"In acknowledging play you must acknowledge mind . . ."

Johan Huizinga

Dedicated to
Jeannette Wilson
who tried to teach me early:
seek to understand, challenge, and love life.
PREFACE

The conception for this essay came at the suggestion of Dr. Merle Fifield while I was a student in her "Chaucer" class at Ball State in the fall of 1974. Dr. Fifield recommended Homo Ludens, and recalled a paper by Dr. John Leyerle, the Director of Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto, which pioneered the application of game-theory to literary analysis. Unfortunately, I was not able to obtain a copy of this study entitled Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, so I decided to attempt a "play-concept" analysis of Troilus and Crisyede without his assistance.

I must further acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Richard G. Brown, Associate Professor of English at Ball State University. His encouragement and suggestions have provided me with the motivation to expand what was originally a course paper into the work which I here submit as my honors thesis at Ball State University this fall of 1975.

Marc L. Wilson
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE ........................................... i
CONTENTS ......................................... ii

I. INTRODUCTION ..................................... 1
   A. The play concept as viewed by Huizinga ....... 2
   B. The play concept as a literary tool .......... 2

II. THE PLAY CONCEPT ................................ 3
   A. Play is free .................................... 3
   B. Play is "not ordinary" ......................... 4
   C. Play is "disinterested" ....................... 6
   D. Play has spatial and chronological limits ... 8
   E. Play creates order ............................. 10
   F. Play has tension ............................... 10
   G. Play has rules ................................ 11
   H. Play forms groups ............................. 12
   I. Play has definite functions .................. 13

III. THE PLAY CONCEPT IN TROILUS AND CRISYEDE .... 14
   A. Freedom in the activity ..................... 16
   B. The "not ordinary" elements of the activity .. 18
   C. The "disinterestedness" of the activity ..... 19
   D. The spatial and chronological limitations of activity .......... 21
   E. The order in the activity .................... 23
   F. The tension in the activity .................. 23
The purpose of this paper is to establish the play-concept as a useful tool in literary analysis. To this end the paper will attempt to demonstrate how action and character in Chaucer's *Troilus and Crisyede* can be better understood in terms of "play" in the sense that Johan Huizinga has demonstrated in *Homo Ludens*.

The particular strength of the game theory in literary analysis is the capacity to make clear the various levels of reality on which a character can operate. The line between what is "real"--that is, what is the result of the phenomenological environment--and what is "unreal"--in this case, what is the result of an effort to impose what is imagined to be order and perfection upon the phenomenological environment--is difficult to trace. Huizinga's play-concept provides a basis for examining the different, and sometimes simultaneous, levels of reality that must be dealt with in day-to-day existence and which are encountered in the world of a fictitious character.

Huizinga establishes that, culturally, play is one of the main starting points for civilization. The concept of play must be reduced to a working definition before it can be understood and before it can be useful as a literary tool.
This Huizinga does before he goes on to discuss the play element in human culture:

Summing up the formal characteristics of play we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious," but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means.  

Some detailed examination and modification may be needed before the play-concept can be understood as a benefit to literary analysis. The basic elements of play, to paraphrase Huizinga, are as follows:

I. All play is free; participation is voluntary and continuing the game is also a voluntary activity.

II. All play is "beside the ordinary"; it cannot exist within the "real" world.

III. All play is "disinterested"; it is not associated with profit and material gain.

IV. All play is contained within location and time limits; that is, all play occurs within definable spatial and chronological zones.

V. All play creates order and strives for perfection; the world created by a game is one that is absolutely ordered and perfect for the actions of the play.

VI. All play is tense; there are tensions set up in play and games that grow out of the effort to achieve
order and out of the effort to establish and recognize the rules of a particular game.

VII. All play has rules; the rules are the recognized structure of activities within the game.

VIII. All play encourages the formation of groups; these groups are secretive in nature and exclusive to the members of the play community. 3

These are the elements of play as set down in Homo Ludens. This catalogue is accurate and fair as far as it goes. But each particular category needs to be qualified in some more detail before applying them to an understanding of Troilus and Crisyede.

A. Huizinga states that all play is participated in freely and voluntarily—or it is not "play" at all. This statement brings up the problem of clarifying what is meant by "free and voluntary." Let it be asserted that freedom involves the kind of "authentic living" pattern that is suggested by Heidegger.4 The individual must always accept the responsibility for his choices and must recognize the validity of his choices. There can be no such thing as the negative choice. Choosing not-to-choose is an absurdity that freedom does not admit. There is no way to abdicate personal responsibility for taking a particular course of action—or a particular course of inaction. In the case of play, therefore, circumstance cannot dictate that an individual must participate, or that he cannot participate. Play is a product of the mind, not the phenomenological environment. It is,
in Huizinga's terms separated from the ordinary. This does not mean that the impact or value of play activities is questionable. But it does show that since play is a product of the imagination and will rather than of the environment and physical circumstance, the possibility of anyone being forced by 'circumstance' to play is eliminated. To be so would be both inconsistent with the nature of play and a denial of freedom.

Motivation, rather than circumstance, might be more appropriate to the discussion of play in this context. This reference would be much more apt, as it can be asserted that a participant in some play-action chooses participation as a preferable alternative, having been motivated to select that particular possibility as superior to any other that may have been presented. Note that the element of "fun" does not necessarily have to be present in play, even though it is common in play. While play activity is universal in human culture, it would be inaccurate to assert that it is motivated by a drive to create 'fun'. Some motivating factor must be present, however. One can safely admit that some aesthetically pleasing or spiritually enriching experience must be promised in play activities.

B. Huizinga has said that "We play and we know that we play, so we must be more than merely rational beings, for play is irrational." Play is an irrational activity. It is of the mind, and yet, it has no place in a rational process, unless one admits that an exercise of mental capacity—
even of rational capacity—is the same thing as rationality. One may as well propose that playing "chopsticks" and the compositions of Chopin are both equal demonstrations of proficiency at the keyboard, or that the exercises that an athlete performs in preparation for a race—a "warm up"—are as significant as the race itself. Games are not of this world, and yet the players are real enough people. They do, in fact, imagine the conditions of the play activity. While they are not transported to some plane of existence beyond the present one where they move and play within the same three physical dimensions as they commonly do in the "real" world, there is a very important separation from the "real" world, nonetheless. Those that play are totally absorbed in the activity. The game may compete with the "real" world for the attention of the player and, often as not, prevail for a time. The relatively "nonserious" nature of play may even suggest itself as preferable to the frequently tedious and serious nature of the "real" world. It is this sense of stepping outside the ordinary life that makes play activity special in regard to its sense of freedom, its disinterestedness, its containment within certain time and space limitations, and its sense of order. Huizinga explains the relationship between the play world and the real world in this way:

This "only pretending" quality of play betrays a consciousness of the inferiority of play compared with "seriousness," a feeling that seems to be something as primary as play itself. Nevertheless, as we have already pointed out, the consciousness of play being "only pretend" does not by any means prevent it
from proceeding with the utmost seriousness, with an absorption, a devotion that passes into rapture and, temporarily at least, completely abolishes that troublesome "only pretending" feeling. . . . The inferiority of play is continually offset by the corresponding superiority of its seriousness.

Play, then, is separate from "real" life, but retains a consciousness of the separateness—even, Huizinga suggests, a consciousness of its inferiority. An act of will makes play distinct from the activities of the rest of the world. It also imparts the qualities of imposed order and perfection, tension, and the value of rules, as shall be seen. The distinction between "play" and "games" is what is central in distinguishing between the rational and the irrational phases of activity in the play-concept. Play-activity is any activity that falls into the eight categories that Huizinga has discussed. "Games," on the other hand, are the total manifestation of related play activities. Games tend to express rational structure in the rules and goals of which they are made. When "play-activity" is considered, however, the processes are irrational because the purpose behind any play activity is not to be explained in rational terms. Appetitive drives, ambitions, subsistence and profit motivation are all subordinated to the play-activity itself.

C. Play is called "disinterested" by Huizinga. He asserts that play is not concerned with any material profit. Roger Caillois, who was impressed by Huizinga's work enough to deal with the topic himself, was troubled by the fact that this assertion seemed to exclude any game where property of
real value was exchanged. Gambling seems to be the chief sport here offended. Caillois modified the assertion to read: "Property may be exchanged, but no goods are produced."  

This matter does bring up a seeming weakness in Huizinga's contention. But a closer look not only clears up this problem, but should give a better understanding of the play-concept as a literary instrument. The key lies in the word "disinterested." Rather than meaning that the players were not going to exchange any goods at all, Huizinga meant that they were not interested in the "real world value" of the goods. The players are not concerned with "real" life considerations during the course of the game. They are beyond the "ordinary existence." In fact, it is just as Caillois suggests, for the players are not seeking any material gain. The word "disinterested" implies that the markers, symbols, and prizes in the game are not valued by the players in the same sense that the "ordinary" world values them. They are important to the players only as they represent a position in the order the players have imposed on the play world, or as they represent the skill or luck or favor that a player possesses. Caillois's distinction that play is not productive may be important in certain contexts (sociological or technological, perhaps?). In literary and psychological analysis it is both a foregone conclusion and a distracting qualification. Of course play is not meant to be productive in either of these latter two contexts.
No goods in play-activities can have any but symbolic value since the play is removed from the "real" world. The "disinterestedness" of play means that the normal pressures and drives of the common world are suspended. But this does not mean that the symbols and awards used in a play-activity or game situation might not also have a coincidental value in the common world as well as a symbolic value in the game world. Whenever these symbols take on the "real" world value, or whenever a player begins to assess the common value of play properties with an eye to converting them into whatever real value has been assigned to them by the real world, the game is destroyed and the play-activity ends immediately for that player. It is no longer "playing," so the person must pay the penalty of being disillusioned then and there. This last, of course, puts professional players—ballplayers, gamblers, sportsmen, etc.—beyond the pale. The intrusion of the "real" world into the game will destroy any game as a play-activity.

D. All play is carried out within the spatial limits of a play area or areas and within the limits of a play time. The play areas may be as obvious as a boxing-ring, a playground, a stage, or any number of formally and consciously recognized areas that are set aside for a particular kind of game or a special part of play-activity. The pageantry that often goes along with a formal game is also contained within spatial boundaries (parade grounds, arenas, auditoriums, club-houses, etc.) and may be seen as a secondary kind of
play. In many ways the pageantry of a game is quite independent of the game itself as a play-activity. Consider the pageantry of a professional football game, for example. These formal games are any that can be said to have a specified number of players who are confined to a game area with a limited amount of playing time. They must work for specified goals in prescribed ways. Most often the time allotted for these games is precisely measured out in units, and must be used consecutively at regular intervals.

Informal games have only loosely described limitations on the number of participants and on the kind of activity. They are subject to the play-concept assertion of chronological and spatial limitations. In fact, these designations are particularly important in establishing the "separateness" of informal games.

Any game must have a beginning and an end. The informal game begins when the participants accept the imposition of some imagined order and begin to work for some expression of that order. It is not necessary that the player acknowledge in a formal way either the order or the goals that express that order. Neither do the participants have to signify and agree formally about these things to each other. Most often the play is begun, carried out, and completed by conventions that are only apparent under careful scrutiny. An example of this would be courtly love, a convention that we will examine in detail shortly.

All play ends immediately when the "real" world
intrudes into its context. If the "real" world is recognized by someone either stepping outside the game boundaries or violating the play time with ordinary matters, the play-activity is over. Play must be separate from the ordinary world in all ways, especially in the space/time context.

E. Play creates order, which grows out of the player's effort to create an environment that is perfect for the conditions and activities of the play. The goal of all play is to attain some expression of perfection. Huizinga says:

Play demands order absolute and supreme. The least deviation from it "spoils the game," robs it of its character and makes it worthless. The profound affinity between play and order is perhaps the reason why play... seems to lie to such a large extent in the field of aesthetics. ... .It may be that this aesthetic factor is identical with the impulse to create orderly form, which animates play in all its aspects.

F. The element of tension must be present in any situation where the outcome is in doubt. In play, there is always a striving towards resolution of a situation, maintenance of some order, or the solution of some problem. Even beyond these considerations, the element of tension that is present in play-activities is what provides the ethical value of a game situation. The player's abilities to overcome the obstacles of the game, to beat the "odds" in certain situations, and to prove himself to be a "fair" competitor or a moral player, represent the tension of a play-activity. These values go beyond the question of 'who is going to win', or 'how well will a certain individual do'. Together with these last
considerations, they make up the element of tension that is *sine qua non* of all play.

G. Both the element of tension and the drive to create order and perfection are closely related to the fact that all play has rules. The rules are meant to guide the players towards some goal in a specific way. They are also meant to protect the play-activity from the outside world. These rules are meant to guide the players towards some goal in a specific way. They are also meant to protect the play-activity from the outside world. These rules and the illusion that they are intended to protect are of primary importance. They are the structure of the game, the very fabric of which it is made. Any game must be understood in its rules first and foremost before play can proceed. There must be agreement among all players about how the action will be conducted.

Note the fact that people will often tolerate a cheater longer than they will a "spoil sport." Bank robbers and revolutionaries spend more time in jails than do embezzlers and unscrupulous politicians. Children are often admonished not to be "tattle tales," and a ball-player who steps out of bounds with the ball—violating the spatial limitations of the play—will lose possession of the ball. What rationale can be assigned for this value system? Simply this: to break the illusion of the game—to destroy the "play" by shattering the roles and thereby letting the "real" world enter into the magic circle of play—is by far a more unforgiveable crime than to seek an advantage by circumventing
the rules, and yet leaving the appearance of the game intact. Around this value system has grown an extensive system of "honor." One might even admire a cheater for his skill at undermining the rules of play without disturbing the surface of things, viewing his activity as another sort of game within a game. But those who disrupt through violence, ignorance, or contempt are held to be barbarians, dangerous radicals, and incorrigibles, men who have benefit of neither culture nor honor.

H. Huizinga has recognized that games tend to cause the formation of social groups based on the game community. At any point where people escape from the "real" world into the "game" world, it is as if they have shared an experience that has transcended their individual selves and as if they feel bound to their fellow players by this common denominator.

The pageantry that accompanies play is a kind of group activity that asserts the existence of a body of people who all share this same interest. At times it becomes a game itself. It could represent the game itself in a stylized, symbolic fashion, and it may function as a sort of safety-valve for those who cannot participate at that particular time or who cannot participate directly and actively at all.

It is remarkable how similar this view of pageantry is to what has been suggested by Dr. Carl Andry as a working definition of religions. In discussing the nature of religions, he says that religions are
Emotional in nature. They occur when a community group comes together to share a relationship to an idea and to each other, and to communicate about that idea with each other. Relationship and respect for some common idea... that is the key to religions, not gods and books and spirits.

Is it too bold to suggest that religion and play have a kinship that goes all the way back to the dawn of rationality in the human race?

Huizinga assigns one of two possible functions to all play: to be a contest for something and to represent something. It is also possible to have a combination of these two functions. As a competition for something, some kind of property is frequently exchanged as a token of the outcome. The prize in this exchange is sought after because of its symbolic value, regardless of its worth in the ordinary world. It may acquire mystical or sentimental accretions that give it a symbolic value far beyond the immediate contest. Nevertheless, it is a prize in a game only as long as the competitors seek it as a symbol of their special skill or luck, and not for its intrinsic or assigned values. As a representation of an event, situation, person, or whatever, play reaches its most sublime and sophisticated level. There is a relationship between the activities of children as they play "house" and the activities of adults as they attend a solemn occasion of state or religion. Both are seeking to represent: either to recreate some past event as they idealize it, or to influence the course of things to come as they would like to have them turn out. In primeval memory this sort of activity may have
been associated directly with sympathetic magic and religion. Today the relationships, meanings, and functions are perhaps more sophisticated, definitely more obscure.

There are also play activities that people participate in that have a more personal significance, such as when one plays "the perfect host," the "wise man," or the ever-popular "interested friend." These activities are true play activities when they meet the criteria for games that Huizinga suggests. But they have also a very significant bearing on the "real" world, since they are such common phenomena in the ordinary, every-day existence. It is quite possible to move among and deal with the ordinary world and yet be separated from it.

All of the abovementioned considerations about the play-concept can be used effectively as a means to an understanding of the actions and characters of Chaucer's *Troilus and Crisyede*. Throughout the development of the tale the reader should observe the levels of reality upon which these characters operate. It is not suggested that the play world of Troilus and Crisyde is not in some very important senses "real," nor is the sincerity of their affections for each other here questioned. But there is a definite line between what is imposed upon them by the world and what is imposed upon them by their own wills. The application of Huizinga's game-theory to this poem is one way of delimiting these different levels of activity. The lines between "ordinary" and "play" in the poem are not obvious, as they might be in
the case of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*; here the play-world levels and the ordinary-world levels are apparent, regardless of the reader's sympathies. Those who live and think in the "real" world will always insist that *Don Quixote de la Mancha* was a madman, and those who live in the "imagined" world will always insist that *Don Quejana* was, in fact, the madman. The play activities of Quixote are in sharp contrast to the conditions of the ordinary world. In *Troilus and Crisyede* the two levels actually blend, rather than contrast. They are entangled in a game, but not so totally that they ignore the phenomenological events and realities around them. Their illusions are much more subtle. They do not recognize that they are in a game, and neither do the rest of the characters. They can, however, tell a windmill from a giant.

If *Troilus and Crisyede* is about a game, then it remains to describe and designate that game. One of the more significant themes in the poem is that of courtly love. This is the convention that *Troilus and Crisyede* give to their relationship. It is the vehicle for much of the plot. Courtly love ties together all themes and all events and gives them a plausible cause, a sufficient context and reason for being a part of this tale in the first place. The theme of courtly love is too obviously a central one in the tale to be explained solely by the play-concept analysis, or solely by any other method. However, one can claim that the game that develops is a game of courtly love. The game-theory can be applied to *Troilus and Crisyede* as a way to understand better how the
courtly-love theme operates in the poem. The actions and intentions of the characters in Chaucer's story are moved by the courtly-love theme. This paper asserts that the courtly love of Troilus and Crisyede is a game. We may expect, then, to find in this 'game' of courtly love all the elements that Huizinga suggests. Indeed, they are there, and in tracing these elements one can gain some insight into the action in the poem itself.

A. To be a game any activity must first be freely and voluntarily entered upon. Troilus and his lady are free to enter or to disdain the courtly-love affair. Admittedly, the issue is somewhat confused by the fact that Troilus tries to surrender his freedom. Speaking to himself, Troilus says "ganw thin owen chyne" (Book I, 1.509), and he seems to take his figure of speech quite to heart, for he constantly speaks of his lack of control over his own fate: "Al sterlees withinne a boot am I" (Book I, 1.416) and "For wel fynde I that Fortune is my fo" (Book I, 1.838). Troilus is willing to give up the freedom of his choice. He stands "Amydde the see, betwixen wyndes two" (Book I, 1.417), and he does not wish to be in the position of having to decide on a course of action. Instead, he tries to surrender his responsibility:

And to the God of Love thus seyde he
With pitous vois, "O lord, now youres is
My spirit, which that oughte youres be. (Book I, 1.421)

No man can ever surrender his right to choose. The fact that one is in some way responsible for his own fate
goes back in literary history at least as far as *Genesis*, and in pre-literary history it goes back to the basic myths of mankind (such as are expressed by the myths of Sisyphus and Prometheus, for example). Criseyde enters the activity no less freely, though perhaps with some greater degree of reluctance at first. For the purposes of this thesis, however, this reluctance enforces the idea that she enters voluntarily into the arrangement. She has contemplated the possibilities, and whatever reservations she may or may not have had, she has entered into the "play" on the basis of choice. She willingly accepts Troilus's love, just as he willingly offers it.

One could cover up these choices with a plethora of circumstantial compulsions, both psychological and material. But to hedge the question here must lead one eventually to question all free choice. Who cannot argue that any and all decisions he has faced were not without circumstantial pressure to choose one way, the other way, or both ways? Rather, let it be granted that people are motivated by both positive and negative kinds of pressures, but not compelled to a choice inevitably and irrevocably on the basis of these pressures. Human beings do have, and frequently exhibit, the capacity for making the perverse decision that does not necessarily go the way the wind seems to be blowing.

Of the three main characters in the game of courtly love in this poem, Pandarus most obviously enters the activities freely. He offers his help to Troilus spontaneously (Book I, 1.618-620). He persists in his offer, even when Troilus
questions the value of his aid (Book I, 1.621 & 622). There can be little doubt that Pandarus is a voluntary agent in the game.

B. Troilus is stepping out of the ordinary when he enters the courtly-love affair. He has maintained a very definite position on Eros in his day-to-day existence. He has been quite merciless with those who are in love. He holds love in scorn, and Pandarus recalls that Troilus once referred to Love as "Seynt Idyot, lord of thise foles alle" (Book I, 1.910). Suddenly Troilus's opinion of Eros is reversed. He has stepped out of the ordinary world and has departed from his ordinary values:

But for non hate he to the Grekes hadde,
    Ne also for the rescous of the town,
    Ne made hym thus in armes for to madde,
    But only, lo, for this conclusioun:
    To liken hire the bet for his renoun. (Book I, 1.477 ff)

Up to this time Troilus has been an ideal warrior--in the Greek sense. He does not care for any of the affairs of the world that are outside of the immediate enterprise. He scorns love and he scorns lovers as fools. But now he plays an entirely different role. Even his motives in going to war have been altered.

Troy's chiefest industry at this time is a desperate war. Troilus has been embroiled in it and has been very personal in his hatred of the invaders. However, his infatuation with Crisyede has changed all that. He makes a terrible slaughter among the Greek armies, but not for the sake of his
old animosity and not even for the sake of rescuing the city. His whole effort, as the poet tells us in the above passage, is to get Crisyede to appreciate him more for his "renoun."

Crisyede steps out of her ordinary existence, too. Again, her choice does not have the same impulsiveness that Troilus's has. But it is perhaps a more tangible choice. She has lived a very uncertain life as a widow and the daughter of a proclaimed traitor. Her life has not been particularly easy or pleasant. But she has maintained the things that are important to her: property, respect, and her freedom to choose. Now she sets all this aside while she entertains Troilus's love. To suppose that Crisyede is only making the best use of Troilus would be to contradict what the poet tells us in so many words:

For I sey nought that she so sodeynly
Yaf hym hire love, but that she gan enclyne
To like hym first, . . .
And after that, his manhod and his pyne
Made love withinne hire herte for to myne. (Book II, 1.673-678)

Keep in mind that this is the poet speaking in plain narrative terms, not the rationalization of one of the characters. It may be taken at face value, then. Crisyede is removed from her ordinary existence by this love. She no longer needs to face the every day struggle with her fear. She has a very solid type of protection from both the Greeks, whom she is dreadfully afraid of (Book II, 1.120-124) and from her dread that she will be despised and driven out by the Trojan council.

C. In regard to the third element of play activities,
play must be "disinterested." The disinterestedness of Crisyede follows close after she has been in a "not-ordinary" state of being. It can be conjectured that she is in love with a Trojan Prince because of the convenience of having Troilus's interest in her well-being. But the poet clearly indicates that this is not the case in the lines cited immediately above. She does not expect any profit from the affair, regardless of how it might look, and she actually feels apprehensive about the results of the affair. She fears that she will be taking a certain risk in getting involved with Troilus in the first place. In the conversation between Crisyede and Pandarus in Book two, 11. 449-505, this apprehension is clearly seen. So Crisyede can see little profit in loving Troilus.

If Crisyede is disinterested, then, in the advantages of loving Troilus, what of Troilus? In a crude way, it could be supposed that he "gains something" from his lady. But it seems more probably that Crisyede's submission to his love is actually just the sort of prize with which a game might reward a player for completing an activity successfully. If an assigned value is placed upon this act, then the world of reality has intruded and disrupted the game. In fact, Troilus does no such thing. In terms of Troilus's seeking and Crisyede's giving, this act of love is quite within the rules of courtly love that Andreas Capellanus has set down. Just because the world of cynical reality might assign a 'real value' to the consummation of the affair does not mean
that Troilus does. That would be against what is known about the dictates of courtly love, and it would be contrary to what is known about human nature. Men and women in love are not moved to place a material or temporal value upon that love. So Troilus is also disinterested in his motivation to participate in the play activity.

D. The play concept limits all play activity to certain time and space zones. We can define the spatial limits upon Troilus and Crisyede fairly easily. The play activities of courtly love may take place on battlefields and in lists, in the palace gardens and chambers, or even in temples and churches. Their surroundings are always idealized. Armed conflicts take place in beautiful open glades, the lovers meet and commune in pleasant gardens or lavish palaces. They do not meet in cafes or living rooms, and the rivals do not do battle in a mud pit or slag heap. Whatever the occasion is to be, the conditions of the surroundings must be ideal for the action which is about to occur. First of all, the activities of Troilus and Crisyede take place in the spatial context of Troy. While Crisyede has no contact with the battlefield activities, this does not exclude the battle from the play activities. As has already been noted, the poet notes very carefully the influence of the courtly love upon Troilus's actions and motivations as a soldier. The courtly-love activities flourish in the chambers of Crisyede's palace in the exchange between Pandarus and Crisyede (opening of Book II, 11.78-595) in a kind of parade when Crisyede
views Troilus passing in the company of warriors after returning from the field (Book II, 1.610-651), in the temple where Troilus first notices Crisyede (Book I, 1.274), and, of course, in the bed chambers of both Troilus and Crisyede. Courtly love limits their activities to certain times and certain places by another means besides the demand for an ideal setting. Pandarus charges Troilus to guard Crisyede's honor carefully. This admonition means more than it seems to. According to the rules of courtly love, secrecy is a vital part of the affair. Troilus is cautioned by Pandarus to keep the relationship with Crisyede in confidence (Book III, 11.281-329). They cannot go parading hand in hand through the city market during the middle of the day. A courtly lover is bound to remain discreet and secret if at all possible. The fact that courtly love encouraged an adulterous relationship is sufficient to explain this convention in general terms. In reference to Troilus and Crisyede, the element of secrecy tends to support the element of group formation, as shall be seen presently. Crisyede, however, is not married. As a widow she is certainly free to marry again. Their behavior seems puzzling until one considers two things. First, marriage and courtly love do not mix. No man can be a lover to his wife in the courtly love tradition. Secondly, Troilus and Crisyede are playing, and their game includes this secrecy as a part of its order. The secrecy not only heightens the tensions of the game, but it serves to protect the order and illusion of the game as well. So they limit
themselves as to where and when they might play out their game—and yet, carry the game with them constantly.

E. Troilus's conception of order in this game is that of Eros as a benevolent and protective figure. His hymn to the God of Love (Book III, 11.1744-1771) demonstrates this idea. Since the war has taken on new meaning for Troilus, the affairs and state of the whole world seem to be perfectly ordered to him. They shall remain in order only as long as Troilus can maintain the illusion of the game.

Crisyede sees in Troilus her protector and seeks this sort of protection above all things. Her relationship with Troilus is motivated by fear. Fear is the key to understanding her motivation. According to C. S. Lewis, she has a fear of loneliness, of old age, of death, of love, and of hostility; of everything, indeed, that can be feared. And from this Fear springs the only positive passion which can be permanent in such a nature, the pitiable longing, more childlike than womanly, for some strong and stable thing that will hide her away and take the burden from her shoulders.

This relationship supplies this kind of protection. Troilus becomes for her "... a wal/ of steel, and sheld from every displeasaunce" (Book III, 1.479). Her conception of the order in this game is to be in a perfectly safe and stable world, and this is the order she imposes upon the game.

F. The tension in the game is derived from the psychological make-up of Troilus and Crisyede. The war takes on a new meaning for Troilus, and he redoubles his effort in battle. He becomes a terrible hero to the Greeks. But, as the poet
points out, not because he loves Troy or hates Greeks, but because he loves Crisyede. The war is no longer simply a desperate necessity—a slaughter of friend and foe amid the pandemonium of sweat, blood, weariness, and the palpable despair that characterize battle. It is a platform for glory, and the drudgery and hideous labor of battle fade away in his quest for the "renoun" that will win his lady's favor for him. Crisyede has found her protector, and Troilus has found something that gives purpose to the struggle of war and the pointlessness of civic duties that have fallen upon him as a prince and chief warrior. The struggle to maintain the order of their play world creates the tension that must accompany play. The effort to conceal their affair from others also injects a kind of tension. The discovery and declaration of their love would ruin the game. One of the conventions of courtly love is that players will maintain the secrecy of the affair. Troilus and Crisyede follow these conventions. Troilus never offers to marry Crisyede; if he had, there would have been no question of her leaving Troy. That would have been the end of the game of courtly love. C. S. Lewis cites the following as the sentiment that precludes a man from having the same sort of love for his wife that the courtly lover would have for his lady: *ominis ardentior amator propria uxoris adulter est.* (Passionate love of one's own wife is adultery," supposedly Xystus Pithagoricus). 18 Troilus would hardly have subjected his wife to the degradation of an adulterous affair, and as a courtly lover, he would not want
sufficient "reasons" for accepting Troilus's suit, she must at least entertain it.

13. "When made public love rarely endures." Capellanus does not elaborate upon this point, but Pandarus gives sufficient cause for Troilus to be discreet in this specific case (Book III, 1.281-329).

15. "Every lover regularly turns pale in the presence of his beloved."

16. "When a lover suddenly catches sight of his beloved his heart palpitates."

There is not much that can be added to these last two conventions. Keep in mind the behavior of Troilus in Book I when he first sees Crisyede in the temple for example.

17. "A new love puts to flight an old one." This is certainly brought out in the actions of Crisyede.

21. "Real jealousy always increases the feeling of love." When Troilus first begins to wonder about the faithfulness of Crisyede, his appetite increases rather than diminishes.

23. "He whom the thought of love vexes eats and sleeps very little." Troilus certainly follows this convention (Book I, 1.484).

26. "Love can deny nothing to love." Troilus demonstrates this convention in his refusal to look at Crisyede's behavior objectively, Crisyede demonstrates this convention when she admits Troilus to her bed in the first place.

These are not all the rules that might be demonstrated
in *Troilus and Crisyede*, but enough of them have been pointed out, indicating that the action in the story does follow the conventions of courtly love to a degree that puts the Troilus-Crisyede affair well within the ken of courtly love. It is not suggested that the poem is demonstrative of every one of the thirty-one rules that Capellanus outlines. But, since Capellanus is not the only source for such conventions, and since the whole concept of courtly love is a tradition much too large to be definitively limited in the scope of one point-of-view (albeit, Capellanus is regarded as a prime source of courtly love tradition), it is not reasonable to expect Chaucer to agree with each and every point. We cannot even say for sure that Chaucer had read Capellanus's book at all. But he would certainly have been familiar with the sentiment and tradition of courtly love.

H. As for the last point, play tends to encourage the formation of groups, in *Troilus and Crisyede* not only is there a very definite group in the characters of Pandarus, Troilus, and Crisyede, but we even have a foil for the group in the character of Diomede. These are the only characters to which the poet gives any significant development. Diomede is little more than a sketch, though it must be granted that his character is a masterful example of economic development. The three Trojans maintain the exclusiveness of their group through the concern for secrecy. They disguise their true feelings so that the game will not be disrupted. One could say that Pandarus functions in the action as a sort of
referee. He quite obviously cannot get into the active participation of the affair, because that would be an entirely different role from the one that the poet has given him. But he cannot be disregarded in the action, either. Pandarus is the one who acts as the go-between for Troilus and Crisyede—that is, as long as they need one. We even find him giving Troilus special instructions about the game when he cautions him to be secret in his love affair. That is certainly the role of a kind of referee, is it not?

One should note that there is a relationship between the different points that make up the play activity. The motivation of Troilus in battle, as the poet indicates in Book I, ll.477-483, is related to several of the play-concept elements. The tension and the disinterestedness, even the distinction from the ordinary, all seem to come from the same set of activities or motives. These elements blend and support each other. They are not monolithic. They are more like touchstones. They point out key aspects of the play-concept in Troilus and Crisyede, but they are not meant to stand alone. Like stones in an arch, they are all there in greater or lesser quantities or otherwise the whole structure would collapse.

The main function of the game of courtly love that is described in the poem is that of representing something. This seems especially true since there is no real rival in the affair to provide a competitive situation. Diomede is chosen by Crisyede with almost no contest from Troilus, and
Troilus, in his time and place, receives no competition from Diomede. Crisyede does all the choosing on the basis of her needs. Since she must feel protected, she can survive only when she has attached herself to the thing that will give her that protection. Once she is forced to be absent from Troilus, she has no choice but to find a substitute. 20

What this game of courtly love represents, in the tradition, is a kind of allegory of love itself. The allegory, however, may at times seem to be closer to being parody, especially when the Religion of Love is considered. 21 The comparison is between the kind of love that a knight ought to give his lady and the kind of love that a person is expected to give to God. The knight seeks a kind of 'grace' from his lady in the courtly love tradition, and he must often suffer her rebuke for reasons that do not seem immediately clear to him or any man. So mankind is forced to seek 'grace' from the Kingdom of God; it must be willing to submit to His rebuke and chastening without question. However, Crisyede is not capable of continuing the game once she has been forced out of Troy. She turns from Troilus to Diomede as her source of strength, but the rejection does not grow out of her disgust or dissatisfaction with the service Troilus has given her. Instead, the betrayal results from her human frailty. The allegory in Chaucer's tale could be said to represent the difference between the human reality and the heavenly ideal.

It should be emphasized that the play world is disrupted for Crisyede as soon as she is out of Troy. The real
world has destroyed her world of order and harmony; the game is now over for her. Not so for Troilus. He can continue to carry his play for some while longer. Crisyede has been confronted with a much more demanding environment than her lover. She finds that her security is gone and that she is once again with no sense of belonging. She has to end one game, probably to begin another. Capellanus notes above that "a new love puts an old love to flight." Another rule of courtly love that comes from the same source is "No one can be bound by a double love." Together with the natural tendencies of her character, these conventions spell the end of her affection for Troilus.

Troilus continues to keep his illusion, but the sense of playing is leaving him. His illusion is becoming delusion as he waits for what never comes: the return of Crisyede and the restoration of their old play. He is finally confronted by the broach that he had given to Crisyede as a pledge of trust on their last time together. It is pinned to the collar-piece of a suit of armor that had been stripped from the defeated Diomede. The world of phenomenological realities can no longer be integrated into the game. Troilus can no longer shield himself, and he falls apart. He will have no more of games, no more of meaning; he will try to create no more order or perfection in his world. He becomes a creature of phenomenological reality only, returning to the pith of existence and dying in battle. C. S. Lewis uses words that describe the feeling at the closing of the game most appropriately:
"We hear the bell clang; and the children, suddenly hushed and grave, and a little frightened, troop back to their master."  

The analysis of the activity of Troilus and Crisyede as a game leads one to conclude that there are several layers of reality involved in this tragic poem. The cruelty and pain that Troilus feels in the final revelation bring everything back to one level. But how can the "realness" of their love affair and the "realness" of the effect it has had upon them be ignored or discounted as "merely a game?" To say that courtly love was a game and that Troilus and Crisyede "played" is not to question the value or the reality of the impact of that game.

The play-concept makes it clear that there is more than one level of activity going on, that there is more than one kind of reality to be dealt with here. This "play" level is where the WILL of the characters comes in to create an orderly and harmonious perception of the world. The players attempt to impose perfection on the state of the world by following the rules of the courtly-love game. This play world is frail. It is made of subjective imagination. But it is, perhaps, an assertion of human ideals, for into this play world go the very best of human ideals, the best ideas, formulae and theories that the human mind can produce, and the dearest dreams of the heart.

Games and play permeate human experience. They offer another way of dealing with the realities one must live with from day to day, a way that is used unconsciously and constantly
by human beings. The play-concept is a way of depicting the human condition, as well as a way of deciphering human nature. It can also be a way to understand the various levels of reality that are delineated within a fictitious world, such as Troilus and Crisyede.
REFERENCE NOTES


2 Huizinga, p. 13.

3 Huizinga, pp. 7-13.


5 Huizinga, p. 4.

6 Huizinga, p. 8.


8 "Disinterested": Translated from the German *selbstlosigkeit,* indicating 'self-disinterest'; not motivated by self-concern, or self-benefit.

9 Huizinga, p. 10.


11 Huizinga, p. 13.


13 The particular reference is to the so-called "Second Creation Myth" found in *Genesis 2:4* to *Genesis 3:24*.

15 Capellanus, p. 185.
17 Lewis, p. 185.
18 Lewis, p. 15.
19 Capellanus, pp. 184-186.
20 Lewis, pp. 185-190, *passim*.
21 Lewis, pp. 12, 18-22, *et passim*.
22 Capellanus, *loc. cit*.
23 Lewis, p. 43.
LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED


