
**A COMPARISON OF CHAUCER'S VERSE FORMS AND METRICAL PRACTICES WITH THOSE OF HIS FRENCH CONTEMPORARIES:
MACHAUT, DESCHAMPS, AND PROISSART**

Approved:

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DEDICATION

To Dr. Allan L. Carter

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TICES WITH THOSE OF HIS FRENCH CONTEMPORARIES:
MACHAUT, DESCHAMPS, AND FROISSART**

THESIS

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PREFACE

From the specimens of Chaucer's lyrical work, and from the texts that are now available to us, which we assume present a conscientious preservation of his grammatical forms and his metre, it is plainly seen that Chaucer was striving for perfection of metrical skill, that with which this paper has to deal. "It is not to be supposed that Chaucer wrote only lines of mechanically regular metre, nor that he always succeeded in avoiding awkward constructions."¹ The lyrical works belong to the French division of his poetry, "which is full of obvious tentative experiments; the author is trying his hand which, as yet, is an uncertain one, on metre, on language, on subject, and though he often does well, he seldom shows the supremacy of mature genius."² The lyrical efforts were, then, used less to express his feeling than to train his style and versification. Accepting "A well attested reading that should be accepted as authentic, even though

¹ Treilus and Criseyde, ed. by Root, p. lxxxiv.

² Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. II, p. 192.

the variant reading of a single authority gives a smoother, perhaps a better, line³ than Chaucer himself wrote, it is to be said that Chaucer was no common versifier. His aim toward his improved style and more ample rhythm, that which is evident in his later narrative works, resulted in the lyrical works, which had been his first concern, and with which he seems to have begun, making known to his countrymen new forms he had learned. It is of vital interest to become acquainted with the lyrical poetry "at which Chaucer aimed and at times hit the mark, because if he had not fashioned his style by cultivating delicate stanzas, he could not very well have become the poet he was in his narrative style."⁴

The acquaintance can best be made profitable through a study of the French poetry of the fourteenth century. Chaucer, at the very height of his inspiration, came into contact with the lyrical efforts of French poets, possessed with the desire for an unerring judgment in intricate stanza forms, with a fixed number of syllables in each line according to their principles, the correspondence of rhymes, and their distance from each other. Chaucer was more than an imitator of the French contemporaries; he had an originality of his own. It is fairer to call him a kindred spirit of the French, rather than a follower in every sense of the word. He possessed the longing to express in his own lan-

3 Troilus and Criseyde, ed. Root, p. lxxxiv.

4 Legouis, Emile, Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 61.

guage the poetical beauty he saw in French verse. "In French, at least the French of his own day, there can be no doubt that he was proficient, not only as a 'grant translateur', but as taking subjects and forms freely from what was still the leading literary vernacular of Europe generally."

It will be the purpose of this paper to give an account of the French poets, Machaut, Deschamps, and Froissart, and to exhibit their forms, and, in the conclusion, their subjects, placing passages from their works side by side with corresponding passages from Chaucer, in an effort to show that the same principles governed both.

⁵ Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. II, p. 214.

INTRODUCTION

Of the French contemporaries of Chaucer, the poetry of Guillaume de Machaut left the deepest mark. This fact is not surprising, because the one who did more than anyone else to promote the cult of form in the fourteenth century was Guillaume de Machaut, who was born at the beginning of the century and died in 1377. "He was a musician, and particularly devoted in his attention to the union of verse and metre, being largely responsible for the vogue of complicated metres, in which the poets began to delight, and which became more involved."

Chaucer found in Machaut's patterns, principles, and stanzas the beginning of his own ideal, which he readily and earnestly set out to realize. He recognized the perfection of Machaut's rarely incorrect, rarely slipshod metre, and his accurate rhyming. When Chaucer began to write, there were three schools and methods of writing. There was the long-established tradition, the form of most of the old romances; there was the brilliant school of alliterative poets just beginning; and finally there was the new school in France, of which Guillaume de Machaut

1 Wright, C.H.C., History of French Literature, p. 112.

was the leader.² Chaucer chose the methods of Machaut because they seemed to illustrate the best means of securing his desired effect.

The metrical tendencies of Machaut were carried on by Rustache Deschamps, who was born about 1345, and died toward 1405 or 1407. Deschamps' "Art de dietier et de fere³ ~~de~~ de chants royal, virelais, balades, et rondeaux" is an elaborate metrical scheme on the connection between music and verse. Deschamps was neither Chaucer's master nor his predecessor, but they more possibly practiced the technique⁴ of Machaut together, since they were both his pupils,⁴ and were both striving for new poetical forms. Deschamps was Chaucer's pattern and contemporary. Because of these facts there are many points of resemblance between the work of the two in the matter of versification. Deschamps sent to his English rival a copy of his poems with a ballad addressed to the "Grand translateur, noble Geoffrey Chaucier"⁵ "Deschamps' poems had a great influence upon Chaucer."⁶

It is a matter of speculation whether Chaucer came in-

2 Manly, Some New Light on Chaucer, p. 274.

3 Cf. Appendix A, 1.

4 Cf. Appendix A, 2.

5 Cf. Appendix A, 3.

6 The Student's Chaucer, ed. by MacCracken, p. 596.

to actual contact with these two poets he took for his models in poetry. The form of his work certainly leads one to believe that Chaucer placed his creative destiny in the hands of Machaut to be shaped by him. But that could only have happened through a meeting in France. If such a meeting truly took place, circumstances and indications point toward 1359 as a time most fitting and probable for Chaucer to have met and known Machaut and Deschamps. It was at this time that the youthful writer of ditties and merry songs in praise of the goddess, Venus, was transformed into a soldier and went joyfully campaigning into France with the Duke of Clarence in the forces of Edward III in his siege against Reims. Following the encounter Chaucer was taken captive, and left in that city for the time-being. An interesting supposition is that Machaut was in Reims at the time and that he undertook to teach Chaucer his technique.⁷ There is as yet no conclusive evidence to prove they met in Reims, then, at the very time of Chaucer's imprisonment. In the "Vie de Guillaume de Machaut"⁸ are found significant passages.

"Vers 1340 nous rencontrons le poète à Reims. Ceci résulte des indications continues dans une 'Complainte', adressé par lui à un des amis de France nommé Henri."

⁷ Cf. Appendix A, 3.

⁸ Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, ed. Chickmarf, Vol. I, pp. xxxiv and lix.

"Il est possible que notre poète passa à Reims les premières années de la seconde moitié du XIV^e siècle. Il commençait à sentir le poids de l'âge; il était atteint un affection gouteuse, dont il se plaignait à différentes reprises, et que sa vie vagabonde avait redouté contribuer à aggraver. Le séjour supposé de Machaut à Reims permet d'expliquer certains détails de la biographie d'Eustache Deschamps, le célèbre poète champenois contemporain de Machaut. Deschamps lui même dit qu'il fut 'nourri' par Machaut, expression qui prouve que ce dernier éleva ou aider à élever son jeune compatriote, devenu plus tard son disciple en poésie.

"Celui-ci passa à Reims toute sa jeunesse (il était né entre 1340 et 1346), jusqu'au moment où il quitta cette ville pour aller étudier à l'Université d'Orléans. Ce laps de temps correspond précisément à l'époque de la vie de Machaut où le poète, comme je suppose, se serait définitivement retiré à Reims." 9

"Deschamps assista au siège de cette vieille par les Anglais; durant plus d'un mois, (du 4 décembre 1359 au 11 janvier 1360), il put voir les pillages organisés par l'ennemi autour de la ville. Il est possible que Machaut, lui aussi, résidât en cette ville à la même époque et qu'il ait été témoin de ces scènes désastreuses." 10

These passages do not allow us to assert that Chaucer met either one of them, but only give us some color to our surmise. I am sure the question has been turned over in the mind of every one who has seen references to Chaucer's indebtedness to Machaut and Deschamps. No authority on Chaucer who has produced a work on his art, or who

9 Ibid., p. 1.

10 Ibid., p. lix.

mentions him in a literary history, of those that have been available to me, knows for a certainty that Chaucer was personally instructed by Guillaume de Machaut, along with Deschamps. The question is only important in the consideration of the points Chaucer learned for himself from their work, in proportion to those to which they guided him.

If it could be proved that Chaucer was near Machaut, it might mean that he saw the poet at work and delighted in his technique, for it was at this time that Machaut was completing much of his work.

"Son service auprès du roi Jean de Luxembourg n'avait guère laissé à Machaut les loisirs nécessaires pour s'occuper de poésie. Ses compositions principales lui sont postérieures; elle se placent entre 1350 et 1377"¹¹

"Il débuta par de petites pièces lyriques, dont un certain nombre mises en musiques, ballades, rondeaux, ou virelais, dominant dans ses premiers essais de sa muse. Effusions sentimentales, séparations, tourments du cœur aggravés par l'éloignement, tels sont les thèmes uniformes que son esprit fécond développe sous les aspects les plus variés."¹²

It is possible that not much of Chaucer's extant poetry can be referred to the reign of Edward III.¹³ At that time it is probable that he wrote many short pieces in the form of ballads, complaints, virelais and

¹¹ Ibid., p. xxxix.

¹² Ibid., p. xi.

¹³ Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Skeat's edition, Vol. II, p. xxx.

Henceforth, all references made in this thesis to this edition of Chaucer's works will merely be stated as Skeat.

rendels, which have not been preserved. It is of unusual interest, in this connection, particularly, to notice that the first appearance in England of this ballad form in seven-lined decasyllabic syllables, rhyming ababbe, of which the French poets were fond enough to use it more often than any other form, was in the great stanza, called the rime royal, in the "Complaint unto Pitt".¹⁴ This work is listed, conjecturally, with all the works which might have been written between the years 1372 and 1373.¹⁵ It shows us that Chaucer knew Machaut's forms before then, because his last trip to France was in 1370 with dispatches from England.¹⁶

Next to Guillaume de Machaut and Eustache Deschamps in importance of influence was Jehan Froissart. It is possible that Chaucer conversed with Froissart when he made his journey to France on diplomatic missions.¹⁷ Like Froissart, and better than he, Chaucer could depict the castles of nobles, their conversations, their talks of love, and anything else that might interest them, and please them by his portraiture. But Chaucer's aim carried

¹⁴ Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. II, p. 195.

¹⁵ Skent, Vol. II, p. lxviii

¹⁶ The College Chaucer, by MacCracken, Appendix, p.593.

¹⁷ Taine, History of English Literature, Vol. I, p.171.

him beyond the influence of Froissart's chronicles of war, the narratives of all different colouring in his lengthy poetical works. It was the frame-work into which Froissart placed the love and morals of feudal imagination that charmed him as much as anything. It was as if Chaucer accepted the poetry of Froissart as architecture which might appeal to the external senses, through its beauty of perfect form. This cannot mean that Chaucer "dilutes a bright colouring in a monotonous stanza",¹⁸ forgetting to concentrate on his passion or his idea, as Froissart sometimes did. But Chaucer's sole aim at that time was poetry for its own sake. Froissart, another successful pupil of Machaut, was outstanding in his perfection of form and versification.

This lengthy discussion of Chaucer's connections with the three French contemporaries, I feel has been necessary in order to show his object and plan in following their lead in metres, and what they had that he wanted. I hope I have made clear the particular phases of their skill which Chaucer wished to take up, but I place them here in their entirety. Chaucer wished to use a verse accentual and syllabic in the London dialect, and favored the cultivation of rhyme as did the poets who followed closely

18 Ibid., p. 211.

the pattern of French versification. He wished to express in English all the charm he found in French poetry, putting into their poetical moulds English words, and those adapted already from the French. These are the aspects that I shall consider from now on to the conclusion of this paper.

Chaucer's first task was to select a metre for his verse, other than the octosyllabic which was already in use in England. He fashioned for himself the decasyllabic metre which he introduced from France, and looked to the same place for the most fitting forms into which to cast it. He satisfied himself that the stanzas which had proved so successful for the technique of Machaut, Deschamps, and Froissart, would prove as much so for him. Of all the forms to which these three gave their attention, the forms which won their chief favor were the strophes in seven lines, rhyming ababbcc, and in rhyming ababbcb, which they placed into ballads of three stanzas with a refrain. The virelais, lays, and rondeaux came in for their share of attention. It is supposed that Chaucer worked on these types, but nothing remains of his earliest attempts, at least none that can be identified with certainty. Though it is a regrettable fact that they were not preserved, his later works offer a sufficient number of pieces to illustrate his skill in the

ballade, and the one rondel which has been preserved, bears evidence of being his own, and possibly being written between the years 1380 and 1396.¹⁹ These are the chief forms which Chaucer came to borrow of which we have evidence.

That it may be seen "whether or not Chaucer speaks of love or piety or morals, his lyric poetry is almost always an imitation of the French as regards form, and nearly always as regards subject",²⁰ I wish to take passages from "An Amorous Complaint", "The Farmer Age", "To Rosamunde", and the first movement of the "triple roundel", "Merciles Beautè", to be compared with similar ones from the works of the French poets. These passages are no less intricate than those of the French themselves. The "Amorous Complaint", as "The Complaint of Pity", and "Annelida and Arcite" are, is written "in the seven-lined stanza ababbee, which was Chaucer's favorite among these combinations, and which acquired the name of rhyme-royal perhaps under the circumstance, though the usual explanation is that it was because of the use of the

19 Skeat, Vol. II, p. lxiii.

20 Legouis, Emile, Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 61.

stanza in the "King's Quair", and consists of thirteen stanzas. "The Former Age" is written in six stanzas, rhyming ababbbe. The ballad, "To Resamund" is a happy specimen of Chaucer's skill in rhyming, with a metre like that of "The Former Age", and the same rhymes are used throughout. The first movement of the roundel is composed of thirteen lines, the rhymes, and exhibits a mastery in meter. Corresponding passages from the French are given for a consideration of form.

"But certes than is all my
wonderinge,
Si than she is the fayrest
creature.
As to me dome, that ever was
livinge,
The benignest and beste eek
that nature
Hath wrought or shal whyl that
the world may dure,
Why that she lefte pite so
far behinde?
It was, ywis, a gret defeaute
in kinde."21

"Gentil dame de tres noble
figure,
Je vous ain mieux et de
plus vraie amour.
Que je ne fâst toute autre
creature
Pour la bonté qui tant vous
fait d'onneur,
Et sachiez bien que vous
fine douçour.
Tout doucement me maistrie
et demainne.
Que de mon cuer estes la
souverainne."22

"Ever have I been, and shal,
howso I wende,
Outher to live or dye, your
humble trewe;
Ye been to me my ginning and
myn ende,
Sonne of the sterre bright and
clere of hewe,
Alwey in oon to love you fresh-
ly newe,

"Travauls d'amours me sont
salas et ju.
Puis que plaisance amou-
reuse m'i aminne,
Car amours m'ont armé d'un
noble escu,
Où scripte est loyaute toute
plainne,
Et se me dist, comme mon
capitaine;

21 Skent, Vol. II, p. 413.

22 "Poésies Lyriques" in Oeuvres de Guillaume Machaut, Vol. I, p. 127.

"By God and by my treuthe, is
my entente,
To live or dye, I wol it
never repente."23

"S'er loyalement, je ne
fendroi mie,
En disirant d'avoir dame
et amie."24

"Madame, ye ben of al beaute
shyne
As fer as cereled is the
mappebounde;
Fer as the cristal glorious
ye shyne,
And lyke ruby ben your chekes
rounde
Therwith yeben so mery and so
ioccunde,
That at a revel whan that I
see yew daunce,
It is an oynement unto my
wounde,
Though ye to me ne do no da-
liaunce."25

"Gente de corps, face à
droite coulourée
Humble de regart, front
haute et bien assis,
Entre veil phaisant, bouche
bien ordonnée,
Petit menton, lefres, et
vez traitis,
Vous joiettes font deux
fosses toudis,
En soubariant, o belle plus-
que belle!
Vous regarder es un droit
paradis
De je en jour vo beaute re-
nouvelle."26

"I which am the sorwefulleste
man
That in this world was ever
yet livinge,
And leest recoverer of him-
selven can.
Beginne thus my deadly com-
plaininge.
On hir, that may to lyf and
deeth me bringe,
Which hath on me mercy ne no
rewthe,
That love his best, but sleeth
me for my trewthe."27

"One'ques nulz home n'at d'am-
ours plus de paine
Que je sueffre pour amer
loyalment,
Ne tant n'ayma sa dame sou-
veraine
Comme je l'aym de ouers
parfaitement
Toudis la sers, mais je ne
sais comment,
Elle a vers moy si mervei-
lleuse guise;
Quant plus me voit ma dame
et moins ne prise."28

23 Skent, Vol. II, p. 414.

24 Oeuvres de Froissart, Vol. II, p. 389.

25 Skent, Vol. II, p. 389.

26 Oeuvres de Deschamps, Vol. V, p. 186.

27 Skent, Vol. II, 411.

28 Oeuvres de Deschamps, Vol. III, p. 216.

"Your yën two wel slee me
sodenly,
I may the beaute of hem
not sustene,
So woundeth hit through-out
my herte kene.

And but your word wel helen
hastily;
My hertes wounde, whyl that
hit is grene.
Your yën two wel slee me
sodenly,
I may the beaute of hem not
sustene

Upon my trouthe, I say you
feithfully,
That ye ben of my lyf and
deeth the quene;
For with my deeth the trouthe
shall be sene.
Your yën two wel shæe me
sodenly,
I may the beaute of hem
not sustene,
So woundeth hit through-
out me herte kene."29

"A blissful lyfe, a paisible
and a swete
Ledden the peuple in the far-
mer age;
They held hym payed of the
frutes they ete,
Which that the feldees yave hem
by usage;
They ne were forpampred with
outrage,
Unknownen was the quern and eek
the melle;

"Vous dous regars, douce
dame m'a mort,
S'Amour ne fait que vos
gentils cuer m'eint.

Quant en rient à vous amer,
m'amort;--
Vous dous regars, douce dame
m'amort.

Car je congnois en sa dou-
ceur ma mort,
Pour la parfaite amours
qui en moy meint,
Vous dous regars, douce
dame, m'a'mort,
S'Amours ne fait que vo
gentils cuer m'eint."30

"Les chevaliers du bon temps
ancien
Et leurs enfans, alsient à
la messe;
Et doutant Dieu chascun vi-
voit du sien
L'en congnoissoit leur bien
et leur prouesse,
Et li peuples labourait en
simplesse
Chascuns convent estoit de
son office.

29 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 387.

30 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II,
p. 572.

They eten masts, hawes, and
 swich pounage,
 And drunken water of the
 colde welle."³¹

"Religion fut de tous biens
 l'addresse
 Mais au jour d'ui ne voy
 regner que vice."³²

From these specimens it can be seen that Chaucer soon found himself as skillful as these clever versifiers in their own field. Of Chaucer's triple rondel, Emile Legouis writes that any of the French trouvères might have been pleased to place his name to this trifle. For the workman's skill is here as evident as the passion remains doubtful.³³ Professor John Livingston Lowes has pointed out that the possible sources for the roundel are to be found among certain works of Chaucer's model, Deschamps.³⁴

In his conformity with the seven and eight-line stanzas with delicately interlaced rhyme, Chaucer achieved the effect which he desired.³⁵ Saintsbury tells us that the use of elaborate, and even very elaborate, stanzas was not itself a novelty, because they were written almost the best part of a century before Chaucer, though showing little assured craftsmanship.³⁶ But of the French he says,

³¹ Skeat, Vol. II, p. 387.

³² Oeuvres de Deschamps, Vol. VI, p. 93.

³³ Legouis, Emile, Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 62.

³⁴ Modern Language Review, January, 1910.

³⁵ Cf. Appendix A, 5.

³⁶ Saintsbury, History of English Prosody, Vol. I, p. 147.

"...the French had for more than a century been writing elaborate forms of poetry most sedulously, and had turned out, in several different kinds of continuous stanzas, and in the smaller integers of triole, rondeau, ballade, and the like, the most artificial perhaps, but certainly not the least artful and artistic of poetic arrangements."³⁷

It is, however, from the construction of the verse itself that Chaucer profited most. In the same way that Deschamps, Machaut, and Froissart allowed music to slip in through measured rhythm, which underlies the art of versification as well as of music, Chaucer seems to have marked his efforts, as a rule, with fairly regular beats according to certain principles, and yet with a suppleness to render the inflection of the speaking voice. Many authorities, one of the most notable being Dryden, frankly scouted the idea of Chaucer's metre being regular, but it was as his own.³⁸ Saintsbury has this to say:

"The old seventeenth and eighteenth century notion that he could not scan is, of course, now held by no educated person. But there are some who hold that Chaucer allowed himself nipa-syllable lines, and others, or the same, that he adhered to a strictly decasyllabic basis, as, it is pretty certain his immediate successors tried to do.... I believe that where only nine syllables, even with the finale-e, occur, there is probably¹ a fault in the reading;..."

³⁷ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 147.

³⁸ Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. II, p. 195.

I insert this 'probability' because, though I think the nine-syllable line is never even in Chaucer or Milton a success, I think it just possible that Chaucer like Milton may have tried it, deceived by the analogy of the octosyllable."³⁹

The decasyllabic verse is the chosen metre in these forms accepted from the French. "It is perhaps the oldest of all metres in French, and is certainly the staple measure in extant French literature. Chaucer seems to have attempted the French principles in carrying it out.

If it is true that Chaucer may have tried the nine-syllable line, this abnormality, if it can be called such, can be explained for in Chaucer's case as well as that of Machaut, Deschamps, Forissart, in the French principle of the dropping of the first syllable when it seemed desirable for the main flow of the line. The French, Machaut, Deschamps, and Froissart have no abnormalities, but they made frequent usage of this principle, if we are to judge by a study of their works. In the lines to follow it will be seen that there are no abnormalities and deficiencies to be accounted for, except the lack of the first syllable.

"Madame for your newe-fanglenesse" 40

"Dame plaisant assez à l'aventure" 41

³⁹ Saintsbury, History of English Literature, p. 130.

⁴⁰ Skeat, Vol. II, p. 409.

⁴¹ Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II, p. 637.

"Jalousye be hanged by a
cable" 42

"Fausse, traître, perverse,
et mere sure" 43

"Madame, ye been al of beaute
shryne" 44

"Las! ta forme fait trop a
redouter" 45

"Love has taught me no more
of his art" 46

"Car je vesque longement en
doutance" 47

Neither Chaucer nor the French made use of the principle for lack of skill or ingenuity, but because the lines flowed more smoothly when they dropped the initial syllable, and, at least, it adds a sort of variation as if it were a cadence if it had been used at stated intervals. But they permitted no lack of syllables within the line. To provide for the number of syllables, the French poets employed the counting of the final-e as a syllable, though chiefly unaccented. If the line called for the use of the-e, they made a point of counting it. In the same manner they felt free to ignore it as a syllable if the line was decasyllabic without its pronunciation. Chaucer was influenced by the use of the final-e in con-

42 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 402.

43 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II, p. 637.

44 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 389.

45 Oeuvres de Deschamps, Vol. V, p. 169.

46 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 361.

47 Oeuvres de Froissart, Vol. II, p. 376.

temporary French poetry. This suffix was beginning to disappear in the pronunciation in Chaucer's day, but the memory of it was still sufficiently fresh in England to permit its use as a counted syllable. A few examples of this principle follow.

"Biseche unto your make wo-
manhede" 48

"De triste cuer faire par-
faitement" 49

"To newe thing your lust is
ever kene" 50

"Ne puet estre fors de fausse
figure" 51

"If that it were thing pos-
sible to do " 52

"Frans et gentis, ne dire ne
saroie" 53

"Myn hertes wounde, whil that
hit is grene" 54

"Ne cure n'ont de nul con-
sentement" 55

When more than the ten syllables occur in the line,

48 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 413.

49 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, p. 557.

50 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 409.

51 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, p. 557.

52 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 385.

53 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, p. 387.

54 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 387.

55 Oeuvres De Froissart, Vol. II, p. 402.

which they often do, two are crowded into either the unstressed or stressed part of the disyllabic foot. They are usually made up of vowels or consonants that contract easily as they might be pronounced as one syllable and in that way the rhythm of the verse does not suffer. (The contraction or slurring of vowels and consonants in syllables in verse corresponded to what took place in the ordinary speech of the French, so that their principle was founded on what was most likely to prove pleasing and rhythmical, particularly so to the human voice.) It was natural, then, that Chaucer was happy to seize upon this principle, going even further in his attempt to make his metre regular by blending the vowels between words. The following examples show the use of the slurring of vowels, principally semi-vowels.

"Ther poverte is, as seith Diogones" 56

"Et li siens sont toudis en aventure" 57

"Why seyston thame I am to thee so kene" 58

"Car il est wrais, fins, loiaus et secrez" 59

56 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 381.

57 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II, p. 497.

58 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 384.

59 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II, p. 544.

"So curteisly I go, with love
bounde" 60

"En lieu du cuer, amis, qui
me demeure" 61

"In nouncerteine we languishe
in penaunce" 62

"Or me convient viser que
temprement" 63

These examples of the principle of contraction of vowels within a syllable show that slight variety in time-value is only allowed when the reader chooses to prolong the pronunciation of the syllable. Even then, it offers a variation which is pleasing in its inflection. The blending of vowels between words is even more so.

"Must folwe his trace, and al
his wittes dresse" 64

"Quant vostre ami me daingnie
apeler" 65

"Yet halt thyn ancre, and yit
thou mayst arryve" 66

"Sans etre ames son bon sem-
blant attraire" 67

60 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 384.

61 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II, p. 497.

62 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 387.

63 Oeuvres de Froissart, Vol. II, p. 373.

64 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 403.

65 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II, p. 545.

66 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 393.

67 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. I, p. 18.

"Thy lere I clampne hit is ad-
versité" 68

"Corps monstruese, horrible
à regarder" 69

That Chaucer recognized the beauty and rhythm in the blending of vowels between words is an impression strengthened by the fact that it occurs much more often in his narrative and later productions than in these lyrical efforts, while he was experimenting with metre. As he became more practiced in the art of writing, he reached the point where he might expand the sharp confines of his strong, regular metre; he allowed one beat to glide into the other.

In addition to the dropping of the first syllable and the blending of vowels, to make for both variation and rhythm, the French poets made use of initial inversion to occur in the first foot before the rhythm and movement of the line set in. In this way they retained regularity of the verse, and added smoothness. Chaucer followed the same principle when the line seemed to demand it.

"Thus am I slayn, sith that pite
is deed" 70

"Frans et gentis, ne dire
ne saraie" 71

68 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 49.

69 Oeuvres de Deschamps, Vol. V, p. 168.

70 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 273.

71 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II, p. 544.

"Humblest of herte, hyest of
reverence," 72

"S'enques amans reçut mort
pour penser" 73

"No man is wretched but him-
self it wene" 74

"Onques n'ama de plus
loyal amour" 75

Chaucer's rejection of the alliteration of the poets of Northumbria and the west of England, in favoring the accentual and syllabic verse of the Southwest, is the cause for his use of the primary stress on significant terminations of inflectional syllables. Many of these terminations which receive the primary stress belong to words of French origin. When the words were adapted into English, the French word-accent was observed, in the same way that the accent on the last syllable of many words was observed. Chaucer found this practice useful to him, and he employed it as we find it in the lyrics of the French poets.

"On thee, ne me, ne noon of our figure" 76

72 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 274.

73 Oeuvres de Froissart, p. 370.

74 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 384.

75 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II, p. 18.

76 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 397.

"Honneur honoureth him for his noblesse" 77

"Which that the fieldes gave hem by usage" 78

"Governed is by Fortunes errour" 79

"Hir fredom fond Arcite in swich manere" 80

"Thus oughte I blesse wel myn aventure" 81

"Whom for to serve is set al my plesaunce" 82

"Sithen she is the fayrest creature" 83

"As wele or wo, no poure and now honour" 84

"And ye, that han ful chesenas I devyse" 85

"So thirleth with the poynt of remembraunce" 86

77 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 401.

78 Ibid., p. 389.

79 Ibid., p. 396.

80 Ibid., p. 401.

81 Ibid., p. 415.

82 Ibid., p. 413.

83 Ibid., p. 383.

84 Ibid., p. 324.

85 Ibid., p. 373.

86 Ibid.

Saintsbury has said that Chaucer "does not trouble himself with the French decasyllabic caesura at the fourth syllable, for though it appears sometimes, it is as often absent. ... Still, where a very strong stop occurs in the middle of the line, it is generally at the fourth⁸⁷ syllable." Where he happened to make use of the caesura, one can claim for Chaucer a mastery that matched and went beyond that of the French poets. In claiming that for him, one estimates a real distinction, because the French themselves were not lacking in that skill, and they had their occasional moments in making it useful. A stanza from a ballad of Machaut will show the extent to which he used it.

"De vray desir, d'amoureuse pensée
 Tres loyalement, com fins loyan amis,
 Vous ay servi, douce dame honnourée
 Et serviray, tant com je seray vis;
 N'oneques mon cuer saouler
 Ne pas de vous chierer et honnourer
 Et vous mettes toudis douleur en mi,
 Quant vous n'ames de vos grace banni."⁸⁸

In the first and third verses the caesura occurs between the second and third feet, as it should in decasyllabic verse. In these verses the caesurae stands for the

⁸⁷ Saintsbury, History of English Prosody, Vol. II, p. 149.

⁸⁸ Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II, p. 227.

short syllables of the second foot, so that the measure begins on a stressed syllable, without marring the line, but enhancing it by the very purpose for which it is used. Machaut proclaimed that his purpose in writing ballads was to construct a form into which he might place all the woes of a suffering heart. The caesura which occurs in the first four lines of his ballad might suggest sighs of this suffering heart, except that it seems only a metrical artifice which Machaut used for effect and could not then get beyond it.

With Chaucer's use, there is a difference. He truly makes use of the caesurae to express the laments of an aching heart. He imparts the ring of truth in the expression of touching thoughts, and submits himself to the most exacting verse scheme in the passage which is to follow.

"My swete foo,	why do you so, for shame?
And thinke ye	that furtherd be your name
To leve a newe,	and been untreue, Nay!
And putte you	in solaundre now and blame
And do to me	adversitee and grame
That leve you mest; god, wel thee wost alwey?	
You turn ayeyn, and be al pleyn, som day,	
And than shall this, that now is miss be game,	
And al for yive, whil that I live may." 89	

The easy flow of emotion is not hampered by the

metrical artifice, but is increased by the number of pauses and the brevity of the rhymed fragments which seem to be punctuated with sighs. This is what Chaucer makes the caesura do for his lines.

He uses it further that the final - e may be pronounced during the pause, as is to be seen in the following passage.

"Compleyne ne coude, ne might wyn herte never.
My paynes halve, ne what torment I have,
Thogh that I sholde in your presence be ever,
My hertes lady, as wisely he me save
That bountee made, and beutee list to grave
In your persone, and hem bothe in-fere
Ever tawayte, and ay be wher ye were." 90

Chaucer in his rhyming was a match for the French poets, as much so in the lyrical work as in his narrative work, in which he performed some rhyming feats which carried him beyond the dexterity of French precision and genius. The field in England was open to him in the making of rhymes. Selection and rejection and his task of hammering the dialect of England into a language peculiarly its own, was a task of which he often had reason to despair. Chaucer was limited by the language rather than his instinct for sound and its quality. He knew what was beautiful to the ears, but his difficulty was in finding enough words with rhyming qualities in his language. This he makes known in his tribute to Otte de Granson, contemporary of

Deschamps and Froissant.

"And eek to me hit is a greet penaunce,
 Sith rhyme in English hath swich scarcitee
 To felwe word by word the curiositee,
 Gramson, flour of hem that make in Fraunce." 91

But he who searches for imperfect rhymes in Chaucer will find few of them. He makes the most of his limitations and is as unfailingly precise in the selection of his rhymes as are his French models. The requirements of the time necessitated their care in the choice of rhymes because the beauty of their pieces asserted itself in that way, as they followed their complicated metres. Deschamps gave particular attention to the choice of rhymes in the "Art de distier."

"Deschamps qui compte pour un syllable dans la mesure du vers la syllable finale féminine, recommande -- pour rendre la ballade plaisante et de bonne façon, de mélanger des vers d'un nombre pair des syllabes aux vers en ayant un nombre impair, c'est à dire de mélanger les rimes masculines et les rimes féminine. Il n'indique pas dans quelle proportion, mais c'est évidemment là l'origine de l'alternance des rimes masculines et féminines qui est devenue une des lois de la poésie française moderne." 92

Chaucer seemed to have been pleased with this plan of Deschamps and he tried his hand at alternating his feminine

91 Ibid., p. 404.

92 Deschamps, Oeuvres, ed. by Raynaud, Vol. XI, pp. 115-116.

and masculine rhymes, at which he proved quite successful as the following fine lines will show. They are to be compared with a stanza from Deschamps in illustration of this principle.

"Now certes, Love, hit is
right covenable
That men ful dere bye they
noble thing,
As wake a-bedde, and fasten
at the table
Weping to laughe, and singe
in compleyning,
And down to caste visage and
laking,
Often to chaungen thewe and
countenancee,
Pleyne in sloping, and
dremen at the daunce.
Al the revers of any glad
feling." 94

"Selon raison, et la sainte
escripture,
Homme piteux ne meurt de
cruel mort,
Mais li crueux; puis sa
disconfiture,
Et contre droit est tres-
cruelment mort;
Car qui murdrist puis vic-
toire, il a tort;
A son dessus ait de pité
memoire.
Tout homme armé doit estre
par effort,
Cruelx devant, pituex
après victoire." 95

The French were versatile in rhyming words with exactly the same sounds, even arriving at the point of rhyming the same words, but taking care to use them with different meanings. To my mind, this is not a point by which one may criticize their ability to select from their store of language or lack of innate responsiveness to the melody and harmony of sounds, but it is, rather, another test of their workmanship. It is one thing to hit upon a rhyme and still another to make it please without becoming monotonous. The use of the same word with different meanings for the rhymes

94 Cf. Appendix A, 4.

94 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 401.

95 Oeuvres de Deschamps, Vol. III, p. 37.

does not grate on one's sense of sound, and it at least pleases the mind, if not the ear. The real danger of its use is in its leading to too frequent use, as we find it does in the case of the French. Machaut was particularly fond of this method of rhyming,

"C'est-à-dire la répétition d'un même mot à la rime et, en général la reprise d'une rime, une fois qu'elle a servi. Deux strophes successives (str. 15 et 16, de 'La Remède de Fortune') ont exactement les mêmes rimes, (en -euse et -é)." 96

On another occasion Machaut rhymed sixty-three verses in 'our' (Poésies Lyriques, Vol. I, p. 273). That Chaucer occasionally found it a solution for his rhymes is evident in the following lines.

"The fleur of fairnes lap-
peth in his armes
And Venus kisseth Mars, the
God of Armes" 97

"Nuls, se me vueil par
l'amoureuse pointe
Nouvellement d'autre
amour estre pointe." 98

"Thus serveth he, withouten
fee or shipe,
She sent him now to londe,
now to shippe" 99

"Ence lay faire ay [je] mis
mente,
Et compris, sans ce que je
mente" 100

96 Oeuvres de Guillaume de Machaut, Vol. II, p. xli.

97 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 376.

98 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II, p. 461.

99 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 372.

100 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II, p. 472.

"Before me stant, clad in
 assure,
 To profren oft a newe
 assure" 101

"De ma delour ne puis avoir
 confort
 Puis que ma dame en riens
 ne me conforte," 102

"The longe night, this won-
 der sight I drye
 ... He never no myn yēn two
 be drye" 103

"Tous les fais plus à point
 mesure
 Qui ne fait nulle autre
 mesure" 104

"When every foul[ther] chese
 shal his make
 ... This woful song and this
 compleynt I make" 105

"Savez vous pour quoy je
 fais
 .. Pour ce que trestous mes
 fais." 106

If Chaucer can be said to have rivaled his French mas-
 ters, there is ample evidence that he out-rivalled them
 in his use of internal rhyme, for I find nothing in the
 French poetry, that was available to me, like it. The
 following passages have been quoted in reference to Chau-
 cer's skill in the use of the caesura, but I quote them
 that they may be looked at, as they pertain especially to

101 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 377.

102 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, p. 189.

103 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 377.

104 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II,
 p. 189.

105 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 414.

106 Oeuvres de Deschamps, ed. Saint-Hilaire, Vol. V,
 p. 83.

his mastery in a then new and novel manner.

"My swete feȝ why do ye so, for shame?
 And thinke ye, that furthered be your
 name,
 To love a newe, and been untrewed? Nay!
 And putte you in schaudre now and blame,
 And do to me adversitee and grame,
 That love you most, god, wol thou west!
 alway?
 Yet turn ayen, and be al pleynd sonday,
 And thou shal this that you is miss be
 game,
 And al for-give, whyl that I live may." 107

"The longe night this wonder sight I drye,
 And on the day for this a fray I dye,
 And of al this right noght, y-wis, ye
 wrecche.
 He never me myn yēn two be drye,
 And to yow routhe and to your trowthe I
 crye.
 But welaway! to fer be they to feeche;
 Thus holdeth me my destinee a wrecche.
 But me to rede out of this drede crye
 He may my wit so weyk is hit, not strecche." 108

It can be seen by these examples that Chaucer was so expert in thymes that they seemed to flow from his pen with the slightest efforts, as if with no effort at all. Where the French lacked genius, and somewhat reduced their rhymes to adherence to rhetoric and verbal gymnastics, Chaucer took particular pains to escape from any monotony of stilted lyrical strains and the too frequent use of the

107 Skent, Vol. II, p. 375.

108 Ibid.

identical sounds which Machaut, Deschamps, and Froissart ushered in, Machaut taking the lead. It has been mentioned that identical sounds only please when they give the impression of fitting in perfectly, without being an obvious strain of effect. Chaucer, with modesty, it must be admitted, called his rhyme "light and lewed", but it was ever his attempt to perfect it, and at least he did strive for naturalness above all. Professor Skeat has pointed out that Chaucer, in spite of his care, was guilty of an oversight in "The Former Age" in rhyming 'galles', line forty-seven, with 'walles', and 'halles', whereas the line should end with a word to rhyme with 'shete'. The stanza is here quoted.

"Yit were no paleis-chaumbres, ne noon halles;
 In caves and [in] wodes softe and swete
 Slepten this blissed folk with-oute galles,
 On gras or leves in parfit quiete.
 Ne down of fetheres, ne no bleched shete
 Was kid to hem, but in seurtee they slepte;
 Hir hertes were al oon, with-oute galles,
 Everich of hem his feith to other kepte." 111

As it is written the formula for the rhyme is ababbab₆ and the remainder of the strophes rhyme ababbcb₆. Saintsbury tells us that there grew up a "process of arbitrarily

109 Skeat, Vol. II, "House of Fame", l. 1096-1098.

110 Ibid., p. 491.

111 Ibid., p. 381.

112

'mending' Chaucer" so that the oversight would seem to be due to a scribal blunder, or the rhyme has been left as Chaucer wrote. In any event the imperfection exists.

It is fortunate for the sake of Chaucer's rhymes that he did not set a task for himself of translating the lyrics of Machaut, Deschamps, and Froissart, and so was able to give his rhymes a more pleasant sound and a freshness of tone in his own manner, without the necessity of being accurate and confining himself to their manner of expression. This freedom gave him larger opportunity for experimenting with his rhyme, than would have translating. Chaucer often selected passages from the works of the French to have a look at them for their beauty, but he did not always translate. Legouis has given us an idea of his skill in showing what he has done with a passage from a longer work of Machaut, "Dit de La Varguerite", writing a passage of his own from the memory of it.

<p>"And whan that hit is even, I renne blyve, As soone as ever the sun ginneth weste, To sene this fleur, how it wal go to reste, For fere of night, so hateth she derknesse! Hir chere is pleyntly spread in brightnesse,</p>	<p>"J'aime une fleur qui s'ouvre et s'incline Vers le soleil, de jour quand il chemine. Et quand il est couché sous sa courtine Par nuit obscure, Elle se clost, ainsois que le jour fine.</p>
---	--

Of the sonne, for there it
 wal uncloze.

Alas! that I ne had English,
 rhyme, or prose."¹¹³

Ses feuilles ont dessous
 couleur sanguine,
 Blanches dessus que gente
 hermine
 Ne Blanchour pure...."¹¹⁴

Again, we have the evidence that Chaucer felt he lacked the proper rhyme with which to write, but he expressed the beauty that was in his soul. That he felt the extreme importance of rhyme, and that he longed fervently for the power, is a statement summed up in the line, "Alas! that I ne had English rhyme or prose."

Another trait, largely French in its development, is the cataloging of beautiful names to enhance the sound, the rhythm of his verse, and not employed wholly for versification. The French delighted to enumerate names in their ballads in much the way American writers catalogue the geographical names of towns and cities. There is without a doubt a charm in such enumeration. Particularly did the idea of mentioning beautiful ladies of legend and history appeal to these French poets, in their cultivation of the "balade des neiges d'anton". Chaucer made a point of using the proper names at each opportunity that presented itself, the best example being in the prologue to "The Legend of Good Women", where he placed this account of the beautiful ladies in ballad form. Emile Legouis writes of

¹¹³ Skeat, The Students' Chaucer, p. 350

¹¹⁴ Legouis, Emile, Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 51.

a ballad he discovered which he says existed on this subject before Chaucer, rather prettily turned, which Chaucer read, closely imitated, and placed in the center of the prologue, which he found in "Tristan" edited by Francisque Michel, in Volume I, page 38. I found that it is a ballad of Deschamps, which I wish to quote with the whole of that of Chaucer.

"Hyd, Absalon, thy guilte
tressis clere;
Ester, ley thow mekenesse
al adoun;
Hyde, Jonothos, al thy
frendely manere;
Penelope and Marcia Ca-
toun,
Mak of youre wyfhood no
comparisoun;
Hyde, ye your beuteis,
Ysode and Elene,
Alceste is here, that al
may disteyne.

"Hester, Judith, Penelopé,
Helaine,
Sorre, Tisbé, Rebeque et
Sarry,
Lucresee, Yseult, Genevre,
Chastellaine
La très loial nommée de
Vergy,
Rachel aussi, la dame de
Fayel
On ne furent si precieux
jouel
D'honneur, bonté senz, beau-
té et valour
Con est ma très douce dame
d'onneur.

"Thou fayre body, lat it
not a peere,
La veyne, and thow, Lucresee
of Roman Toun,
And Paleyene, that boughte
love so dere,
Et Chlopatra with al thy
passioun,
Hyde ye youre trouthe in
love and your renoun;
And thow, Tysbe, that hast
for love swich payne
Alceste is here, that al
that may disteyne.

"Se d'Absolon la grante beauté
humaine,
De Solomon tout le senz sanz
demy,
D'Alixandre l'avoir et le de-
maine
Des. IX. preux eusse et leur
prouesse aussy,
Et la farce, syque se aucun
appel,
Avoys, ne seroie bon ne bel
Ne digne assez pour sytrés
noble fleur,
Con est ma très douce dame
d'onneur.

"Here, Dido, Laodamia, alle
 in fere,
 Ek Phyllis hangyng for
 thy Demophoun,
 And Canace, espied by thy
 chere,
 Hippolyte, betrayed with
 Jasoun,
 Make of youre trouthe in
 love no host so soun;
 Nor Ypermestres, or Adraime,
 ne pleyne
 Alceste is here, that al
 that may disteyne"116

"Sy dy pour uray qu'ains ne
 fauldroit alaine
 Que pousse compter le bien
 de luy;
 Et son gent corps loyalement
 servir paine,
 Et sy l'onour, sers, craings
 et abey,
 Cuers, corps, avoir lydonne
 sans rappel,
 N'il n'est deduit, jeu, solas-
 ne revel.
 Sy très plaisant, ne tant pl
 pleins de doulour
 Con est ma très douce dame
 d'onour."117

The French names and spelling were accepted by Chaucer with little modification through his feeling for the sound of words. He placed them in the lines so the accent falls on the same syllable as it does in the French poetry: Absolon, d'Absolon; Ester, Hester; Penelope, Penelopé; Yseude, Yseult; Lucrese, Lucrese; and Tysbe, Tisbé.

Froissart and Machaut also have written lines including musical proper names.

"Ne quier veoir Medé ne Jason,
 Ne trop avant lire ens ou mapemonde,
 Ne la musique Orpheüs ne le son,
 Ne Herculès, qui cercha toute le monde,
 Ne Lucrese, qui tant fu bonne et monde,
 Ne Penelope aussi, car, par Saint Jame,
 Je voi assés, puisque je voi madame."118

"Je suis trop bien ma dame comparer
 A l'image que fist Pygmalion.

116 The Students' Chaucer, ed. by MacCracken, p. 502.

117 Oeuvres de Deschamps, ed. Raynaud, Vol. X, p. xlix.

118 Oeuvres de Froissart, ed. Scheler, Vol. II, p. 369.

D'ivoire estoit, tant belle et si sans per
Que plus l'ama Medee Jason.
Li fels toudie la priat.
Mais l'image riens ne li repondoit,
Einsi me fait celle qui mon cuer font,
Qu'adès la pris et riens ne me respont."119

CONCLUSION

I have tried to point out a few poetic principles which Chaucer accepted from the French, those which pertained to stanza form, metre, construction of his verse, direct attack, contraction and slurring of vowels, elision between words, primary accent on significant terminations, use of the caesura, alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes, use of internal rhyme, and proper names for musical effect. Chaucer used one principle to advantage which the French found no occasion to use as far as I can judge. This has to do with the elision of the vowel or a syllable from the midst of a word. It is the form of versification that is called ¹syncope. The vowel which principally received this treatment was - e. The - e was not pronounced by the French, as the following examples will show,

"Sers loyallment, je ne faudroi moi"²

"Tout doucement me maistris et demainne"³

¹ College Standard Dictionary, Funk and Wagnalls Co.

² Oeuvres de Froissart, Vol. II, p. 389.

³ Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. I, p. 27.

but the principle seems to be one of French pronunciation rather than versification. With Chaucer it is clearly a principle of versification when certain words are used.

4

"Daunte thyself that dauntest otheres drede"

5

"He down of fethgres, ne no bleched shete"

6

"Was nevere erst Soogan blamyd for his tongh"

7

"Te-brokene ben the statytes hye in hevne."

The foregoing list comprises the chief principles which Chaucer accepted from the French, but this paper would not be complete without an attempt to show that the mood of Chaucer's poetry was closely analagous to that of the French. Such titles as "Sur ceux qui lovent li temps passé", "Balade Tresmorale", Sur les défauts dont les princes doivent se garder" ⁸ are highly suggestive of Chaucer's, "The Former Age", "Truth", and "Envoy

4 The Student's Chaucer, p. 553.

5 Ibid., p. 544, l. 45.

6 Ibid., p. 555, l. 21.

7 Ibid., p. 555, l. 1.

8 Oeuvres de Deschamps, Vol. II, p. 6.

To Seegan⁹. Not only are the titles similar, but the material itself bears a close resemblance. From Fortune, "Le responsee de fortune a plainiff", and "Comment Franc Voulenté Puet Resister a Tous Case" come these lines.

"No man is wreeched but him-
self hit wene
And he that hath himself hath
suffisance
Why seystow thanne I am to thee
so here,
That hast thy-self out of my
governance?" 10

"Par Franc Vouloir, qui
est enlui enté
Et par lequel maint homme
ont resisté
A toy, qui riens ne pirez
contre valoir
Sil ne consent a ta
chetiveté." 11

The volume from which "Comment Franc Voulenté Puet Register a Tous Case" comes is filled with the "Balades de Moralites" in which "one reads stanzas full of practical and worldly advice of equilitarian and even ego-¹²istic wisdom written in a popular, homely style", discussions such as are found in the moral ballad "Truth".

The French were fond of casting the stanzas of their ballads into the phrasing of "complaints". Chaucer followed suit with his "Compleynt of Venus", translated from

9 The Student's Chaucer, MacCracken, pp. 541, 553, and 555.

10 Skeat, Vol. II, p. 548.

11 Oeuvres de Deschamps, Vol. XI. p. 441.

12 Legouis, Emile, Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 67.

de Granssen, "A Complaint To His Lady", "Complaint to Pité, and "The Complaynt of Chaucer To His Purse". "Anelida and Arcite is still a 'Complaint', Queen Anelida bewailing the falseness of her lover Arcite",¹³ with "the sincere effusions of a bruised heart, still amorous and ready to forgive at the height of its undeserved sorrow".¹⁴ The "Balade De Plour et Judgment L'Amant"¹⁵ illustrates the complaints of a lover who has served well and been unrewarded as should be fitting to him, and yet gives the idea of willingness to serve in the same way should the lady condescend to the slightest recognition. By no word does the stanza give the idea, but the tone suggests it.

"Jugez, amans, et vois ma douleur
 Comment Amours et ma dame ensement.
 N'ont fors boni de leur plaisant sejour
 Et s'eloigné de merci durement,
 Sans avoir fait ne pensée;
 Et combien que je l'aie ainsi servie,
 Elle me het et est mon ennemie." 16

The French "complaints" were not always amorous. "The Complaynt of Chaucer to His Purse" finds its counterpart

¹³ Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. II, p. 196.

¹⁴ Legouis, Emile, Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 67.

¹⁵ Oeuvres de Guillaume de Machaut, Vol. II, p. 653.

¹⁶ Ibid.

in a ballad of Machaut, "De Culs qui n'ent Point d'Argent".

"C'est grant douleur qui d'estre en maladie,
D'avoir les fievres, froidures ou frissons,
Rage de dens mal d'espидemie,
Estre batu souvent de gros bastons,
Avoir gravelle et ma^l de trencheisons
Si n'est il mal tel, à mon jugement,
Com le mischief que l'avoir pou d'argent." 17

Chaucer's "complaint" is personal and his money is symbolized as a lovely blonde lady, but the dire sorrow of the lack of money is summed up in the line, "Beeth hevy ageyne, or elles mete I dye", in the same way that Machaut has summed it up as worse than all the adverse fortunes which come to man, "Com le mischief que d'avoir pou d'argent".

The subject which Chaucer followed most was the pleasure of love, and, likewise, the chagrin. It is the chief subject of the French ballads and rondels.

"Les pièces amoureuses composées par Deschamps forment une notable partrie de ses œuvres poétiques. Cent-trente neuf pièces entre autres (n^{os} 409 à 547) constituent à trois exceptions près, une suite continue de ballades amoureuses, et les rondeaux, et les virelais qui viennent après, se rapportent pour la plupart au même sujet. ... Les qualités que la poésie et la convention exigent d'elle sont du reste nombreuses: elle sera belle,

17 Ibid., p. 646.

sage, pieuse, douce, courtoise, disintéressée, constante et saura s'inspirer de l'exemple des amoureuses célèbres, Guenièvre, Isent, et autres..." 18

These characteristics are fully exemplified in the lines of the French lyrics.

"En pour ce pri madame de valeur,
Qui tant par est douce, plaisant et pure." 19

"Et si me doubte, très douce debonnaire,
Qui belle et bonne et sage estes sans per." 20

"Hé! gentils cuers, loiaus, dous, debonnaire." 21

"Ve grante bonté, vo biauté fossonnée,
Ve noble corps, vo grace, et vo savoir." 22

"Belle, blanche, blonde, bonne, agreable,
Jeune et gente, de tous biens acournée.

"Douce et plaisant, qui pas ne se desrée." 23

The same attributes are to be observed in Chaucer.

"His name is Bounte set in Womanhede,
Sednesse in Yowthe, and Beaute Irideles,

18 Oeuvres de Deschamps, (Société des anciens textes)
Vol. XI, p. 270.

19 Guillaume de Machaut, Poésies Lyriques, Vol. II,
p. 93.

20 Ibid., p. 73.

21 Ibid., p. 115.

22 Ibid., p. 104.

23 Oeuvres de Deschamps, Vol. III, p. 220.

"And Plessaunce under Governaunce and Drede." 24

"And with your pite me som wyse avaunce" 25

"Youre gentillnesse, and your debonairite?" 26

"Youre beaute hoole, and stedfast governaunce" 27

We are giving below ideas in regard to what material an amorous ballad should contain, so that we may see Chaucer's adherence to the material.

"On a vue quelles étaient en amour des qualités demandées à la dame; elle se resument, comme le dit Deschamps, en un chapel de quatre fleurs qui ont bonté, grâce, beauté et courtoisie..... Je veux cependant citer quelque vers d'une ballade ou'est décrite dans tous les détails la beauté de la femme telle que l'avacent imaginée les chansonniers en XIII^e siècle, telle aussi que la concevaient encore les contemporains de Deschamps. Je doute que l'énumérations de toutes ces perfectiones conventionnelles ait jamais répondu exactement à l'image réelle de celle de ses maîtresse dont le poète gardait toujours jalousement sur le portrait.

"Gente de corps, face a droit coulourée
Humble regart, front hault, et bien
assise." 28

This selection was placed elsewhere in this paper to

24 The Students' Chaucer, ed. by MacCracken, p. 527

25 Ibid., p. 555.

26 Ibid., p. 529.

27 Ibid., p. 565.

28 Oeuvres de Deschamps, Vol. XI, p. 272 - 273.

be compared with "To Rosamunde", which enumerates the conventional perfections of the image of his mistress to a slighter degree than the French poet, Deschamps. Machaut was as much an exponent in the art as was Deschamps and wrote ballads and elegies on the perfections of his lady.

"Très habilement, Guillaume développe par la même occasion un autre thème non moins fréquent dans la poésie amoureuse: l'énumération des qualités physiques et morales de celle à qu'il a voué son amour. Énumérer ses vertues, parce qu'elles sont pour l'amant la cause de son perfectionnement, n'est-ce pas faire le portrait le plus élogieux de sa maîtresse?" 29

Deschamps made it obvious that "l'amours n'offre pas des plaisirs; il aussi des chagrins qui prêtent une ample matière aux plaintes poétiques". Professor John Lowes, in his presentation of evidence with reference to the authenticity of the "Merçiles Beauté", has thrown further light on the peculiarly interesting relations between Chaucer and Deschamps as to their matter and phraseology. He has compared several lyrics of Deschamps with the rondel of Chaucer, and the first example is given here with the corresponding part of the rondel as Professor Lowes has presented it. 30

29 Oeuvres de Guillaume de Machaut, Vol. II, p. xiii.

30 Modern Language Review, January, 1910.

"Your yën two wel slay me
sodenly;
I may the beauté of hem
not sustene,

So woundeth hit through-
out my herte kene

And but your word wel
helen hastily
My hertes wounde, whyl
that hit is grene.
Your yën two wel slay me
sodenly....

So hath your beauté fro
herte chased,
Pitee, that me ne availleth
not

to pleyne;
For Dounger halt your
mercy in his cheyne."

"Comment pourra mon corps
durer
Ne le deuls regars endu-
rer
De vos biaux yeux?
Se bon espoir ne me fait
mêueux
Que je n'ay, il me fait
finir.
En traiant m'ont voulu
navrer
Jusqu'au cuer, par leur
regarder.
Tres perilleux;
Dont du trait ne puis re-
passer.

Mais m'en convendra tres-
passer.
Ayde moy, Dieux!

Foy que Pitié vueille gar-
der
Et bon espoir reconforter
Mon plaint piteux;
Car se Dangier le dis-
piteux
Ne nuist, je doy bien de-
mander
Comment pourra mon corps
durer." 31

Professor Lowes has an interesting discussion to add to his example. "It is clear enough, of course, that the details of the passages quoted are, in a large measure, commonplace of the genre. That is true of the fatal potency to the lady's eyes; and the juxtaposition of Pity and Danger one meets everywhere. It is unnecessary to exemplify it at length. It occurs frequently in Des-

champs: Par ses doux yeux est me cuer envois, Et si
 fort traits qu'il ne se puet defendre, Sans coup ferir le
 fault mourir ou rendre, En uray espoir d'esper guerison
 (III, 250, No. 440); Par le doux ceil qui m'a mors de sa
 sardo (III, 327, No. 500); De mal eure vous regarday, Et
 trop present furent li ray. De vos biaux yeux pour moy fe-
 rir, Du regart des queles me nauray Tant que jamais joye
 n'auray Se Pites ne me veuet (IV, 165, No. 544); cf. III,
 285, No. 467;..."
 32

Professor Lowes has compared the third section of the
 triple rondel, which he calls a "humorous paraphrase in
 thoroughly Chaucerian vein" with another poem of Deschamps.

"Syn I fro Love escaped am
 so fat,
 I never think to ben in
 his prison leve
 Syn I am free, I counte
 him not a bene.

He may answer and sey
 this or that;
 I do no fors, I speke
 right as I mene,
 Syn I fro Love escaped
 am so fat
 I nevere thenk to hen in
 his prison lene.

Love hath my name istruck
 out of his sclat,
 And he is strike out of me
 bakes elene

"Puis qu'Amour ay servi
 trestout mon temps
 Et employé cuer et corps
 quanque j'ay
 S'Amours mefaut, j'ameriz
 jour n'amery.

Joyes, deduiz, festes, es-
 batement,
 Ay fait, pour li, mais plus
 ne les feray,
 Puis qu'Amour ay servi tres-
 tout mon temps,
 Et employé cuer et corps quan-
 que j'ay.

Croire ne puis qu'amours soit
 si opulans,
 Maiz a ce cop de certain le
 seroy;

For everme, this is non
 other mene,
 Syn I fre Love escaped
 am so fat,
 I nevere think to ben in
 his prison lene,
 Syn I am free I counte him
 not a bene."³³

Et s'ainsie est, a tous amans
 diray,
 Puis qu'Amour ay servi tres-
 tout mon temps,
 S'Amours me faut, jamaiz jour
 n'ameray."³⁴

"The themes are identical; the conventional phraseology of the rondeau is turned into the vivid, racy idiom of the roundel - the same strains; one cannot but feel that it³⁵ reappears in mellowed form in the 'Envoy to Seogan'.

"This is obvious without comment. Compare for example--

"Love hath my name istruck out of his sclat,
 And he is strike out of my bokes elene
 For ever mo--

with the refrain

"S'amour me faut, j'amaiz jour n'ameray"

This view of Chaucer's affinities with the French in the matter of themes and phraseology only serves to strengthen the evidence that "The primary sources for his poetic art must be looked for in France. They are to be found not in Anglo-Norman poetry, unimaginative and formless, but in the pure specimens of proper French poetry, which he had³⁶ occasion to know." A study of the French poetry, so close

³³ Skent, Vol. II, p. 387.

³⁴ Oeuvres de Deschamps (Societe des Anciens Textes), Vol. IV, p. 29

³⁵ Ibid.,

³⁶ Legouis, Etude, Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 48.

that it led him to the acceptance of their very moed, naturally led to the adoption of their principles, because it was the latter which held the major portion of his interest. It was this fortunate choice of Chaucer that gave us the first great metrist in the English language.

APPENDIX A

1.

- a. "Deschamps a lui même indiqué dans son 'Art de Dictier' la manière de faire une ballade; malheureusement sa théorie est confuse et incomplète"
(Oeuvres de Deschamps, Vol. XI, p. 11)

- b. "'L'Art de dictier' ne dit mot de la théorie du rondeau;.... Le rondeau de Deschamps qui peut être écrit en vers de 7, de 8, ou de 10 syllabes, se compose de 3 strophes, toujours établies sur deux rimes; la première comprend de 2 à 5 vers; la seconde comporte de 1 à 3 vers, suivis, du premier ou des 2 premières vers de la première strophe formant refrain partiel. La troisième strophe compte autant de vers que la première, suivis de la répétition de cette première; strophe tout entière, formant refrain couplet."
(Oeuvres de Deschamps, ed. par Gaston Raynaud, Vol. XI, p. 124).

2.

Balade adresse à Geoffrey Chaucer, en lui
envoyant ses ouvrages

'O Socrates plains de philosophie,
Seneque en meurs et Anglax en pratique,
Ovides grans en ta poeterie,
Bries in parler, saiges en rhetorique,

Aigles treshauls, qui par ta theorique
 Enlumines le regne d'Eneas,
 I'isle aux geans, ceuls de Brutt, et qui as
 Semé les fleurs et planté le rowier,
 Aux ignorans de la langue pandras,
 Grant translateur, noble Geoffrey Chaucier.

Tu es d'amours mondains Dieux en Albis:
 Et de la Rose, en la terre Angelique,
 Qui d'Angela saxonne, est puis flourie
 Anglèterre, d'elle ce nom s'applique
 Le derruier en l'ethimologique;
 En bon anglès le livre translata;
 Et un vergier ou du plant demandas
 De ceuls qui font pour eulx auctoriser,
 A ja longtemps que tu edifias,
 Grant translateur, noble Geoffrey Chaucier.

A toy pour ce de la fontaine Helye
 Requier avoir un buvraige autentique,
 Dont la days est de tout en ta boillie,
 Pour raffrener d'elle ma soif ethique,
 Qui en gaule seroy paralitique
 Jusques a ce que tu m'abuveras.
 Eustaces sui, qui de mon plantaras:
 Mais pran en gré les euvres d'escolier
 Que par Clifford de moy avoir pourras,
 Grant translateur, noble Geoffrey Chaucier.

Lenvoy

Pfete hault, loenge destruye,
 Et ton jardin ne seroye qui'ortie;
 Consideré ce que j'ay dit premier
 Ton noble plant, ta douce melodie,
 Mais pour sçavoir, de rescripre te prie,
 Grant translateur, noble Geoffrey Chaucier."

(Oeuvres de Deschamps, ed. by
 Saint-Hilaire, Vol. II, p. 138).

3. "By a curious coincidence, the old poet, Guillaume de Machaut, was in all probability at the same time shut up in Reims, besieged by the English, and was training there in the art of verse-making a youth destined to make famous the name of Eustache Deschamps. Although we are unable to assert that Chaucer met either one of

them, we should like to picture the young English prisoner brought into contact at that early date with him who was his earliest master in verse, and with that other, who later became by turn his pattern and praiser. In any case why should not Chaucer's acquaintance with Machaut date from this temporary proximity?"

(Legouis, Emile, Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 7.

4. "Rimes to lines ending with stress are called masculine,...."

"Rimes to lines with light endings are called Feminine, or double rhymes,...."

(Andrews, C. E., The Writing and Reading of Verse, p. 82).

5. "And he practices the new artificial forms, but without much eagerness or very brilliant success. On the other hand he hits (in the seven-lined stanza with the couplet, the "rhyme royal") on a form which evidently suits him, and which, not merely by the effect of his example, holds a very great place in English poetry for the next two centuries. Moreover, he shows in his handling of these various vehicles a distinct mastery, and a great freedom from two faults-straggling looseness and wooden precision - which had characterized most earlier verse."

(Saintsbury, History of English Prosody, Vol. II, p. 155.

APPENDIX B

Excerpts from the "Histoire De La Litterature Française", G. Lanson.

1. "Le nom qui désormais va désigner la poésie, le nom qui peint merveilleusement celle de ces deux siècles, depuis Machaut et Deschamps jusqu'à Cretin et Molinet, c'est le XIV^e siècle qui l'adopte et le consacre: et ce nom est rhétorique.

L'instituteur de cette rhétorique fut Guillaume de Machaut..."

(P. 148).

2. "Eustache Deschamps passe pour un élève de Machaut. Cela de vrai de la forme de ses vers: du reste il lui ressemble aussi peu que possible. Sa poésie est tout de circonstance,...."

(P. 155).

3. "Que du reste Deschamps, avec son rude langage, dans ses vers martelés et pénibles ait souvent de la force, de l'éclat, de l'originalité..."

(P. 156).

4. "Eustache Deschamps, qui est pourtant un homme de sens, prend le peine d'écrire en 1392 un 'Art de

dictier et de faire ballades et chants royaux' qui résume la poétique du siècle. Le mal n'est pas qu'il aime les formes curieuses et parfaites; mais il les estime seulement selon l'effort et contorsion d'esprit qu'elles nécessitent."
(P. 147).

5. "Mais dans cet tout esprit de Froissart, tout cet art, il n'ya pas un grain de poésie: ni intimité, ni personnalité: pas un mot qui sorte de l'âme ou le révèle. C'est comme dans les lais, les virelais, ballades, et pastourelles de Froissart: les jolies pièces abondent; c'est quelque chose de fin, de vif, de charmant, une fantaisie discrète, une forme sobre; mais une ingenuité d'opéra-comique dans les paysanneries, et portout une fousse naïvité, une adroite contrefaçon du sentiment, une puérilité d'esprit. Cependant Froissart, plus souvent que Machault, donne la sensation du fini, du parfait accord de la forme et du fond."
(P. 149).

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