," making its first appearance in Coluccio Salutati's treatise De Laboribus Herculis" (p. 178). This last work has recently been edited by R.L. Ullman, De Laboribus Herculis, 2 Vols, Zürich, 1951. In this edition, see pp. 181-182 (3.7.1.; 3.7.2) for references to Hercules and his choice. Mommsen describes Salutati's treatment of Hercules: "Salutati, like Petrarch, combined Cicero's account of the choice of Hercules with the traditional allegory of the Pythagorean letter and also employed once, in the letter addressed to Giovanni of Siena, the phrase in bivio, which Petrarch had used in the same connection" (p. 189). It seems that the use of Hercules' choice by Nevill may be its first occurrence in English poetry.

<sup>14</sup>Sebastian Brandt, The Ship of Fools, trans. by Alexander Barclay (printed by Fynson, 1509; and by London: Henry Sotherton Co., 1874), 2 Vols. Volume II used exclusively. p. 286.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 287.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 305.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 288.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>20</sup>George Ferguson, Signs and Symbols in Christian Art (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 151.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., facing p. 65.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., facing p. 112.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., facing p. 128.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., facing p. 144.

<sup>25</sup>Joseph F. Eagan, S.J., "The Import of Color Symbolism in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," St. Louis University Studies, Series A, Humanities, Vol. I, #2 (November, 1949), pp. 21-23.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>27</sup>Ferguson, Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, p. 40.

<sup>28</sup>Brandt, The Ship of Fools, p. 303.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>31</sup>Nevill, The Castell of Pleasure, p. 123.

<sup>32</sup>Perchorius, Reductorium morale, lib XI, F CCLVII.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., lib XI, F CCXLIII.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., lib XI, F CCXLIII

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., Lib XI, F CCXLIIII.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., Lib XI, F CCIVI.

<sup>37</sup>Fantasy continually misleads the persona, especially in her improper reading of the Hippomenes-Atalanta story. She tells the persona what he wants to hear and gives him a vision which gratifies momentarily his desires. She is the principle in the mind which allows immediate gratification of egotistic desires to take place. In this role, she is similar to Fancy in Skelton's Magnificence, ed. by Robert Lee Ransay (London: Oxford University Press, 1908, EETS, 98). At the beginning of this play (contemporary in composition to Nevill's poem), Fancy, having the specific quality of largesse, gradually diverts Magnificence (and his controlled and reasoned use of his wealth) away from the control of Measure, who, with Felicity, controls Liberality. Fancy, like Fantasy, leads Magnificence down the rosy path of self-desire. But, unlike Nevill's persona who ends in despair, Magnificence is finally rescued from suicide by Good Hope. Also, in The Faerie Queene (Book One, Canto I, stanza XLVI), the dream that Morpheus brings is called an "ydel dreame" which with "false shewes" might "abuse his fantasy." This indicates that Fantasy, like other faculties, can be used and abused. St. George's fantasy is of course abused, and he thus dreams of "loves and lustfull play."

<sup>38</sup>Ferguson, Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, p. 34. Professor DiCesare has suggested that the myrtle may also be a symbol for immortality, though it is not used this way in this context.

<sup>39</sup>Ovid's Metamorphoses, trans. by Caxton, Vol. I, 100 sheets in.

<sup>40</sup>Berchorius gives the Pyramus and Thisbe fable a gloss which continues the set of oblique references to the Virgin. In the Cvidius moralizatus, he compares Thisbe to the Virgin: "Ista historia potest allezari de passione et incarnatione christi. Pyramus est dei filius. Tysbe vero anima humana quae se principio multum dilexerunt et per caritatem et amorem coniungi inuicem decreuerunt...et sub mori

arbore id est sub cruce ad fontem baptismi et gratiae inulcem consentire....Et ideo tyste id est fidelis anima debet per compassionem eius de passionis gladio se transfigere et eandem poenam mentaliter sustinere. Vel dic quod ista puella est virgo maria ad quam dei filius per incarnationem venit et sub crucis arbore mori voluit. Ipso vero per compassionem eius gladio se transfodit (p. 74-75). The Ovide moralise echoes this by saying that the story shows that man should live for the love of God and not for the love of this world and that he must imitate by his death Jesus' death; we must be martyrs for love: "Li saint martir, qui despisoient/Le monde et pour Dieu se vivoient/A tous martires endurer" (Tome II, Livre IV, lines 1208-1210). All these love stories point the reader to God and his kingdom, not the garden of affection.

<sup>41</sup>Nevill, The Castell of Pleasure, p. 123.

<sup>42</sup>Auctores Mythographi Latini, pp. 860-861.

<sup>43</sup>Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. by Caxton, Vo. II, 30 sheets in.

<sup>44</sup>This theme of engrossment in worldly delights is echoed by Perchorius in the Cvidius moralizatus. He identifies Hippomenes as the devil and the three apples as the temptations of the world: "Vel dic quod ista nympa est anima quam diabolus hippomenes temptationibus persequi non cessat: vt ipsam per malas concupiscentias capiat; et pudiciciam gratiae ipsi tollat. Ipso tamen quandoque taliter per dissensum peccata fuzit; et per bona opera currit quod ad ipsam diabolus non attingit. Sed pro certo quando videt quod ipsam superare non potest tria poma aurea id est tria mundi delectabilia scilicet diuitias; delicias; et honores ipsi solet offerre; et sic dum circa ista tria anima solet vacare necesse se habet a cursu bonorum operum se retardare. Sic igitur fit quod ista tria poma per auaritiam quantum ad diuitias; per luxuriam quantum ad delicias; per superbiam quantum ad eminentias; consequitur et diabolo per vitia coniugatur; et sic eius spiritualis virginitas violatur" (p. 156). This emphasizes Caxton's interpretation. In the Ovide moralise, after noting one interpretation in which the lovers' transformation is seen as a fall from



grace, the three apples are interpreted as representing faith, hope and charity: "Par Athalenta peut l'en prendre/Saint Yglise, la preuz, la bele,/Vierge curieuse et isnele/A corre humblement, snas bouffoi,/ Au cours de la divine foi//Par Ypomanes puis entendre/ Ceulz qui jadis suelent reprendre/Les corlours de Sainte Yglise,/Come saint Pol et saint Lenise.// Et Damedieu lor fist secours/Donant lor trois pomes dorees,/Ce sont trois vertues esmerees.//L'une est fois, l'autre est esperance/Et la tierce, qui plus avance/Tout home, est voire charité." (Tome IV, Livre X, lines 4037-4102).

<sup>45</sup> Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. by Caxton, Vol. I, 107 sheets in. Being somewhat more harsh than Caxton on the envious Clytie, Berchorius states in the Cvidius moralizatus: "Vel dic quod clytie significat animam peccatricem quam pro certo sol iustitiae christus non dignatur respicere immo ipsam vilipendit" (p. 80). And the Ovide moralise echoes this: "Clytie la fole envieuse/Despiserresse et desdelzneuse/Qui de Dieu soloit estre amie//.... Clytie, si con dist la fable/Avoit grant ire et grant envie/Des biens et de la bone vie/Que leuchote tousdis menoit.//....Clytie fu de Dieu despote./La malloite gent maldite,/Plaine d'orueil et de folie/Et d'envieuse dilonie./Het Diex, qui het tous envieux,/Tous felons, tous malicieux" (Tome II, Livre IV, lines 1822-1824, 1831-1834, 1868-1873). These references have only tertiary significance for the text itself.

<sup>46</sup> Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. by Caxton, Vol. II, 8 sheets in. The Ovide moralise explains Hyacinthus as a martyr: "Par Jacintus, sans riens mesprendre,/Peut l'en les apostres entendre/Et les martirs, que Diex ama/Tant, qu'amis et filz les clama/ Et citiens de paradis/Qui tant amerent Dieu jadis/ Et tant furent plain de sa grace" (Tome IV, Livre X, lines 3444-3450).

<sup>47</sup> Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. by Caxton, Vol. I, 89 sheets in.

<sup>48</sup> see Ben Jonson, ed. by C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), IV, p. 51. Berchorius agrees with this general

interpretation: "Dic quod Echo significat adultores qui et montes id est praelatos....Echo sunt quaedam litiosae et brisosae mulieres....Pro certo isti in fonte mundanae prosperitatis videntes vmbam et eminentiam status sui quae omnia transeunt sicut vmbra" (Ovidius moralizatus, p. 71). The Ovide moralise interprets Narcissus as an emblem of pride: "La "fontaine Narcisi" donna son nom à la ville de "Narci" et à une fleur. La beauté physique "petit vault, qui se poi dure et si tost fault." C'est à cause de leur orgueil que Dieu a chasse les mauvais anges du Paradis. La fleur représente celle dont "li Psalmistes dist qu'au main, florist, au soir est cheoite et fletrie," la vanité. Narcisse est encore l'homme orgueilleux qui se mire "au faulz miroirs de cest monde," et qui s'enivre du "bevrage plein d'amertume" qui donne toujours plus soif" (Tome I, Livre III, Sommaire). Commenting on this fable in "The fable of Ovid tretinz of Narcissus, translated out of Latin into Englyssh mytre, with a moral ther unto (1560)," Douglas Bush, in Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1963), p. 47, cites Boccaccio's gloss of the story; for Boccaccio, Echo is "the voice of earthly delights and vanities which lures men to their ruin." For this reference, see Giovanni Boccaccio, Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri (Bari: Gius. Laterza and Figli, 1951), Vol. I, Liber Septimus, p. 381, lines 1-10. For each fable, I have consulted the Genealogie but have found that it was helpful only in this case.

## CHAPTER VI

<sup>1</sup> Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. by Caxton, Vol. I, 128 sheets in.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. I, 128 sheets in.

<sup>3</sup> Berchorius reads this fable again as a reference to the Virgin or to virgins: "Ista puella potest significare virginem gloriosam quae in cista fidei



custodita; ibi a Ioue id est a spiritu sancto  
 ertitit impraefnata et descendente pluuiâ aurea id  
 est dei filio in premium vteri virginialis perseum  
 id est christum deum et hominem concepit" (Cyvidius  
 moralizatus, pp. 82-83). And the Cyvide moralise  
 takes this one step further: "Danaë est le sein  
 de la Vierge, la naissance de Fersée représente  
 celle du Christ, Acrisius signifie le peuple  
 hébreu qui persecute le Sauveur." (Tome II, Livre  
 IV, Sommaire). This sum of references to the  
 Virgin reinforces the reading of the garden of  
 affection as an upside down paradise, in which the  
 fairest hill since the Incarnation has been transformed  
 into a worldly temple of delights.

<sup>4</sup>Lewis, The Allegory of Love, p. 253.

<sup>5</sup>Line 803 reads: "I cannot comprehend your  
 attainable kindress." The M.E.D. defines "compass"  
 as "to comprehend, understand, interpret" as common  
 from 1400. But the M.E.D. does not list "compassable."  
 The O.E.D. defines it as "attainable" and cites its  
 first use in 1581. Feeling that this meaning does not  
 fit smoothly into the context, Cornelius has suggested  
 that it may mean "gracious" or "condescending."  
 This suggestion seems improbable, since none of the  
 meanings of "compass" or "compassen" could easily  
 be transformed into this meaning by the "able"  
 suffix. "Attainable" is probably the best meaning,  
 being understood in relation to its root meaning:  
 "capable of being encircled."

<sup>6</sup>Huppé and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, p. 85.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 87-88.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>9</sup>see CHAPTER III, footnote 10.

<sup>10</sup>The Interlude of Calisto and Melebea  
 (London: The Malone Society Reprints, 1908).

<sup>11</sup>As Professor Weld has pointed out, this  
 subject was also treated in 1576 in a pageant and  
 tournament called "The Fortune of Perfect Beauty,"

in which the four foster children of Desire besiege the Castle of Perfect Beauty (inhabited by Queen Elizabeth) and are at length defeated (see W.W. Greg, A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration (London, 1939-1962), Vol. I, pp. 156-157).

<sup>12</sup>Professor Weld has suggested that "a man of yesterdaye" may refer to a member of the older nobility, many of whom were killed in the War of the Roses. If so, Disdain's remark would be snobbish, an insult addressed to the mushrooming new nobility.

## CHAPTER VII

<sup>1</sup>Huppé and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>4</sup>I have corrected slightly Cornelius' translation of this passage.

<sup>5</sup>E.G. Koonce, Chaucer and the Tradition of Fame, pp. 15-19.

<sup>6</sup>Andreas Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), p. 185.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>8</sup>C.S. Lewis comments on this passage: "Thus Nevill warns lovers to be 'secret,' not noticing that there is now nothing to be secret about" (The Allegory of Love, p. 255). Lewis here fails to distinguish Nevill the omniscient author from the confused persona who gives this advice.

<sup>9</sup>Huppé and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, pp. 144-145.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 145n.

<sup>11</sup> Francis X. Newman, "Somnium - Medieval Theories of Dreams and the Form of Vision Poetry" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1962), pp. 316-317.

## CHAPTER VIII

<sup>1</sup> Huppe' and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, pp. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> Though the O.E.D. cites a use of "rural" in prose in 1470 and then in Lyndesay's The Monarchie in 1555, Nevill's use of the term to describe rhetorical principles may be preceded in English poetry only by its use in Alexander Parclay's The Elogues (1514), ed. by Peatrice White (London: Oxford University Press, 1928; EETS, 175). In "The Prologue" to his translations, Parclay echoes Hawes' concern with sloth and addresses himself to the problem of style as appropriate to subject matter, a problem which Nevill treats extensively in his Epilogue. Parclay first introduces the idea of "plain style" as appropriate to the speech of shepherds:

In this saide maner the famous Theocrite  
First in Siracuse attempted for to write  
Certayne Eloges or speeches pastorall,  
Inducing Shepherdes, men homely and rurall.  
Which in playne language, according to their name,  
Had sundry talking, sometime of mirth and game,  
Sometime of thinges more like to ꝑrauitie,  
And not exceeding their small capacitie.

(19-26)

Following Hawes, Parclay also speaks of sloth:

Dull slouth eschewing, my selfe to exercise  
In such small matters, or I durst enterprise  
To hyer matter.....

(51-53)

Finally, Parclay states that rhetoric must be appropriate to its subject:

It were not fitting a heard or man rurall  
 To speake in termes gay and rhetoricall.  
 So teacheth Horace in arte of poetry,  
 That writers namely their reason should apply  
 Mete speeche appropiing to euey personage,  
 After his estate, behauour, wit and age.  
 (83-88)

Since "rurall termes" probably means low style or humble style in Nevill, Barclay's importance for Nevill is not in the pastoral mode as distinct from the dream vision. Rather, following Horace, Barclay firmly states the principle that style must mirror its subject, an idea which Nevill cleverly manipulates in the Epilogue.

<sup>3</sup>Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, trans. by D.W. Robertson, Jr. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1958). pp. 128-129.

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