

WINNING THE ROSE



*A Commentary on The Romance of the Rose
by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung*

by *A. S. KLINE*

Published with illuminations, courtesy of the British Library.

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This print edition is published by

Poetry In Translation (www.poetryintranslation.com),

via Amazon Services UK Limited (a UK limited company with registration number 03223028 and its registered office at 1 Principal Place, Worship Street, London, EC2A 2FA)

ISBN-13: 979-8600222243

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INTRODUCTION: THE AUTHORS



'Jean de Meung and Guillaume de Lorris'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); 2nd quarter of the 14th century
The British Library



he Romance of the Rose, written in 13th century France, and one of the finest and most widely-read poetic works of the Medieval period, consists of two distinct parts created, it appears, by two different authors, Guillaume de Lorris (Lorris being a village east of Orléans) and Jean de Meung.

I say ‘appears’, because our knowledge of Guillaume derives solely from Jean de Meung’s Continuation of the Romance. In Chapter LX, the God of Love (Amor), in his speech there, states that Guillaume, the Lover, who stands before him, will begin the Romance, but not live to complete it. One Jean Chopinel, however, will be born at Meung-sur-Loire (south-west of Orléans) and will continue the work, more than forty years later. Jean, prompted by the God of Love, and imbued by him with knowledge of love, being a man who holds the Romance dear, will attempt to complete the task. It is worth noting that Jean is described as one who will be a member of Love’s Company all his life, a man lively in heart and body, who will despise the counter-claims of Reason regarding amorous love, and who if he strays from Love’s company will in the end repent of his misdeed. That characterisation should be remembered when we consider the intention and execution, of the Continuation.

Later in the Continuation (in Chapter LXII), we hear that Charles of Anjou has taken the kingdom of Sicily from Manfred, placing that part of the text in the years between 1268 when Charles acquired the kingdom and 1285 when he died. There is also mention (in Chapter LXV) of the Carmelite friars, who were in theory suppressed by the Council of Lyon in 1274, and a mention of the mountains between France and Sardinia (in Chapter XCVIII) implying a date before 1271 when the County of Toulouse, bordering the Mediterranean, became part of the royal domains. We should also note the Paris Condemnations of 1277, against heretical teachings, which Jean might indeed have mentioned if his text was written later. An approximate date of 1268-1270, before the death of Louis IX, and when Charles as King of Sicily was still current news and worth mentioning, seems reasonable therefore for Jean’s text, giving a date around 1228-1230 for Guillaume’s supposedly incomplete text, written some forty or more years earlier, according to Jean.

Of the historical Guillaume we know nothing more. Jean de Meung seems to have moved to Paris, the intellectual centre of France, and to have been connected to the University of Paris. He appears to have lived from 1292 till his death in 1305 in a house on the Rue Saint-Jacques (A plaque at 218 Rue Saint-Jacques marks the supposed location). As author and translator he produced, among other literary works, translations from the Latin of Boethius' 'Consolations', the 'Letters of Abelard and Heloise', and a treatise 'On Spiritual Friendship' by Aelred of Rievaulx, all of which influenced the Romance. Aelred, in particular, wrote that his mind 'surrendered to affection and became devoted to love...nothing seemed sweeter, more pleasant, or more worthy than to be loved and to love' words which echo Augustine's Confessions: *Nondum amabam, et amare amabam...quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare* 'I love not yet, yet I loved to love. I sought what I might love, in love with loving.'

To place the authors in their historical context, Guillaume would have lived during the reigns of Philip II Augustus (1180-1223), Louis VIII the Lion (1223-1226) and Louis IX the Saint (1226-1270) and may have died as late as the time of the Baron's Crusade of 1239. Jean lived during the reigns of Louis IX, Philip III, the Bold (1270-1285) and Philip IV, The Fair (1285-1314) and was a contemporary of both Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and Dante (1265-1321).

The 13th century was the century of plague, the Black Death decimating Europe, peaking in the 1250's. It saw several Crusades, the reconquest of Spain from the Moors, the expansion of the Mongol Empire in the East, and the Muslim Sultanate in India, as well as the founding of the Ottoman Empire in the last years of the century.

France was consolidated as a kingdom, largely within its current geographical boundaries, while the University of the Sorbonne was founded (1257), and the last of Bishop Tempier's Paris Condemnations (1277) banned a number of 'heretical' teachings, including those on the physical treatises of Aristotle.

It is also worth noting the conflict, from 1250 onwards, between the University of Paris, championed by Guillaume de Saint-Amour (1202-1272)

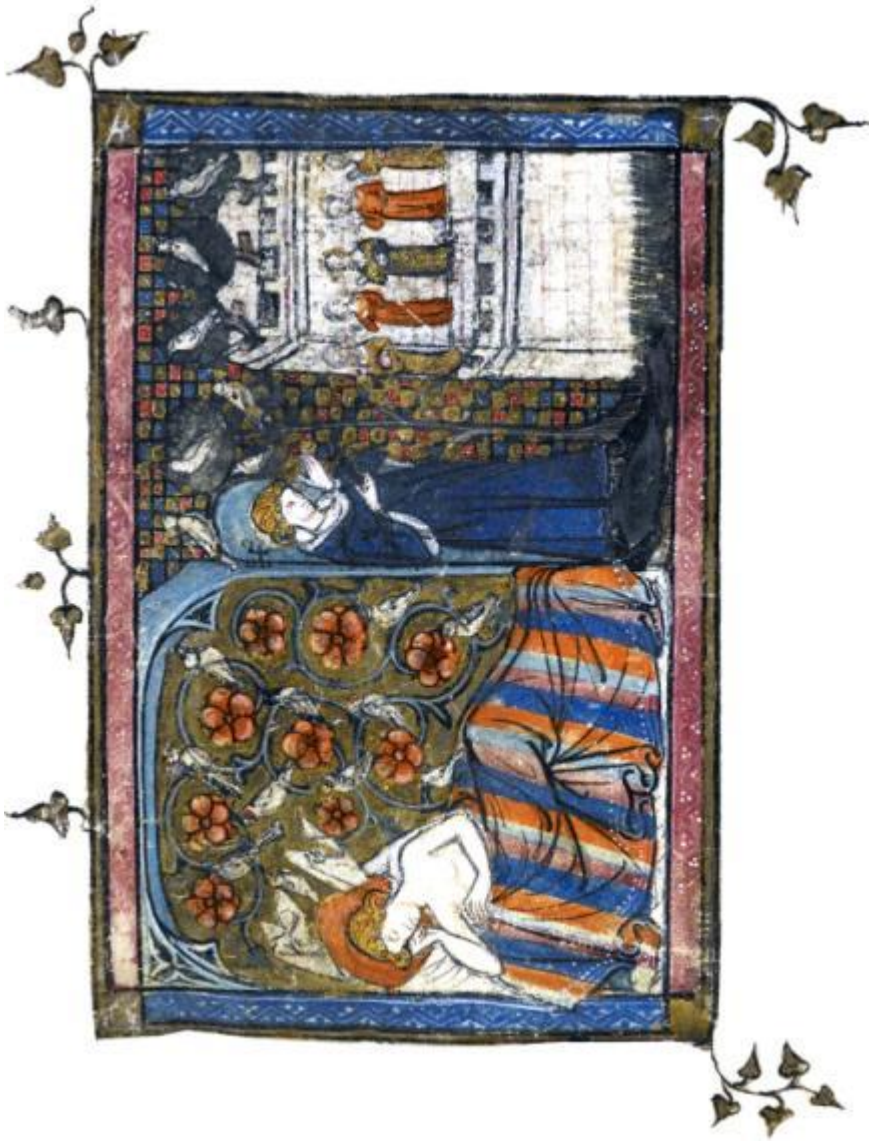
and the mendicant religious orders (primarily the Dominicans and Franciscans) championed by Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus. In the text of the Romance, Jean supports Guillaume de Saint-Amour, and frowns generally on what he saw as the hypocritical behaviour of the mendicant orders, superficially embracing ‘barren’ poverty and abstinence, while nevertheless seeking power and intellectual dominance.

INTRODUCTION: THE STRUCTURE OF THE ROMANCE



he Romance of the Rose then comprises two works, an original text by Guillaume de Lorris, and a Continuation by Jean de Meung. Both are cast in the form of a (shared) Dream, with Guillaume and then Jean playing the part of dreamer, Lover, and author. This triple role allows shifts of emphasis from first-person to third person narrative, from participant to commentator. The transition from Guillaume to Jean as author takes place when Jean starts his Continuation (the link word being ‘despair’), while that from Guillaume to Jean, as dreamer and Lover, takes place within or sometime after Jean’s central Chapter LX.

Guillaume casts his work as a Dream concerning courtly love, ‘fin amour’, true or pure or refined love. He is himself the dreamer, and his dream reads as a relatively straightforward narrative. Why cast it as a dream? Because in dream (or a vision) a supposedly real, first-person narrative can allow personifications of various entities, human emotions, or states, such as Joy, Love, Pleasure, Reason, Wealth, Resistance and Jealousy to act and speak, as though they were real personages (in other words to function as anthropomorphic metaphors) and to interact with the Lover and the author as first person narrators. Personification was widely used in the Classical literature of Greece and Rome, and indeed within ‘pagan’ religion, and was used notably in the medieval period by Prudentius in his ‘Psychomachia’ (early fifth century), and Boethius in his ‘Consolation of Philosophy’ (sixth century) where there is a dialogue between the author and Lady Philosophy, a work which also made Fortune and her Wheel a popular medieval trope. The personifications have human characteristics therefore and perform their speeches and actions within the Dream rather like the masked performers in Louis XIV’s pageants at Versailles. They are described in detail, they speak, dance, and otherwise act within a refined, stately and courtly environment.



'The lover asleep and the walled garden'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France; 2nd quarter of the 14th century
The British Library

Guillaume, as author, proclaims in the opening chapter, that he is writing an 'Art of Love' (Ovid) for his age. Within the Dream, the Lover, Guillaume, gains entry to the Garden of Pleasure; encounters, is pursued by, and is wounded by the God of Love (Amor or Cupido, the son of the goddess Venus); pays homage to the God of Love who instructs him in the rules of his realm; and then sets out on a Quest to win the object of his love, the Rose, both a courtly and an erotic feminine symbol. Note that 'fin amour' contains both elements, as witnessed in Troubadour love poetry which does not separate courtly admiration for, and love of, the beloved from sexual longing.

The Lover meets with Fair-Welcome who assists him and Resistance who obstructs him; with Reason whose advice he discounts, and with Friend who advises him. Pity and Openness plead for him, and aided by Fair-Welcome he succeeds in reaching the Rose. However, Jealousy (in the sense here of possessiveness, but primarily self-possessiveness, the desire to keep intact what is one's own, e.g. virginity, equating therefore to sexual caution) as overall guardian of the Rose, scolds Fair-Welcome for allowing access to the Rose, and imprisons him in her castle tower, while Fear and Shame chide Resistance for failing in his duty of guardianship. The Lover laments his fate, and it will be from this point that Jean de Meung will pick up the tale.

A coda allowing the Lover to win the Rose has been added at some point to the text, a conclusion not necessarily penned by Guillaume, but providing a satisfactory if brief conclusion, which Jean rejected in order to create his Continuation. Guillaume's style is poetic and lyrical and treats love in the straightforward manner of courtly longing for the female beloved, mingled with sexual desire. Social and philosophical comment is minimal in the creation of this poetically-delightful journey through the garden of Pleasure, as we shall see later in the detailed chapter by chapter commentary. However Guillaume has set the scene for Jean in a number of ways, a scene which Jean saw the opportunity to fully exploit.

Guillaume, then, created a Dream framework, and within it a Quest. The hero thus encounters many of the traditional elements of a quest story

or myth (see Joseph Campbell's 'Hero with a Thousand Faces'). He sets out on a journey (physical, emotional and moral), undertakes the Quest (with a defined goal which will, he believes, resolve a problem and elevate his state of being), meets with helpers and hinderers, seen here in the form of Personifications, overcomes obstacles, and achieves his goal, partially (he kisses the Rose, but ends in near-despair) or completely (in the 'added' coda). Guillaume includes Personifications crucial to Jean's later narrative; in particular, Reason whose advice the Lover rejects, Friend, and Wealth. He also portrays, in fulfilling the action of the Quest, the God of Love, Fair-Welcome, Jealousy, and Resistance. As we shall see, Jean adds further, equally vital, Personifications, in particular those of Nature and Genius (Nature's priest, who is the spirit of place, and the engine of sexual desire in human beings). Both authors employ Allegory, an extended metaphor in which characters (often personifications), places, and events, deliver a deeper message concerning the real world.

The presence of two authors separated in historical time raises the question of whether their aims and execution conflict or reinforce one another. Are they broadly complementary in their artistic aims, as close as say Giorgione and Titian, or are there inner artistic and philosophical tensions present, like those between Marlowe and Shakespeare, or Guido Cavalcanti and Dante? In the latter case, Guido (consider his poem 'Donna me prega') saw Love as Andreas Cappelanus (in his 'De Amore', c1190) perceived it, as a malady of thought, arising from ardour, born of a dark or disturbed vision, while Dante opposing that view wrote his *Commedia* to demonstrate that human Love was a benign force within the mind, arising from a pure vision, involving the intellect as well as the body, and ending in the love of the Divine Being (a love intertwined with truth and beauty).

Jean's *Continuation of the Romance* adopts Guillaume's structure but develops it further. The context is still the Dream sequence, and within it the Quest, with its helpers, hinderers, obstacles and final goal, the winning of the Rose. Here though the crucial personifications, Reason, Wealth, Friend, Hypocrisy (False-Seeming), the Crone, Fair-Welcome, Nature and Genius are not limited agents of action, but full-blown dramatic Voices. Their monologues are reflective, and open up the Romance to wider

spheres (socially, philosophically, and spiritually) in their attempt to portray, criticise, or celebrate various aspects of love, and to advise, warn, thwart, or support the Lover.

In addition the struggle for access to the Rose develops into full-blown mock-epic, in its conflict between the forces of Love or Amor (and importantly his mother, the goddess Venus) and those of Jealousy and the keepers (Resistance, Ill-Talk, Shame and Fear) who guard her castle, and the Rose. Love's object in the battle is the destruction of Jealousy's fortress, the freeing of Fair-Welcome, and the enablement of the final stage of the Lover's Quest. The narrative sweep of this conflict of Love and Jealousy (Self-Possessiveness), from the assumed stalemate of Guillaume's narrative, with Fair-Welcome imprisoned, to the final triumph of Venus, is echoed by a parallel sweep of the monologues through negative views of amorous and erotic love (voiced by Reason, Friend, Wealth, False-Seeming, and the Crone) followed by the more positive intervention of Nature and Genius, to a re-ascent which hearten love's forces, and enables the final conquest of Jealousy's castle by the wholly pagan goddess Venus. Thus Jean builds on Guillaume's structure, widening, developing, and completing the original text in a new and sophisticated manner.

Jean and Guillaume's views of Love appear complementary, with Jean amplifying and fulfilling Guillaume's intent, but in a non-courtly manner. Reason, Wealth, the Crone, and False-Seeming, in particular, reinforce both authors' position vis-a-vis the operation of amorous love in a world in which Nature prompts the sexual urge: Reason and amorous Love are opposed, amorous Love being an irrational force. The Lover is therefore foolish and amorous Love a folly, according to both Reason and the multiple voices of experience, and yet the authors nevertheless celebrate amorous and erotic love, accepting the primacy of the reproductive and sexual urges within the human, and the pleasure and delight sexuality brings. Reason is therefore rejected by the Lover, and while the voices of experience are noted, nevertheless 'Amor vincit omnia: Love conquers all'.

Those who might wish to view Jean's intention as a straightforward condemnation of amorous and sexual Love, or equally as an ultimate defeat

of Reason, will, I think, find it impossible to justify either course, since the authors, especially Jean appear to hold both views simultaneously: the sad reality of amorous Love's effects in the world as enunciated by Reason and the voices of experience (Friend, Wealth, False-Seeming, and the Crone) on the one hand, and the power of Love, its irrational course, on the other. Such readers would therefore be obliged to find extensive irony in the work, though true irony is notoriously difficult to prove in a literary text alone without substantial supporting evidence from outside the text itself; localised evidence of humour, wit, even mockery within the text is not enough. Either the Lover must be shown to be an ironic portrait of a complete madman or idiot, aiming at a wholly undesirable goal, which he visibly is not; or Reason and the voices of experience must be shown to be uttering ironic speeches which are the opposite of their and the authors' true beliefs, something for which there is no evidence. The Lover is better viewed as a representative everyman, foolish in the way all men are in love; while Reason and the other voices cast an accurate if somewhat cynical light on the vagaries of sexuality and amorous connection.

One may perceive and understand Reason's views through use of the intellect, and yet also accept the driving force of the emotional and sexual urge called Love, with its attendant joys and pains. One can accept this struggle of the Head and the Heart, and therefore support both sides at once. One can mock the madness of physical desire, and even argue its inferiority to spiritual love, without simply rejecting Guillaume's world of courtly love, condemning amorous and erotic love, or rejecting physical desire as a pathway to deeper union. We humans take that double-path all the time; we behave foolishly in love and yet watch ourselves doing so by the light of rational thought; we follow the ways of reason, and yet are engulfed by storms of emotion. We are more humanly complex than can be caught in a single view.

In summary Guillaume and Jean cleverly maintain both positions. Amorous Love in the Romance is an irrational complex of emotions and thoughts, not subject to the full exercise of reason and free-will, and therefore leading to inevitable pain and distress; and yet at the same time is a natural and primal urge that brings pleasure and delight, and in 'fin amour'

engages both mind and heart in a mode of mutual respect. That is the position of Guillaume vis-à-vis courtly love, where its rituals endeavour to control amorous love within a framework sensitive to both its folly and the need for reason, and it is also that of Jean, with regard to amorous love in a broader non-courtly society, where reason and the voices of experience can cast light on the folly, while the pains of love are nevertheless offset by its pleasures and delights.

The Romance, as a whole, presents both the conflict between Reason and Nature as revealed in the speeches of the Personifications, and the conflict between Love and Jealousy (as both Possessiveness and Self-Possessiveness) as revealed in the actions of the Personifications within the allegorical mock-epic. In the end Nature overpowers Reason, Love defeats Jealousy and ‘*Amor vincit Omnia*: Love conquers all’. But Reason’s arguments are not forgotten, nor the voices of experience. The Romance on the one hand gives us the perpetual affirmation and victory of amorous Love, and on the other the voices of Reason and experience forever calling that victory into question.

INTRODUCTION: THE PERSONIFICATIONS



efore exploring the narrative chapter by chapter, it is worth spending a moment on the use of personification. Anything can be given an anthropomorphic realisation in thought, a common tendency in pre-scientific ages where lack of knowledge and understanding of undirected and un-designed forces leads to an imagined world where objects and attributes appear to possess independent life, creatures may be granted fully human attributes, and gods, spirits, and unknown powers act to generate events and processes. The lingering belief in deities and spirits, in a scientific age, shows how hard that tendency is to counter through rational thought. Here are the key Personifications that Guillaume and Jean employ:



'Hate'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); c. 1320 - c. 1340
The British Library

Basic Feelings or Emotions: Pleasure, Delight, Joy, Fear, Pity, Hunger, Hatred.

Extended Emotions and States of Mind: Innocence, Openness, Jealousy, Shame (her father is Misdeeds, her mother Reason), Faint-Heart, Security, Love.

Patterns of Behaviour and Action: Humility, Patience, Chastity, Courtesy, Fair-Welcome (the son of Courtesy), Resistance, Ill-Talk, Foolish-Largesse (Excessive Generosity), Boldness, False-Seeming (whose father is Fraud, and mother Hypocrisy), Larceny, Sweet-Thoughts, Sweet-Speech, Sweet-Glances, Close-Company, Abstinence, Inner-Freedom, Concealment, Avarice, Charity, Idleness.

Qualities or Attributes: Beauty, Honour, Wealth, Poverty, Nobility.

Representative personages: Friend, Crone, the Lover, the Jealous Husband, the Rose.

Mythical powers: Venus (Goddess of Love), Amor (or Cupido, the God of Love, son of Venus), Nature, Genius (Nature's Priest and representative of natural order, natural inclination, and the procreative urge), Death, the Fates, the Furies, Fortune.

Mental Faculties: Reason

As can be seen the Personifications are wide-ranging but those that, as behaviours, representative personages, or powers and faculties, further the thought and action are the most widely represented.

My personal view is that the key Personifications, as deployed in the Continuation particularly, are also elements along a generalised path of love/seduction, taking us from Reason to the Rose; and that explains why the key Personifications appear in the order in which they do. I think Jean is suggesting that lovers and seducers, in general, proceed along a track that starts with rational acquaintance (Reason), progresses to a closer friendship (Friend), justifying the giving of gifts (Wealth), followed by a degree of flattery and deceit (False-Seeming), which leads, often via a go-between (for

example a lady's maid, or here the Crone), to the lover meeting with Fair-Welcome, i.e. the beloved's acceptance of amorous attentions; at that point Nature steps in, followed by her priest Genius, who personifies the individual urge to sexual love and procreation, leading inevitably, after Love has conquered Jealousy, to erotic climax, here in a Dream context. I offer that in lieu of any other obvious explanation for the precise order of the Personifications.

GUILLAUME'S ROMANCE: CHAPTER I: THE LOVER'S PROLOGUE: (LINES 1-130)



Guillaume here sets out to create an Art of Love for his age (as does Jean later). Ovid's 'Ars Amatoria' is the reference point, a poem instructing the male lover in the art of winning the female (in Guillaume's case, the Rose), and this is the hetero-sexual context within which the Romance also is written. Here it is worth reminding the reader that we are dealing with the 13th century not modern moral views. In regard to sexuality, the Romance is generally hostile to non-heterosexual behaviour of all kinds, including chastity and abstinence and their practice within the religious orders, since it is viewed as barren in intent, not leading to the furtherance of the species. It should also be noted that the social context is one in which women played a subservient social role where the power-nexus is concerned (though there were notable exceptions). The society is therefore patriarchal, but within that power framework the role of women in procreation, and as equal companions within loving relationships is regarded as crucial. The emphasis on hetero-sexuality and the perceived role of women may be difficult for the modern reader to accept, and may rightly be regarded as a restriction on the meaning of love, but that would be to impose modern moral values retrospectively on the 13th Century and its common prejudices. Readers should therefore bear in mind the context in all that follows.

Ovid's work is almost an instruction manual but that is not the form Guillaume chooses. He embarks in Chapter I on a dream sequence, a vision if you like, and his first concern is to reinforce the idea that dreams may not be merely idle, but may contain a hidden meaning. He refers to Macrobius (fifth century) who wrote a 'Commentary on Scipio's Dream' a dream sequence which appears in Cicero's 'Republic'. Macrobius dismisses dreams which are merely erotic and it is therefore clear that Guillaume intended the

erotic symbolism of the Rose to be merged with the courtly symbolism of the object of love, such that the beloved female is both an object of desire, and the subject of a deeper loving relationship. The deeper meaning of the dream is therefore Love, not simply sex, and the eroticism may be seen as serving that aim, and not present simply for amusement or arousal (though it may achieve both!)

Guillaume says that Love commands him to set down this dream which he dreamed in his twentieth year (therefore the Lover is a young man, a youth, throughout both Romances). He states that the dream proved true, in other words the hidden meaning of the allegory was realised in his own waking life. The dream is not therefore ironic (i.e. displaying a view counter to the author's true meaning) except inasmuch as its surface eroticism would have been dismissed by Macrobius as idle and trifling, while the dream in fact contains hidden truth about love.

Guillaume now dedicates the work to his beloved, who we assume was a member of the seigniorial court circle in Orléans (a possession of the Crown, and at that time the French king's second city after Paris) or nearby. He associates her with 'honour' and identifies her as the Rose. The context is therefore both courtly and erotic, and honour and sexuality are in no way mutually exclusive. The Rose must be 'won' not taken. The emphasis later will be on free consent and not forced union, in the context of mutual respect between lovers, and a 'marriage' (in the privacy of their love) of equals.

The dream has taken place at least five years ago, so Guillaume the author is now twenty-five years old or more, and it is set in May, in springtime, the season of love in Troubadour poetry and elsewhere (for example Chrétien's 'Arthurian Romances'). In his dream Guillaume, the Lover, now rises from his bed, dresses, and sets out to enjoy the fair season, and is soon walking beside a clear river (that of life, youth and vigour) in which he cleanses his face (indicating purification of motive).

CHAPTER II: THE GARDEN OF PLEASURE: (LINES 131-538)



he Lover now comes upon the walled Garden of Pleasure, the wall being decorated with painted and sculpted images which he now proceeds to describe. These images, on the outside of the garden, indicate, by means of Personification, what is excluded from it. They are images of Hatred (which opposes Love), Felony and Villainy (which attack Love), Covetousness (which corrupts Love), Avarice (which distorts Love), Envy (the desire for and anger at what others possess, which stultifies Love), Sorrow (which damages Love and shuns delight), Age (which deters from pleasure and sexual union), Hypocrisy (and specifically religious hypocrisy, which deceives Love), and Poverty (which is an obstacle to Love).

Here then are various opponents of, or hindrances to, Love and Pleasure, whose access to the Garden the wall prevents. In particular we should note the description of Age, with its fine section on the passage of time, which will be echoed by the Crone's complaint in Jean's Romance. We should also note Hypocrisy who will return, in the person of False-Seeming, in Jean's Romance, and will deliver a scathing condemnation of religious hypocrisy with its pretence of abstinence and poverty, as a part of Jean's attack on the mendicant orders.

Love is to be furthered, in the courtly context, by an environment of happiness and pleasure, of which sexual dalliance is a part, but within which 'fin amour', true love, is also to be found. And the Garden which provides that environment is one 'where no shepherd came, with his flock, to mar the same'. It is not difficult to see the comment as ironic, no simple statement of country life, but a direct challenge to the religious imagery of Jehovah/Christ the Shepherd, and the Church with its flock. When Genius later uses the imagery of the Shepherd and his sheep in Jean's Continuation

we should be alert to possible ironies. Is Genius' speaking ironically of a flock of mindless sheep who exist in a place of virtuous but unchanging existence, and therefore ultimately of tedium, or genuinely of a flock of purified souls in a Paradise Garden truly superior to the Garden of Pleasure? And is Jean using the imagery delivered by Nature's priest in his mock-sermon to damage the overt meaning and point to a more destructive meaning, or to help the reader dismiss the ironic meaning which leaps to mind and to point back to the overt meaning as the genuine truth? For Guillaume seems to be suggesting here, that sheep have no place in the Garden of Pleasure, and that therefore the religious ethos and the ethos of courtly/sexual Love are incompatible.

The Lover now searches for a path, a gate, or door into the Garden and eventually finds a 'little gate, narrow and tight' (a sexual metaphor which mirrors Jean's conclusion to the Continuation), whose key is held, as we shall see, by Lady Idleness. The suggestion here is that love, and sexual dalliance, in the courtly world often arose from idleness, among a class which had easy access to leisure and hence pleasure.

**CHAPTER III: THE LOVER ENTERS THE GARDEN:
(LINES 539-742)**



ady Idleness is described at the entrance to the Garden, a portrait of a court-lady dressed for leisure. She explains that the Garden is owned by Pleasure, an elegant gentleman, who has planted it with exotic trees from the Saracen lands (i.e. the scene of the Crusades). The Lover now enters the Garden of Pleasure which appears as an earthly Paradise. Genius will later, in the Continuation, contrast this earthly Paradise with his description of the celestial Paradise. Love progresses through this Garden designed to stimulate the senses, engaging three senses already with its sights, sounds and scents, until he comes to the figure of Pleasure and his companions, who seem to him as fair as angels (with a hint therefore of a parallel religion. Compare also Chrétien's 'Perceval' and Perceval's first encounter with armed knights)



'Garden of Pleasures'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*,
France, Central (Paris); c. 1400
The British Library

**CHAPTER IV: THE FIGURE OF JOY:
(LINES 743-796)**



he figure of Joy is described, dancing in a round dance (a carole), and singing, with other of the folk, accompanied by music, acrobats etc.

**CHAPTER V: THE FIGURE OF PLEASURE:
(LINES 797-890)**



he figure of Courtesy calls to the Lover, and urges him to join the dancing. We therefore know we are in the courtly world where a stranger to the court is welcomed, and thus treated inclusively by the exclusive class to which he belongs (indicating Guillaume's own status among the nobility, we might assume). The figure of Pleasure is now described, the archetypal handsome young man. His lover is Joy, whom he holds by a finger, as she does him (adding the sense of touch to the three we have already mentioned), and whom he has loved since the age of seven.

He is the exponent of 'the pleasant life' that Jean will allude to at the end of the Continuation. They form the perfect amorous couple, exemplifying beauty and courtly fashion, and, as a favour to her, his clothes are patterned in the same manner as hers. We can therefore see a mutual and reciprocal male-female relationship in play, within the male power-nexus, a relationship of understanding and willing acceptance which appears to be Guillaume's and Jean's ideal for such heterosexual pairing, and for true love (*fin amour*).

**CHAPTER VI: THE GOD OF LOVE, BEAUTY:
(LINES 891-1044)**



ear to this pair, the Lover sees the God of Love (Amor, or Cupido) who is older than a youth, and who governs the company of lovers. He too is as fair as an angel, and has with him Sweet-Glances who carries his two Turkish bows (which traditionally possessed an extreme curvature, almost like a letter C, signifying Cupido) and his arrows (the arrows of Love in Classical mythology strike the Lover through the eyes, and cause the Lover to fall in love, hence they are carried by Sweet-Glances). One of these bows is black as mulberry and gnarled (the first that the Lover sees, i.e. the bitter longing of unrequited Love), and the other smooth and decorated with young men and women. There are ten arrows, and Sweet-Glances holds them five in each hand, while his master dances (The number suggests a comparison with the ten fingers, and the sense of touch, vital to erotic love). The five arrows which Sweet-Glances holds in his right hand, have barbed golden tips, and shafts painted in gold. These five golden arrows (which wound, and prompt desire) are Beauty, Innocence, Openness, Close-Company and Fair-Seeming. The arrows he holds in his left hand (the 'sinister' side) are painted black, with black tips. These are the arrows that thwart love, namely Pride, Villainy, Shame, Despair, and Inconstancy.

The Lover now returns to his description of the dance and the dancers. Near to the God of Love, Beauty dances. The delightful portrait Guillaume paints echoes through European art, prompting reminiscence, for example, of Botticelli's dancers in his 'Primavera', and of Byron's 'She walks in beauty like the night'.

CHAPTER VII: WEALTH, GENEROSITY AND OPENNESS: (LINES 1045-1264)



Guillaume, as Lover and narrator, now gives us a portrait of Wealth. As with Beauty she is a ‘noble’ lady; Guillaume stresses the courtly values. She will figure large in Jean’s Continuation as the guardian of the broad road to Love, as one who obstructs the indigent Lover, while offering a route to pleasure for the wealthy. Here she is also a pre-requisite for courtly leisure. The ‘whole world was in her power’, says Guillaume, and then proceeds to describe the army of flatterers and detractors, who flock to the court of Wealth, and who with their envy and lies poison love and drive lovers apart. Wealth’s purple robes are decorated with the history of kings and dukes (the wielders of supreme wealth). Her belt-buckle and clasp have protective and curative properties (implying that wealth enabled both a lifestyle that inhibited illness, and the ability to afford drugs and physicians). Wealth’s companion is a young nobleman whose lifestyle she supports, perhaps a portrait of someone specific whom Guillaume knew, or knew of, among the nobility of Orléans, or beyond.

The next of the Company of Love to be described is Generosity. Alexander the Great is here mentioned as an exemplar of the generous ruler. Generosity wins men’s hearts while Avarice deters love and loyalty, so the wise ruler should be generous. Generosity holds the hand of a knight of the line of King Arthur, who again may be based on a historical personage, perhaps a visitor from the English court for some tournament or other. (It is worth noting that by 1236, not long after the time assumed for the writing of Guillaume’s Romance, Louis IX of France was married, in 1234, to Margaret of Provence, and Henry III of England, in 1236, to her sister, Eleanor of Provence confirming the strong ties between the two courts.)

Guillaume next describes Openness, and humorously mentions Orléans, perhaps suggesting his present locale. Her companion is compared in handsomeness to ‘one who was the Lord of Windsor’s son’. (The supreme Lord of Royal Windsor from 1216 to the 1230’s would be the king, Henry III, who had no children before 1239, but since the past tense is used it may be Henry III himself who is referred to, his father King John being the previous Lord of Windsor, or his brother Richard, Count of Poitou, ignoring his illegitimate brother Richard Fitzroy, and his maternal half-brothers, Hugh XI of Lusignan and William de Valence)

**CHAPTER VIII: COURTESY:
(LINES 1265-1300)**



ourtesy, who had invited the Lover to the round-dance, is considered next, with her young man, and Idleness, who has been described already. In Love's Company, and in the dance, we thus have Courtesy and her lover, Pleasure and his lover Joy, the God of Love (Amor) and his companion Sweet-Glances, Wealth and her noble companion, Beauty alone, Generosity with her knightly companion, Openness with her regal companion, and Lady Idleness. The courtly ethos, which surrounds Amor, is therefore taken to be endowed with wealth, pleasurable and joyful, free and open, and full of beauty and leisure.

**CHAPTER IX: YOUTH:
(LINES 1301-1328)**



he last figure to be described is that of Youth, a twelve-year old girl, and her young lover, forming a picture of charming innocence. They are a reminder of the arranged marriages between young people of noble blood in that age, and that young and noble brides were expected to bear children from puberty (as early as the age of twelve) onwards. All of the figures in Love's Company take part in this dance in the Garden of Pleasure.

CHAPTER X: THE LOVER IS PURSUED BY AMOR:
(LINES 1329-1486)



As the dance ends, and the sets of lovers retreat to the shade for dalliance, the Lover sets out to wander the Garden, following Amor. Guillaume, as the Lover, now declares that their life is superior to all others, ‘for there’s no greater paradise, than to love as *our* hearts devise.’ There is no hint of irony in this statement, which is at the heart of the quest for the Rose. The value of the Christian paradise is therefore in question, since it is amorous love which these lovers pursue, and their paradise is an earthly one. The statement also suggests that love is an exercise of free-will (‘as *our* hearts devise’). It would be possible to claim, from a Christian viewpoint, that if the love the heart devised was simply the love of God, then the Christian paradise might be its aim, but nevertheless such love is not the specific aim of the lovers in the Garden of Pleasure. It should be noted however that Guillaume mentions the Christian God in a fairly conventional way throughout, and the paradigm of his society was a firm belief in deity.

Amor now calls for his golden bow and arrows. Sweet-Glances strings the bow (since Love comes through the eyes) and presents it, along with the golden arrows in his right hand, to the God of Love, who now plans to follow the Lover in turn, in order to wound him, and rouse his love for the Rose.

The Lover describes the Garden’s flora, which is partly Mediterranean in nature, fruit trees such as pomegranate, fig and date; nut trees, such as the nutmeg; various spice plants; cypress and olive trees (‘that here one rarely sees’) and partly that of Guillaume’s native northern France. The creatures are there too, for example deer, squirrels, and rabbits. The whole Garden is a ‘man-made’ cultivated space, planted carefully by Pleasure with

streams of his devising. It bears a wealth of flowers too, in both summer and winter, since the garden has seasons (a feature to be contrasted later with Genius' celestial paradise whose day is eternal).

The Lover is now hunted by Amor, who shadows him among the trees like a hunter, ready to wound him. Meanwhile the Lover arrives at a fountain, or spring, rising from a marble block, beneath a pine tree. The inscription on the marble block tells us that this is the fountain and pool beside which Narcissus died.

**CHAPTER XI: NARCISSUS:
(LINES 1487-1538)**



he narrator now begins the tale of Narcissus, derived probably from Ovid (see 'Metamorphoses' Book III: 339). Echo's love for Narcissus went unrequited and, in dying, she prayed that the handsome Narcissus be doomed to a fatal love akin to her own. While out hunting he stopped to rest beside this very fountain beneath the pine.



'Narcissus at the fountain'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); c. 1320 - c. 1340
The British Library

CHAPTER XII: NARCISSUS AND HIS REFLECTION: (LINES 1539-1740)



Love then punished him for his disdain of Echo (and heterosexual love) by making him fall in love with his own reflection. Guillaume, as the Lover-narrator, then gives a mocking warning, to women in particular, to requite their lovers or be doomed to a similar fate (implying humorously that 13th century courtly women spent a lot of time gazing in mirrors and were somewhat in love with themselves!).

The Lover now dares to gaze into the water himself, and sees two crystals in the depths (representing the eyes perhaps) which act to create rainbow colours from the sunlight falling there. They each also show a reflection of one half of the Garden, together imaging the whole (apparently they combine the properties of a dispersive and a reflective prism). The pool is the Mirror Perilous in which Narcissus gazed, and saw his own two eyes (and face) in the depths there. Whatever the passer-by views in those crystals (i.e. within the Garden imaged there) and approves, he will fall in love with.

The Lover-narrator, Guillaume, now expresses his belief which is that the love aroused by this place, the Mirror Perilous, the Fountain of Love, is a 'derangement', a transformation of the heart, in which Reason and moderation (sense, measure, counsel) have no place, since the goddess Venus' son Cupido (Amor, the God of Love) has scattered the seeds of love there. Such love promotes the desire to embrace, and it seizes young men and women. Here we have a crucial belief concerning fin amour, or courtly love, that it is erotic not merely amorous, or spiritual (as Nietzsche said: 'the degree and kind of a man's sexuality reaches to the ultimate pinnacle of his spirit.') The longing is for the body of the beloved, the material reality, as well as for the conjoining of minds and spirits.

The lover gazes into the mirror, and sees his own 'Self' in the water (where the Self is not merely his form, but also the world of the interior dream and of the potential Beloved who is mirrored there, she who may also come to mirror the Lover's own self, in an identification of Self and Beloved which true lovers know only too well) as well as seeing the rose enclosure and the Rose. In passing Guillaume mentions Paris and Pavia as desirable cities for the likes of himself, Pavia being a powerful city in Italy at that time, and having a reputation as a place of indulgence for youth (as witnessed by the Archpoet in his 'Goliardic Confession', c1163, the poem 'Estuans intrinsecus': see the 'Carmina Burana').

The Lover now approaches the rose enclosure, and receives the fragrance of the roses (scent following on sight), and longs to cull a rosebud but is fearful of offending 'the master of that Garden'. He chooses and admires the loveliest of the buds (which are as fine as and fresher than full-blown roses, indicating a 13th century courtly male predilection for young girls). The crimson budding rose clearly stands as an erotic image of the female genitalia. He is prevented from culling it (symbolising the act of sexual union) by the thorns and nettles etc. with which it is surrounded.

CHAPTER XIII: AMOR FIRES THE FIVE GOLDEN ARROWS: (LINES 1741-1950)



he Lover is now wounded by the arrow of Beauty, fired by the God of Love (from beside a fig-tree, the fig suggesting the sexual organs, and ripeness) and the Lover experiences a fainting fit (compare Dante's fainting from pity at the end of Canto V of the *Divine Comedy*, after the passage of the whirlwind of lovers). The Lover can withdraw the shaft but not the point of this arrow, which struck him through the eye and lodged in his heart. He has therefore been struck by the beauty of the Beloved, which fails to draw blood but causes anguish.

The Lover approaches the rosebud, seeking a cure from that which has injured him, but is now struck by the arrow of Innocence (virgin innocence) which increases his pain and longing, such that his heart now directs his actions. He is struck again by the arrow named Fair-Seeming (welcoming behaviour) and falls into a swoon by an olive tree (symbolic of peace, since the bud's Fair-Seeming presents a non-hostile face to the Lover). In each case the Lover can dislodge the shaft but not the point, which remains lodged in his heart. He is then struck by the arrow of Openness (frankness, absence of overt resistance, and the openness of the bud).

The Lover now loses his fear of love, since 'Love, that exceeds all things' (note Jean's quoting of Virgil near the end of the *Continuation*: 'Amor vincit omnia: Love conquers all') gives him the power to stand and approach the Rose again, but he is held back by the thorns and nettles, though sight and scent of the Rose are still available to him. Now that he is by the hedge, close to the Rose, Love fires the fifth arrow, that of Close-Company, and the Lover swoons three times in succession. He wishes to die the pain being so great, but is soothed by the effects of the arrow of Fair-Seeming which prevents repentance of love, and bears an unguent that

brings relief (Fair-Seeming granting a positive face to the apparently negative experience). The salve from the arrow spreads through his wounds and makes this love bitter-sweet, the pain being relieved by what causes it.



'Amors shooting the Lover'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); c. 1320 - c. 1340
The British Library

**CHAPTER XIV: AMOR CAPTURES THE LOVER:
(LINES 1951-2028)**



he God of Love now demands the Lover's surrender. The Lover yields, saying that he would not dream of resisting, and that it would 'not seem right or reasonable' to so resist. The Lover therefore implies that to deny love would not be in accord with Reason, and we should bear that in mind during his encounter with Reason later. The Lover dedicates himself 'body and soul' to the service of Love who grants him a kiss on the lips (satisfying the senses of touch, and taste, simultaneously, making the garden a Garden of the Five Senses, which are the means to Pleasure) a favour which Love always denies to the ignoble classes, reinforcing the view that we are dealing here with courtly love specifically. Amor then stresses that 'Love wears the crown' and 'bears the Banner of Courtesy', and that lovers should always be frank and courteous.

Moreover, lovers are to emulate the God of Love in being 'sweet and gentle', and in eschewing 'cruel thoughts, or errors', and 'ill endeavours'. Virtuous moral behaviour then is associated with Love.



'The God of Love taking hold of the Lover'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); c. 1320 - c. 1340
The British Library

**CHAPTER XV: AMOR DEMANDS A PLEDGE OF LOYALTY:
(LINES 2029-2076)**



he Lover clasps hands with Amor as their lips meet, in an act of fealty. The sense of touch is here emphasised. Amor then demands a pledge or surety from the Lover, as he, the God of Love, has often been deceived by those who merely pretend loyalty to him. The Lover protests the impossibility of disobeying the god, but adds that Amor may hold a key to his heart as his guarantee of the Lover's loyalty. The god agrees, claiming that whoever holds the key to the heart holds that to the body as well. Clearly, Guillaume is here associating the mental/spiritual realm with the physical, so that we should expect true love (*fin amour*) and sexual love to be likewise fused.

**CHAPTER XVI: AMOR PROMISES THE LOVER SUCCESS:
(LINES 2077-2158)**



Love proceeds to lock the Lover's heart using an intricate golden key, and the Lover professes himself under Love's command. The Lover expresses his hope for favour, and Amor promises him the balm to his wounds (the winning of the Rose) if he serves well. The Lover then requests that Amor teach him his commandments so that he may indeed serve him accordingly. And Guillaume as the lover archly instructs the audience of lovers to attend (to this new 'Art of Love', designed for his age) since the Romance will amend (correct and guide) lovers and they will understand the overt and covert truth of the dream, which contains no lies.

There does not appear to be any great irony at play here. True, all fiction is in a sense a 'lie' but Guillaume has at the start made the point that a fictional dream may still contain truth (else art is only lies, and not also a means of understanding truth). The subtle shifts of narrative voice here (from straight narration by the Lover, to direct address to the reader by the author) serve to identify the Lover and the author as one, rather than to separate them ironically. Guillaume is here simply helping the reader uninstructed in allegory to look behind the Personifications and apply them to reality (the 'game' of love), and to look behind the dream-quest to the real-world quest.

It is worth noting here, that Guillaume says he writes 'in the vernacular' i.e. in French not Latin, and Dante notably did the same, choosing to write the 'New Life' and the 'Divine Comedy' in Italian. In that sense also Guillaume's 'Art of Love' is truly new, and a departure from Ovid's path.

CHAPTER XVII: LOVE'S COMMANDMENTS: (LINES 2159-2852)



mor now gives out the laws, commandments, or rules of love, of which there are ten (paralleling the Bible's Ten Commandments). Avoid baseness; be courteous to all ranks, and eschew slander (here Sir Kay the slanderer is recalled, perhaps from Chrétien's 'Arthurian Tales' where he is contrasted with Lord Gawain, the soul of courtesy); be decent in speech and avoid coarseness and bawdy (note this when assessing Jean's Continuation); be wise and reasonable to all; honour and serve women and avoid decrying them (again note this vis a vis the Continuation); shun pride and be humble.

Further commandments are articulated. Dress elegantly and well, but not through pride or arrogance; be neat and clean (but shun the use of rouge adopted by women and those who seek to find 'love of another nature', indicating a typical mainstream 13th century distaste for non-heterosexual love, and for 'unnatural' sexual practices; remember that this Art of Love is written specifically for hetero-sexual individuals); appear joyous and happy (because courtly and erotic love shuns sorrow and unhappiness, though love is a 'malady' and bitter-sweet, and lovers must 'suffer'); and lastly be generous and avoid appearing miserly. Amor then summaries the key points from the ten commands above: the Lover should be courteous, free from pride, elegant, joyful and generous.

Next the Lover should faithfully fix the heart on one sole object, and not disperse his affections. The heart should be given as a gift and not lent; it should be given willingly, without deceit, and in its entirety.

An extended portrait is now given of the effects of love on the lover, a characterisation typical of the medieval and renaissance periods (see Shakespeare's 'Comedies'). The lover is distracted, tormented, driven to

solitude, full of fever, complaints and sighs, or rendered mute and unmoving as a statue. These effects are not unique to the individual lover, but characteristic of love as a state of mind and body; it is a species of madness.

Amor explains the effects of separation from and nearness to the beloved. The ardour of physical desire is inversely proportional to distance. The lover is robbed of speech in the beloved's presence, and if he can speak fails to find the right words. The lover is involved in a bitter-sweet struggle to attain the beloved, a struggle overseen by Amor, and only resolved at a time of his choosing. The lover will toss and turn in bed, see the beloved naked in dream, and believe in a farrago of nonsense. He will haunt the lover's doorstep regardless of the weather, and waste away with his vain nightly excursions. Guillaume here compares the true lover's gauntness and distress with the host of false lovers who only pretend to an indifference to food and drink, while remaining as fat and healthy as any abbot or prior. Guillaume's emphasis here on feigned abstinence, and the rich living of the monastic hierarchy is picked up later by Jean. Neither poet has much time for the monastic orders. Amor's further advice is to cultivate the beloved's maidservant, and be generous to her as a means of access to the beloved.

Obvious sources for the ethos, much of the detail of the behaviour of lovers, and the humorous style, are Ovid's 'Amores' and 'Ars Amatoria', the Odes of Horace, and the works of Tibullus (a 13th century manuscript of Tibullus is extant), which should be read as background to the Romance.

The Lover now asks Amor to explain how any lover can survive love's trials and tribulations. Hope accompanies lovers, the god explains, and then gives the Lover three more benefits for company, which solace and console any lover, namely Sweet-Thought, Sweet-Speech, and Sweet-Glances, in other words the ability to think of, speak of, and have sight of the beloved.

**CHAPTER XVIII: THE GOD OF LOVE DEPARTS:
(LINES 2853-2876)**



mor now leaves the Lover, who has set his heart on
winning the Rose.

**CHAPTER XIX: FAIR-WELCOME:
(LINES 2877-3028)**



he Lover now meets with Fair-Welcome, the son of Courtesy. It is Fair-Welcome who can promote access to the Rose, and whose imprisonment by Jealousy fuels the mini-epic struggle between Love and Jealousy which is the crux of the direct action throughout the combined Romance.

Fair-Welcome thus offers the Lover passage to the rose enclosure, in order to smell the fragrance of the roses. The Lover passes through the thorny hedge surrounding the Rose, by means of this passage (i.e. navigates his way through the trials and tribulations of love, at the invitation of the beloved, or at least her representative).

However the enclosure is defended by four guardians of the Rose, Resistance, Ill-Talk, Shame, and Fear. Guillaume tells us that Chastity, who ought to be the lady of the Roses, but whom Venus ever attacks, sought out Reason as a defence, and Reason granted her daughter Shame as company for Chastity, while Jealousy added Fear as an additional guardian. (This is a pleasant example in miniature of allegory in action; the mental and emotional states being represented by personifications who mimic in physical action the processes of the mind and spirit)

The lover might have won the Rose there and then, since Fair-Welcome had gone before him, encouraged him to touch the rosebush (the environment of the beloved, or her body which carries the Rosebud) and plucked a leaf (equating to some physical emblem of the beloved) which he handed to the Lover as a gift since it grew in close proximity to the Rosebud itself. This emboldens the Lover to ask for the bud itself, but his request is rejected by Fair-Welcome, since the bud belongs to the rosebush 'of right'.

It is not coincidental that at the moment of this bold request and its rejection, Resistance leaps out from his hiding-place and berates Fair-Welcome for bringing the Lover into the enclosure, an action which can only bring dishonour on him.



'Fair Welcome and the Lover'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); 4th quarter of the 14th century
The British Library

**CHAPTER XX: RESISTANCE:
(LINES 3029-3040)**



esistance now tells the Lover to be gone, and drives away
Fair-Welcome also who, he claims, has been deceived by
the Lover.

**CHAPTER XXI: FAIR-WELCOME FLEES:
(LINES 3041-3072)**



air-Welcome takes flight, in the face of Resistance, leaving the Lover in distress, and separated from the Rose.

**CHAPTER XXII: THE LOVER IS MET BY REASON:
(LINES 3073-3178)**



Reason now descends from her tower (implying that Reason is bestowed on humanity ‘from above’ by the deity, which is an important consideration when deciding, on reading the Continuation, as to the intellectual authority Reason exerts). Reason is described as possessing attributes which are not extreme (in other words holding to the middle course, as generally advised by the Classical philosophers, and the poets especially Horace and Ovid), and seeming to have been created ‘in Paradise’, and not by Nature. (Nature, it should be noted, also receives her role and function from the deity.)

Reason is made ‘in the image’ of God and can protect lovers from their folly if they believe in her. The Lover in both Guillaume’s and Jean’s sections of the poem rejects Reason’s advice, fails to believe in her, and therefore presumably is in a state of irrational folly. This would tend to reinforce the view that both poets do indeed consider Love a state of foolishness (even madness), but are nevertheless both of the Company of Love. We might therefore expect a critique of Love in both cases, which nevertheless does not change the Lover’s (and humanity’s) loyalty to the God of Love (and his mother Venus) nor does it deter the Lover in his quest for the Rose.

Reason begins by blaming Idleness for allowing the Lover to enter the Garden of Pleasure and thus encounter the God of Love. She then exhorts the Lover to forego Love, spelling out the presence of the other three guards, Shame, Fear and Ill-Talk. She encourages him to reflect and choose the better path, for ‘The ill that has Love for a name, naught but sheer folly is that same. Folly! God help me, truth I tell.’ Tis a brave reader who would ignore a claim to truth, from a divinely-tasked being, made in the name of

the deity! I doubt the presence of any irony here. And yet, remember, the claim of the Romance is also: 'Amor vincit omnia: Love conquers all'. The poets, speaking through their Personifications, are certainly entitled to adopt a position which endorses Reason, and considers Love a folly, but still believes that, in reality, in fact, in the human world, it triumphs in the end; carnal, erotic, amorous love that is, not only spiritual love.

Reason stresses Love's transience and its pain. Love is a state of foolishness easy to enter but difficult to escape from (an echo here of Virgil's: 'facilis descensus Averno: the descent to Hell is easy'). She then exhorts the Lover to restrain his hearts' desire, implying that it is open to the individual to exert free-will and quench the longing, and tells him that only by his own efforts can he escape Love's thrall. The Continuation will consider the question of free-will in more depth.

**CHAPTER XXIII: THE LOVER REPLIES TO REASON:
(LINES 3179-3218)**



Crucially, the Lover, angered by Reason's speech (the emotion of the heart opposing the rationality of the head), rejects her advice. His justification is that he has sworn himself to the service of the God of Love and no longer has free-will in the matter. His heart is under lock and key.

He seeks Love's approbation, and to be remembered as a true lover. He wishes for no more of Reason's words. This is again a crucial point. The landscape of Reason can only offer speech, and words, whereas the landscape of Nature (and Genius) prompts to action, to procreation and to active love. It is easier to reject the former than the latter. This recalls the Biblical contrast between Leah and Rachel, and likewise Martha and Mary, and the contrast in the 'Divine Comedy' between Beatrice and Matilda as articulated by Dante, where the former of each pair stands for the Contemplative Life, the latter for the Active Life.

Seeing that words have failed, Reason departs, leaving the Lover interestingly distraught at lacking counsel regarding how he might win the Rose. The Lover now seeks such alternative counsel, and sets off to find Friend, who, he hopes, will ease his torment. This encounter with Reason, and her rejection in favour of Amor, is central to an understanding of the whole poem, both Guillaume's and Jean's sections. Reason re-appears in Jean's Continuation, dominating the first part of it, just as Nature (and Genius) will dominate the second.

**CHAPTER XXIV: THE LOVER FINDS FRIEND:
(LINES 3219-3236)**



he Lover finds Friend and tells him all about his desire for the Rose, and his encounter with Resistance (though he does not mention the encounter with Reason).

**CHAPTER XXV: FRIEND'S COUNSEL:
(LINES 3237-3264)**



riend counsels the use of flattery and blandishment (deceit) since that will win Resistance round. He tells the Lover to sue for pardon, and promise to be obedient to Resistance's wishes. The Lover sees Friend as having the intent to comfort him and grant him strength of will to pursue his goal. Reason had counselled him to use his own free-will to escape Love, but he now leans on Friend to summon up enough will to renew his quest.



'Friend comforts the Lover'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); 4th quarter of the 14th century
The British Library

**CHAPTER XXVI: THE LOVER SEEKS PARDON:
(LINES 3265-3364)**



Following Friend's advice, the Lover now seeks out Resistance in order to plead for forgiveness. He explains that his actions were driven by love, and that to be able to love is all that he seeks, moreover he will continue loving, but without offending Resistance further. Resistance does indeed pardon him, and is indifferent to the Lover's desires so long as the Lover stays far from the Rose. The Lover returns to tell Friend of all this, who assures him that Resistance, once mollified, will even prove kindly towards a lover. The Lover then lingers near the hedge to the rose-enclosure, under Resistance's watchful eye, not seeking to approach or touch but only to view the Rose. Though Resistance is mollified he shows the Lover no pity, despite the latter's tears and sighs, and apparent obedience.

**CHAPTER XXVII: PITY AND OPENNESS AID THE LOVER:
(LINES 3365-3474)**



ity and Openness now appear, wishing to aid the lover, and they chide Resistance, arguing on the Lover's behalf. The Lover, they say, suffers greatly, and is bound by his loyalty to the God of Love, Amor, and they invoke the rules of courtesy, that one should help the sufferer. The Lover lacks the help now of Fair-Welcome, they say, since Resistance has driven him away.

Resistance agrees to the return of Fair-Welcome, and Openness rushes off to find him. Fair-Welcome agrees to return since Openness requests it, and Resistance has conceded it, and then leads the Lover once more on the path to the Rose.

**CHAPTER XXVIII: THE LOVER APPROACHES THE ROSE:
(LINES 3475-3596)**



he Lover now says he has entered (the earthly) Paradise from Hell. He approaches the now open bud, to admire it, and seeks permission from Fair-Welcome to kiss the Rose. Fair-Welcome replies that he cannot for fear of offending Chastity who has ruled otherwise, since a kiss will invariably lead on to other things. The Lover accepts that he must wait, but the love-goddess Venus arrives to aid him, carrying her burning torch. Venus asks Fair-Welcome why he hesitates to grant permission since the Lover is worthy: he is young, noble and handsome; faithful in love, accustomed to love's service, etc. and therefore should not be denied by any woman. Moreover 'tempus fugit', time is slipping by.

**CHAPTER XXIX: THE LOVER KISSES THE ROSE:
(LINES 3597-3662)**



enus' flames have the desired effect of prompting Fair-Welcome to agree, just as in the Continuation her burning arrow will set fire to and raze the castle of Jealousy. The Lover kisses the Rose, an action which brings him joy, but he tells how later he was in distress and suffered from Shame. He also says that he will tell of the building of Jealousy's castle, which Love eventually captured, and again mentions his lady for whom he, Guillaume, is writing the Romance.

Now Ill-Talk, who has noted his reception by Fair-Welcome, begins to spy on him. His slander regarding their relationship (it is noticeable that while Fair-Welcome is male in the text, he is transformed into a woman in many versions of the accompanying illustrations, as if this relationship was regarded as non-heterosexual by the illustrator and therefore dubious) rouses Jealousy's anger. She runs at Fair-Welcome who wishes himself elsewhere, perhaps Étampes or Meaux (the former is south-west of Paris, the latter east-northeast of Paris, indicating Guillaume's knowledge of Paris and therefore possible residence there. Both were fortified strongholds not far from the Chartres to Reims road).



'The rose reflected'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France; 2nd quarter of the 14th century
The British Library

**CHAPTER XXX: JEALOUSY BERATES FAIR-WELCOME:
(LINES 3663-3800)**



Jealousy now takes Fair-Welcome to task for helping the Lover, who in turn takes fright and runs away. Shame then approaches Jealousy and begs her not to listen to Ill-Talk's slanders, though admitting that Fair-Welcome may be too free in his affections. That is because Courtesy his mother has taught him to be approachable and greet all folk, and Courtesy does not associate with fools (here we see the tension between the foolish madness of amorous Love and the wisdom embodied in Courtesy – a distillation of the courtly code where courtesy towards women restrains erotic desire.)

Fair-Welcome, she says has no other faults, and 'has no other plan, except to enjoy life as best he can' (the sentiment will be echoed by Jean at the end of the Continuation where he speaks of those who seek the paths 'free from strife' and 'love the pleasant life'.) Shame promises to curb Fair-Welcome's activities. Jealousy now expresses her fear at the increase in Lechery which threatens the Roses in their enclosure; Lechery which, she claims, 'reigns everywhere'. Chastity she says is not safe 'even in a cloistered abbey' (Guillaume's mocking dislike for the religious orders is again evident). Jealousy now plans to build a wall round the Rose enclosure and a tower within, in which to imprison Fair-Welcome.

Fear arrives, but steps aside aware of Jealousy's anger. Jealousy then departs leaving Fear and Shame together. Fear suggest to her cousin Shame that they go and seek Resistance and chide him for that inattention to his duties which has brought down Jealousy's wrath on them all.

**CHAPTER XXXI: SHAME AND FEAR BERATE RESISTANCE:
(LINES 3801-3932)**



Shame and Fear find Resistance sleeping under a hawthorn-tree. Shame wakes him and they chide him thoroughly for his negligence. Resistance, chastened, goes off to check the enclosure, seeking for any gaps in the hedge. The Lover having offended Fair-Welcome by kissing the Rose, is further concerned at seeing Resistance patrolling in a fierce mood, and the Lover then speaks of the increased longing he feels having kissed the Rose, and the grief that absence from the Rose will cause him. He has now fallen back into Hell, having been in the earthly Paradise, and blames Ill-Talk for all his ills, he who has told Jealousy of the Lover's actions.

CHAPTER XXXII: JEALOUSY'S TOWER, AND THE CODA: (LINES 3933-4202)



Jealousy now orders the building of a castle (which will re-appear in the Continuation), consisting of a moat and wall forming a square around the Rose enclosure, with a turret at each corner and a round tower at its centre. Each walled face of the square has a gate at its centre, equipped with a portcullis. The castle is also equipped with 13th century war-engines of various kinds (catapults, mangonels, arbalests).

The castle is fully garrisoned. Resistance guards the eastern gate to the front, Shame the southern gate, to the left, Fear the northern gate to the right, and Ill-Talk the rear gate to the west. Ill-Talk however roams round all the gates, and at night sings and plays various instruments (spreads his slanders in other words), the song here quoted being one on the faults, fickleness and lechery of women (misogynistic, but remember it is Ill-Talk who sings it, he who 'found some fault in everyone')

Fair-Welcome is imprisoned high in the tower and guarded by an old Crone, a character who will increase in significance in Jean's Continuation, she who 'knew all the ancient dance' (of Love). Jealousy is now secure in her castle, while the Lover is left outside lamenting his fate, blaming the fickleness of the God of Love, and the power of Fortune to alter circumstance. The image of Fortune's wheel now appears; that which raises a man high only to cast him down into the mud.

The Lover, in a lover's lament, exhorts the absent Fair-Welcome to stay true, and keep a firm heart, so that though the body is imprisoned and in torment the heart might yet remain free: 'a true heart does not cease to love, because of blows, nor doth it move.' Yet the Lover fears Fair-Welcome's indifference to fate, and further hostility towards himself, he having involved Fair-Welcome in his actions. He claims he has not intended

to wrong Fair-Welcome and that his own fate is as dreadful, he being separated from the Rose, and that if Fair-Welcome has forgotten him and he has lost Fair-Welcome's goodwill, he must end in despair. This is the point at which Guillaume may have left the work, rendering it incomplete as Jean claims, and is indeed the point from which Jean de Meung will commence the Continuation.

There is now an added coda, in some manuscripts, not necessarily penned by Guillaume, which briefly but conclusively ends the Romance. Pity arrives to aid the Lover, having escaped the tower, while Jealousy is asleep. She brings with her Fair-Welcome, Beauty and Loyalty, who have escaped with her, along with Innocence and Fair-Glances. Fear had locked the tower door, but despite the threat of Ill-Talk learning of their intent and waking Jealousy, Amor had unlocked it and Venus drawn the bolts.

The Lover is then granted the Rose by Beauty, and Guillaume gives us a brief night idyll where the Lover and his Rose enjoy and delight in each other, followed by a parting at morn (as per the Troubadour tradition of the 'aube', or dawn-poem) as Beauty reclaims the Rose. Beauty gives her last words of encouragement to the Lover, who has 'tasted of true delight' (thus completing the roll-call of the five senses employed in the Garden of Pleasure). 'Seek ever to love without deceit' is Beauty's message to those who would win the Rose. And so the Dream comes to an end, and the tale which Guillaume had promised his lady. Yet Guillaume had promised also to tell of the capture of Jealousy's tower by Amor, which leads to the conclusion that Guillaume did not write the coda, and that his manuscript was indeed incomplete as Jean stated.

Guillaume in a sense 'bequeathed' to Jean the structure of the poem, with its Dream sequence; its allegorical figures and action; its Lover who embraces the folly of love, rejects Reason, and serves Amor; its castle of Jealousy with its guardians; and his quest for the Rose. Jean endorses and adopts this structure and logic, and therefore we have every reason to suppose that Jean's intent in writing the long Continuation was consistent with that of Guillaume: to show that Love is human folly and a species of madness, and yet is the road that human beings desire to travel, urged on by

sexual pleasure, by the urge to continue the species, but also by the promise of 'fin amour', true and loyal Love. Our next task is to consider the Continuation itself and the development and enhancements Jean undertook.



'Fair Welcome in prison'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); c. 1320 - c. 1340

The British Library

JEAN'S RE-IMAGINING OF THE ROMANCE



'Jean de Meung'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, N. (Artois or Picardy); c. 1340
The British Library



ean's main intentions, then, are consistent with those of Guillaume, though he modifies the courtly goal of 'fin amour' interpreting it more widely as amorous and erotic true love, mutually expressed between heterosexual lovers; predominantly carnal rather than spiritual, and unfettered rather than constrained by courtly rules. His ambitions are thus somewhat greater than Guillaume's in terms of the depth and width of the narrative.

Jean takes on Guillaume's role of author and narrator, and at a later point the role of the Lover also, merging the two narratives seamlessly, though providing an explanatory passage in the central Chapter LX, as we shall see. The two authors then have dreamed the same Dream? Well, Jean has on hand the contents of Guillaume's dream so far, and Chapter LX indicates he will be aided by the perennial Love-God Amor in the completion of his task, so with a little help from that deity nothing is impossible!

Jean accepts Guillaume's Quest structure within the Dream, but follows through on Guillaume's unachieved intent of narrating the capture of Jealousy's Castle. Amor will call upon the aid of his mother Venus and a mock-epic battle will ensue in which Love will ultimately take the castle, and effectively disarm Jealousy by dispersing her followers who are her eyes and ears. This major theme of the defeat of Jealousy by Love runs in parallel with the Lover's further encounters with Personifications who, in extensive monologues, instruct, advise and warn the Lover. The key personifications are Reason, whose discourse and advice is rejected by the Lover as in Guillaume's Romance; Friend, Wealth, False-Seeming, the Crone, Fair-Welcome, Nature and Genius.

The monologues of Friend, Wealth, False-Seeming and the Crone take us on a journey of experience, of love encountered not merely in the courtly sphere, but in the broader society of the French 13th Century, including jealousy in action in the form of a jealous husband (Friend), the combination of sex and money (Wealth), the hypocrisy of false-lovers and false-religion (False-Seeming), and a woman of the world's life and regrets (the Crone). They portray the negative effects of sexual desire, and the experiences of those who fail to achieve fin amour, true love.

There is a great deal of laughter and mockery running beneath the surface of the poem, Jean is nothing if not a joker. His true voice is always hard to discern, but that we are in the realm of carnal love is obvious. On the one hand, the text's humour allows it to be read as a critique of such love, revealing its failings and foolishness, and therefore providing Jean with a cover against any charges of obscenity, blasphemy and subversion. On the other, it is a humour that supports the delight and joys of that love also, and can be seen as a Saturnalian celebration, in a world 'turned upside down' of the carnal and erotic, where the foolish Lover triumphs over dull Reason, and Nature overrules abstinence in order to continue the species. I believe Jean intended both, valuing Reason highly but also seeing its inadequacy in the face of Nature.

In parallel to these discourses by the Personifications, the action of the mock-epic sees assaults on the castle and the Lover's meeting with Fair-Welcome only to be parted from him and find himself attacked by the guardians; while Venus will ultimately fly to the aid of her son Amor, to assist in a combined attack.

A short digression follows, comprised of an interesting series of apologies by the author for any offence he has caused to women or the Church (Chapters LXXXI –LXXXIII). Jean's apologies here should be mostly taken at face value, I believe, and not merely as some kind of ironic cloak, though there are ironic elements here and elsewhere suggesting that Jean held a number of controversial beliefs and opinions, which we will note later.

At this critical point in the mock-epic action, namely the preparation for the final attack on the castle, Jean switches the narrative to Personifications of Nature and Genius (Nature's priest, who is the spirit of natural order, human inclination, and the engine of sexual desire in human beings). Reason's long monologue earlier established the intellectual counter to amorous Love. Nature's monologue now establishes the natural world's support for Love and procreation. Thus as well as Love's physical attack on Jealousy, we have in parallel an intellectual tension between Reason and Nature, both of whom we should note are deemed to be agents empowered

by the deity, therefore whose contributions have authority (there is no clear evidence that Jean was other than a believer in the Christian revelation, and a supporter of intellectual authorities, including those of the ancient world).

My contention is that Jean accepts both Reason's dismissal of purely amorous and erotic Love, and Nature's justification of it. If in the end the physical (Nature) appears to defeat the intellectual (Reason), and the act overshadows the word, that is because the world naturally pursues what Reason questions. What we do is more obvious than what we say in the matter of Love. I would suggest that Jean is exploring and explaining the world, not taking sides, even though he is of Love's company; believing like Guillaume that Love is a folly and irrational, but one that even the wise pursue; dismissing Reason in his role as the Lover, but embracing Reason in his role as the author; explaining Nature through his role as the author, but following Nature in the role of the Lover.

There is a philosophical issue raised here, which may have troubled Jean, namely the non-rationality of Nature, an issue which links to the problem of evil. If Nature is a creation of a benign, all-powerful and presumably rational deity, why does the natural often appear non-rational, and why also is evil a part of that creation? A second philosophical issue which may have occupied his thoughts is that if religion, specifically here the Christian religion, is built on non-rational assumptions and beliefs (the existence of a deity, primal sin, the virgin birth, resurrection etc.) how can a rational edifice of thought be built upon it? We should note the irrationality displayed towards the end of the Continuation, including aspects of Genius' sermon, and the apparent blasphemy and obscenity inherent in the erotic double-meaning of the Lover's actions, all of which gives a Saturnalian feel ('the world turned upside-down' as in Apuleius 'Golden Ass' and Petronius' 'Satyricon') to the ending. That may indeed be Jean's way of highlighting the irrationality stemming from Nature (and hence the deity), an irrationality evident in Genius' role as the agent of natural inclination (Nature's priest conducting her confession, preaching a curious sermon, and granting absolution in advance to all true lovers), and exhibited throughout the whole course of amorous and sexual Love.

The following chapter-by chapter commentary will show the flow and conclusion of Jean's dramatization of Love, in which Nature will ultimately by-pass Reason, as Love by-passes Jealousy having razed her castle, because that is what happens in the real world, and it is his world Jean is reporting on, one in which Reason and Jealousy nevertheless endure. If Jean took sides in his own life, in favour of Love's Company, if he has the Lover succeed in his Quest, and Venus overcome Jealousy, and the Rose appear won, nevertheless Reason will continue to contend with Nature, and Love with Jealousy perpetually, just as Jean in the Romance perpetually reveals to us, his readers, his knowledge of what Guillaume called, in referring to the Crone's experience, 'the ancient dance.'

**JEAN'S CONTINUATION: CHAPTER XXXIII: THE LOVER:
(LINES 4283-4450)**



ommencing from Guillaume's last words, Jean picks up the narrative as the Lover, who is supported to some degree by Hope, as the God of Love promised, but who nevertheless regards Hope as uncertain. He summarises his situation to himself: he is obstructed by Resistance, Ill-Talk, Shame and Jealousy, while Fair-Welcome is imprisoned and guarded by the old Crone. Amor's gifts, Sweet-Thought, Sweet-Speech and Sweet-Glances are of no help to him here.

The Lover now blames his folly and madness in paying homage to Amor (that Love is a folly and madness is thus a key theme of the Continuation, but the fact that human beings are driven by an urge to Love is equally key), a folly that he was led into by Lady Idleness who indulged his foolishness and gave him access to the Garden of Pleasure. Jean pens a few lines that summarise his situation: 'I may count myself a fool, indeed, choosing neither to renounce love, nor yet Reason's counsel approve.' It is this rejection of Reason and adherence to the path of Love, while yet perceiving the value of Reason's advice and counsel, that is the Lover's and indeed the human predicament.

However the Lover feels bound by his pledge to Amor, and his debt of gratitude to Fair-Welcome for leading him to the Rose, and tells himself not to complain of the God of Love, or Hope, or Lady Idleness, but simply suffer, waiting in a state of hope till Love sends him some relief. Love after all had promised to advance him, and any fault must lie in himself (there is perhaps a covert reference here to the state of original sin, in which mankind was supposed to exist unless redeemed by the Christian deity's mercy).



'The Lover'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); 2nd quarter of the 14th century
The British Library

He considers his loyalty to Amor may kill him, if he fails to win the Rose, but he nevertheless places himself in the god's hands as to the outcome, asking only that the god remember Fair-Welcome to whom the Lover bequeaths his heart, his only possession (paradoxically however, that can only occur after the Lover's death!).

The relationship between the Lover and Fair-Welcome is intriguing. Fair-Welcome is definitely male in the text (though illustrations often show a very feminine version, perhaps out of editorial caution), and therefore love between men, at least at the emotional and spiritual level, is shown as acceptable. Homosexuality per se appears to be frowned on (as per Church teaching at the time) but nevertheless there are strong hints of a suppressed carnal element to the relationship. This is an example of the way in which Jean proves subversive during the Continuation; he presents ideas which he does not explicitly condone in his own authorial voice, placing them in the mouths of the characters in the drama, or showing them through the relationships between characters, but nevertheless putting them out there, giving them a life of their own, and leaving them available to the reader, regardless of whether he, Jean, explicitly endorses or disowns them.

**CHAPTER XXXIV: REASON:
(LINES 4451-4952)**



t this point, Reason descends from her high tower, as in Guillaume's Romance, and approaches the Lover. Jean has seized on the Lover's rejection of Reason in Guillaume's work, and will now add extensively to Reason's previous counsel, so as to make the Lover's second rejection of Reason appear even more foolish. As already said, Reason dominates the first half of the Continuation as Nature will the second.

Reason queries the Lover's allegiance to love and its miseries, and suggests that if the Lover had known more of the ways of Love he would not have pledged himself to Amor. Reason claims she will imbue him with the knowledge of Love directly, without lies, without his needing to experience all she tells him, and almost without him knowing how. I emphasise again that Reason was deemed to be implanted in mankind by the deity, so that Reason's statements are to be seen as authoritative, but not necessarily wholly representative of Jean's own position.

Reason now gives a series of contrasting statements about love to highlight its irrational inconsistencies. It is 'a pardon and yet stained by sin,

a sin by pardon touched within.' Jean here is influenced by Alain de Lille (c1128-c1202), and his 'Complaint of Nature': love is 'foolish sense and wise folly'. Thus there is a tension in love between foolishness and wisdom, the foolishness deriving from the irrational urge, the wisdom from Amor's place at the centre of human life and procreation ('the whole world travels his way').



'Reason'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France; 2nd quarter of the 14th century
The British Library

In passing, Reason condemns those whom Genius, on behalf of Nature, will later 'excommunicate', those who follow a barren course, obstructing procreation, whether that is through non-heterosexual union, or through monastic or other abstinence from sex, though Reason's conclusion is that the Lover should flee love altogether (which if carried out universally would lead to an end to procreation). There is already here an explicit tension highlighted between Reason and Nature in human life (which exists whether or not Nature is seen as a fallen Nature, with mankind as sinners doomed by Adam's Fall from grace in the Genesis garden). Nature contains the life we humans own to, though a deity it seems can create humans from stones (see Jean's later use of the Deucalion myth), or as in Genesis from nothing.

The Lover says that he recalls Reason's speech, word for word (since Jean is writing/has written it down!) but is still unclear as to the alternative path to be followed in escaping from Amor. Reason claims then that amorous Love is a frailty or malady of thought, arising as a longing, ardour or desire, from disordered thought, and its aim is pleasure and delight between loving couples rather than procreation. This is the formulation given by Andreas Capellanus (fl. late 12th century) in his 'De Amore' (written incidentally at the behest of Marie de Champagne, Chrétien de Troyes' initial sponsor), and espoused by Guido Cavalcanti (in 'Donne mi prega' for example) in contrast to his friend Dante who saw it as part of that ascending chain of love articulated by Boethius, whereby physical, amorous and spiritual love (or charity), and thus human and divine love, are eternally linked.

Reason speaks of the deceit often practised by lovers, and warns the lover against it. She then explains that Holy Scripture endorses sexuality only as a means to procreation, and the continuance of the species. We see again that Reason preaches what Nature will later also preach, yet there is still a conflict between Reason and Nature in that Reason counsels escape from amorous Love and its suffering, while Nature, with Genius' help, urges Amor's irrational devotees on, and absolves them of Love's sins, in order to achieve that very continuance. No wonder the Lover is confused! Jean perhaps intended here to show the limits of Reason, in that both

arguments are logically valid, if one bases them on the initial assumptions; in the one case that escape from suffering and a love unlinked to procreation is best achieved by fleeing its cause (hence the monastic life of abstinence) in the other that the deity intended to continue the species through endowing it with the urge to procreate (the 13th century perceiving the natural mechanism, though not the intentionless Darwinian sieve of natural selection associated with it)

The pursuit of Love is a folly of youth, claims Reason, referring to Cicero who contrasts youth with the wisdom of age (in 'De Senectute'). This allows Reason to discourse on youth, which is so troubled and confused a time it seems that some youths are liable to enter a monastery, eschewing natural freedom, only to repent of it later, rather than follow a life of Pleasure. But Youth is Pleasure's handmaiden, so Pleasure's is the course most likely followed. Age on the other hand leads men away from such a life, though none like being old and would rather retain their youth. The old recall the troubles and sorrows of love and desire, and will speak of their past experiences, and Reason goes on to directly contrast Youth and Age, a popular theme since Classical times, with Age leading to repentance, as life flits by.

Reason then maintains that heterosexual lovers should seek the fruit of their union, children, rather than mere pleasure, though there are some women who will avoid child-bearing at all cost. Reason scorns women who provide sexual services for financial reward, though gifts and pledges between true lovers intent on children are perfectly acceptable, and such lovers should do all that is courteous and fair, including enjoying the act, free of covetousness. (Reason is in part misogynistic and for that matter homophobic, in line with 13th Century morality, as are other of the Personifications, though Jean as author, as we shall see, is eager to show that he is not antagonistic to women, and his portrayal of Fair-Welcome certainly does not suggest homophobia)

Reason advises the Lover to flee from carnal pleasure and relinquish his longing for the Rose, and does so in the strongest terms. The Lover however is under Love's command, indicates that Reason's advice will not

be followed, and questions whether he should then hate all folk since Love is to be rejected (he clearly cannot separate physical desire from emotional affection or spiritual connection). Reason condemns him for a fool, but responds to the Lover's questioning as to other forms of Love he has heard of, with a further speech.

Reason now describes a society of friends based on 'mutual goodwill', almost a form of commonwealth, with the sharing of possessions when required. The image given is of an idealistic commune, where friends proactively support each other, share and retain confidences, and express loyalty in all possible ways. The picture is so idealistic that it might suggest an ironic intent on Jean's part to show that Reason is unrealistic and unworldly but, as said before, he also plants subversive or radical seeds that remains present in the text (just as Gonzalo's speech in Shakespeare's *Tempest* is ridiculed, and yet his Commonwealth was already present in men's minds; which is not the only echo of the Romance in the *Tempest*)

**CHAPTER XXXV: OTHER FORMS OF LOVE:
(LINES 4953-5838)**



Reason now describes this other Love which is based on friendship, giving a delightful picture of true friends. She refers again to Cicero, the 'De Amicitia' is intended, though Jean may have been aware of the Cicero work via the 'De Spirituali Amicitia' of Aelred of Rievaulx (1110-1167), which reveals a strong homosexual orientation, and may have influenced the figure of Fair-Welcome. Cicero's work includes the idea that friends should always answer each other's requests made for a good reason, and reject all others, though making an exception (irrational, because based on Love) of situations where a friend's reputation or life are at stake.

Friendship is thus a love to be pursued. Equally friendship or feigned love aimed at gain is to be scorned. True Love values others for themselves not for what they can gain from them. Reason here uses the physical details of a lunar eclipse as a metaphor, and explains how Wealth attracts false love, and Poverty sees it fade away again. The rich and the miserly may readily be deceived by such false love, betraying their foolishness. One must show friendship to win friendship. Jean's own scorn of hoarded wealth, I think, appears here, but if not this scorn for the rich will echo in many a subversive tract later.

Such false love is a 'child of Fortune', allowing Reason a digression on that subject. Counter-intuitively good-Fortune can prove ill-Fortune since the good-fortune of riches leads to the ill-fortune of false friends whose pretended affection is based only on the desire for gain. Here is the image of Fortune's Wheel again, and the fickleness of friendship which is mere flattery and deceit. When Fortune's wheel turns and Poverty arrives, false friends flee leaving one alone, or with perhaps only a single friend, then true friendship becomes apparent since 'a true friend loves forever'. Thus ill-Fortune which reveals the true friend proves good-Fortune.

Reason then goes on to reveal the troubles Wealth brings, while sufficiency makes a man content with his fate, confident in his reliance on the deity. She quotes Pythagoras (*'The Golden Verses'*, 5th century AD or earlier) on the afterlife and asserts that 'our country is not here on earth' and that 'no one, as our teachers know, is trapped here, but by thinking so.' (Note Shakespeare: *Hamlet Act II Scene II*), accompanied by a lively image of a lad at the docks by the Seine, working hard in an honest manner, spending all he gets in the tavern, but happy with his lot. The rich in possessions may be poor in contentment, the usurer for example. 'The more gain the more need'. The rich merchant is always greedy for greater profit, and troubled and tormented because of it. And the desire for gain drives advocates, physicians and even the venial preachers, who live for vainglory, and may save their hearers' souls but not their own. The miser neglects the poor man at his door, but dies and is forced to leave his wealth in the end.

'All this is brought about by a lack of love, that all the world doth lack' cries Reason. If only 'true love reigned everywhere'. Once again Reason is portrayed as idealistic and unworldly, though the sentiment is fine. If the rich helped the poor all would have a sufficiency, 'but now the world is grown so stale that they make love a thing for sale.' And thus the lament continues; all are 'slaves to riches.' Wealth that needs to work in the world is hoarded instead, but to no avail since all must die, and the heirs will spend what the rich man has not. But the rich man who puts his riches to use, and also succours the poor, makes wings for himself and ascends the air like Daedalus (see Ovid's *'Metamorphoses'* VIII: 183-235 for the myth). God loves the generous and hates the miserly.

Reason now shows her scorn of kings, who will keep an army, not to show their worth, as the common man thinks, but out of fear. The lad at the docks again is free from fear because he has nothing, while a monarch is ever afraid of being robbed and assassinated if it were not for his men, who in fact are not 'his', since he must leave them free, since they own themselves, and give their service willingly, while he owns nothing of them. 'Their virtues, and their every skill, their bodies, strength, wisdom, will, are not his, he owns naught there.' Nothing, that is, that is given them by

Nature. Here is Jean's apparent subversion at work again. The intent may be to show Reason being illogical and unworldly, since the king may not own 'his men' but he can oblige them to serve, yet the words remain, and are perfect fuel for anti-royalist sentiments of the future.

This speech prompts the Lover to ask what he can own that is truly his, and Reason explains that it is those things that lie within him, not worldly possessions since they are subject to Fortune. Reason then recapitulates her message: the lover should scorn to love a friend for mere gain, and should flee from amorous Love, and should believe in her, Reason. He is foolish if he thinks she wished him to hate anyone. Well, replies the Lover, if one travelled the whole Earth there is no such alternative love to be found (an echo of this can be found in John Donne's wry song 'Go and catch a falling star.'). Amorous Love prevails, Chastity and Faith have fled the earth, followed by Justice (See Ovid: 'Metamorphoses' Book I: 125-150, where Astraea is the departing goddess of Justice); Cicero had sought and failed to find more than a very few pairs of true lovers, and all but none in his own day, and where is the Lover to find them now, not on the earth but in the sky perhaps? (The reference to Socrates and the swan, comes from Socrates' dream as related by Apuleius in his 'De Platone'. The attack on the heavens by the Giants is in Ovid: 'Metamorphoses' Book I: 151-176) The Lover is condemning his society, in a traditional but nevertheless subversive fashion.

Reason now speaks about a broader love of humanity, and reiterates the old precept of 'do as you would be done by' (see the Bible, the 'Golden Rule', 'Matthew': 7.12 from the 'Sermon on the Mount'). It is because there are those who break this rule in various ways, that society appoints judges to try the guilty. The Lover now asks Reason to judge between this Love and Justice, as to which is the greater, and Reason replies in favour of Love. Love is more necessary because Justice alone cannot keep folk to the true path, while the broad love of humanity alone is sufficient. Reason relates the myth of Cronos who castrated his father Uranus (The French text gives the later Latin version of Jupiter castrating Saturn). Cronos flung his father's testes into the sea, from which Aphrodite (the Roman Venus) the goddess of Love was born. Justice then ruled the earth, but if ever Love

fled Justice would fail too. On the other hand if a broad love of humanity prevailed then there would be no need for kings, princes and judges. Once again we have here Reason's idealism, and a potentially subversive statement, which is followed by a swift condemnation of corrupt judges.

**CHAPTER XXXVI: JUSTICE: VIRGINIA:
(LINES 5839-5888)**



n that connection, Reason now relates the corrupt judgement of Appius against Virginia (see Livy: 'History of Rome': Book III, chapter 44; the tale had more appeal perhaps to the 13th century than it does to ours)



'Virginius and Virginia'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central? (Paris?); c. 1380
The British Library

**CHAPTER XXXVII: THE MIDDLE WAY:
(LINES 5889-6162)**



irginius, her father, kills Virginia rather than allow the plaintiff Claudius to possess her. Virginius is imprisoned but an uprising of the people restores his freedom, and Appius the false judge is in turn imprisoned and condemned to execution. Virginius however then has Appius banished instead, showing mercy, though the false witnesses are executed. Jean de Meung is definitely flirting with political subversion, as before. Reason now quotes Lucan on the incompatibility of justice and excessive power (see Lucan: 'Pharsalia' Book I: 175 for instance), and includes kings and churchmen in his list of those whose power to judge should be exercised on behalf of the people, as they have sworn to do, since the people grant them their role, and reward them accordingly. Classical authority such as this (Lucan, who defied Nero) is important to Jean's defence (if needed), that any apparent subversion in Reason's discourse is in line with moral history, and for that matter the Scriptures. Nevertheless there is again fuel here for subversion and protest in times where the misuse of power and wrong-doing flourish.

The Lover is satisfied but now comments that Reason should justify her use of coarseness (the castration of Uranus episode; note that Peter Abelard's 12th century castration was still in people's memory) which she agrees to do later. Reason then refers to Horace, the poet, and the philosophy of moderation or 'the middle way, part of the Stoic doctrine of a life lived according to reason and in harmony with Nature. Reason insists that the Lover should love humanity, and 'seek the mean'.

A key passage follows, where Reason explains that there is (even for the lover of humanity) another love, the urge to procreate, by which Nature 'drives' mankind to continue the species. This urge is neither virtuous nor

blameworthy, it does not protect one from vice, but neither should one forgo procreation; there is an acceptable mean between the two poles of licentiousness and abstinence.

Reason concludes however that the foolish Lover will follow the path of amorous Love rather than the path of love for all humanity, and moves her discourse on, while suggesting that the lover should even now become her friend, the friend of Reason, since she is a daughter of God (i.e. divinely created and inspired, making her an authority not easily to be dismissed) Choose Reason as a lover rather than seeking the Rose, she pleads, with a love that is 'forever approved'. She asks him not to scorn her as Echo was scorned (see the Narcissus myth: Ovid: 'Metamorphoses' Book III: 339, referred to by Guillaume, in the original Romance). She refers to Socrates as a man of moderation who was also wise (see Solinus 'Polyhistor': I.72), along with Heraclitus and Diogenes. The Lover should be the same in misfortune as in success, as they were, and thus be immune to Fortune and her Wheel (advice that the guardians of the Rose will ignore as they flee the burning Castle of Jealousy later)

**CHAPTER XXXVIII: FORTUNE'S HOUSE:
(LINES 6163-6440)**



description of Fortune now follows. She is blindfolded, since folk are often blind to the nature of their situation, and how it might change. The House of Fortune is portrayed, on an island subject to the waves, where natural phenomena alter rapidly and often perversely depending on the state of the isle. There are two rivers there, one bright and sweet, that of good fortune, one dark and bitter that of ill fortune, two rivers which merge, with the bitter overcoming the sweet, the ill the good.

Fortune's House is on a perilous windblown slope, with one side of it a thing of splendour, the other a ruin. Fortune is finely dressed and bejewelled in the one part of the house, and poor and naked in the other. In the second state she bemoans her loss of the former state. She upends the virtuous and promotes the vile, and then reverses things again, in such a manner, that she seems not to know what she wishes, and is therefore shown as blind, or rather blindfolded, herself.



'Fortune's wheel'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
Two Poems, Codicile de Jean de Meung
The British Library

**CHAPTER XXXIX: THE WICKED:
(LINES 6441-6494)**



Reason illustrates the vicissitudes of Fortune and how she exalts the wicked by referring to the history of the Emperor Nero, noted for his cruelty. (For the history see Suetonius: 'The Twelve Caesars' Book VI, and Tacitus: 'The Annals' Book XIII onwards). By choosing to refer to Lucan (Seneca the Younger's nephew) previously and now Seneca the Younger himself, (Nero's former tutor), both of whom were driven by Nero to commit suicide, in the aftermath of the Pisan conspiracy, Reason is choosing two classical defenders of freedom and justice and opponents of tyranny, yet again expressing, I think, Jean's radical social posture, under the cloak of a Personification, Reason, who may be seen merely as idealistic and unworldly, though opposition to a Nero demands more than idealism.

**CHAPTER XL: EVIL THE ABSENCE OF GOOD:
(LINES 6495-6710)**



he death of Seneca is now described, and Reason emphasises that Fortune's gifts cannot make the wicked virtuous, but that the power and wealth to which the wicked rise, thanks to Fortune, may reveal their wickedness sooner, and the suggestion that honours alter people's temperament is seen to be untrue, for the wicked were always wicked and simply have the chance to demonstrate their evil nature when in power.

Reason now argues, from Scripture, that power only flows from the good; that wickedness is in fact an absence of the good, a weakness or default; thus the 'power' of evil is in-itself a thing of nothingness. God is omnipotent and cannot work evil, and the wicked are simply absent from the order of sovereign good, and lack the light of it, as a shadow is caused by an absence of light, and is nothing in itself. (This is a somewhat spurious though intellectually consistent argument; since nevertheless the wicked do harm and the 'problem of evil' is unchanged: namely that a supposedly omnipotent benign deity allows such harm to exist. Again I think Jean is showing Reason as idealistic and unworldly, and capable of arguments which the emotions and experience nevertheless reject.)

Reason returns to the argument against following Fortune, but cannot refrain from quoting Claudian (c370-c404AD) on 'the gods' tolerance of the wicked being raised to wealth and high status, where he says it is to punish them later, so their downfall might prove an example (another specious argument, from Claudian: 'In Rufinum' I: 1-23). Reason advises the Lover to embrace patience, and forgo sorrow, since no one can turn back Fortune's Wheel, and it is the God of Love who has caused him such sadness and anguish.

**CHAPTER XLI: FICKLE FORTUNE:
(LINES 6711-6796)**



Fortune's wheel turned and Nero was driven from power, committing suicide. Reason gives us a summary derived from Suetonius. This is followed by the history of Croesus (ultimately derived from Herodotus: Book I) who experienced the vicissitudes of Fortune, and dreamed a dream that presaged his death, which was interpreted by his daughter Phania.

**CHAPTER XLII: THE LOVER REJECTS REASON:
(LINES 6797-7256)**



Phania expounds his dream, and advises him that the noble heart should be humble, courteous and generous in order to win 'the people's friendship'. Nobility is Fortune's daughter, a subversive comment denying inherited nobility, and she is cousin to Sudden-Fall, stating again the fragility of power and wealth. Again Reason's (Jean's) disdain for improper claims to nobility is apparent: without the people's support, won through true nobility of heart, 'a prince is but a common man.'

Croesus disagrees and interprets the dream otherwise. Here Jean is telling us that the Dream of the Romance may be interpreted in more than one way, as surface allegory or deeper reality. Phania's reading of her father's dream here proves true, and the fool's reading erroneous. Reason thus points to her reading of the 'ancient dance' that carnal Love is mere foolishness (which is not necessarily Jean's reading, who holds both possibilities in balance)

Reason then adds the example of Manfred from later history. Manfred (1232-1266) King of Sicily, having usurped his nephew Conradin's kingdom, died during the battle of Benevento in 1266 fought against Charles of Anjou (brother of Louis IX of France) who was supported by the Pope. Conradin (1252-1268) was in turn defeated by Charles at Tagliacozzo in 1268, imprisoned and beheaded as a traitor. Conradin had been supported in the battle by Spanish troops under Henry of Castile and German troops under Frederick of Baden. Dante treats of Manfred in the 'Divine Comedy': Purgatorio: Canto III. Charles is 'now the King of Sicily' which places this early part of the Continuation text between 1266 and 1285, probably earlier rather than later, since the news appears reasonably fresh.

Reason then provides a short disquisition on the game of chess, referring to 'Policraticus', written by John of Salisbury, around 1159, a political treatise on kingship, though the extant text does not appear to support this reference, instead it has Athalus (presumably Attalus III Philometor Euegetes, c170-133BC, mentioned by Livy) inventing dice, a game of chance or Fortune not of skill, a small irony perhaps on Jean's part to tease the reader unfamiliar with the 'Policratus'.

The references to Charles of Anjou, the French king's brother, are here uncharacteristically eulogistic suggesting perhaps that Jean enjoyed some patronage at his court.

Reason now admonishes the Lover, and tells him to learn from these historical examples, adding Hecuba of Troy who was widowed by the Trojan War, and Sisygambis, mother of Darius of Persia, who was taken captive by Alexander the Great. Reason tells him to remember his study of Homer's works, and to hold to wisdom and truth, rather than the lover's form of love which 'brings despair'.

She then gives the tale from Homer ('Iliad': Book XXIV: 500) of the two urns, here barrels, that Zeus has in his cellar, the draught from one bringing good and the other ill. Fortune delivers a mixture to each person, some good always mixed with the bad and vice versa. The Lover should avoid sadness and despair (which is where the Continuation started from) and adopt a Stoic stance towards Fortune whose whirligig of changes he cannot affect. She asks him to grant her three favours: to love her, Reason; to despise amorous and erotic Love; and to hold Fortune in low esteem. The first of these will suffice if he is too weak to perform the rest, and she holds up Socrates as an example.

The Lover replies however that his aim is the Rose and his loyalty to Amor will allow him to win her. His heart tells him this is right, even if 'to Hell it lead.' Here is the wonderfully subversive sentiment of 'Aucassin and Nicolette' the anonymous 13th century French 'chante-fable' in its sixth chapter; I quote Aucassin's speech there: 'What have I to do with Paradise? I don't wish to enter, but to have Nicolette my sweetest friend that I love so much: for only those people I will tell you of go to Paradise. There go the

old priests and the old cripples and the limbless ones who squat all day and night in front of those altars and in those ancient crypts, and those in their old worn cloaks and their old tattered habits, whoever are naked and barefoot and shoeless, whoever are dying of hunger and thirst and cold and misery: they go to Paradise: with them I have nothing to do. But to Hell I will go, since to Hell the fine scholars go, and the lovely knights who are slain in the jousts and in the great wars, and the good soldier and the noble man: with them I would go: and there go the lovely courteous ladies who have two or three lovers as well as their lords, and there go the gold and the silver and ermine and miniver, and there go the harpers and singers and kings of this world: I will go with them, so that I have Nicolette my sweetest love with me.'

Instead of swearing allegiance to Reason, the Lover upbraids her in turn for her use of the word 'testes' in her mention of the castration of Uranus. But Reason explains that truth is truth, that the deity made his sexual equipment so that the Lover might help to propagate the species which is a form of resurrection of the species offsetting the reality of death. Ah yes, says the Lover but God did not give the private parts their names, so Reason is employing bawdy. She then goes into a long justification of her usage (Jean is here using Reason to justify his own use of obscenity later, as the Lover, at the end of the Continuation) quoting Ptolemy, Cato and Plato along the way. She suggests that names are merely words, and can be interchanged so that the lover might end up worshipping gold images of testes in church if they had been named using the word 'relics' rather than 'testes'. (A nice comic piece of Jean's inventiveness, mocking Reason, since of course the meaning of a word is distinct from its form and the physical object indicated remains the same regardless of the name. This is perhaps also a passing comic reference to the teachings of Nominalism, a view of objects, names and universals taught by Peter Abelard, and devised by his teacher Roscellinus, and so we are back to castration, Abelard's historical fate!) Reason suggests the French ladies should use the true terms rather than bowdlerize their speech (another piece of Jean's comic take on things, but also a hint about hypocrisy, a later theme).

Reason then speaks about hidden meanings, for example of the Castration myth itself. The Lover understands the myth in its obvious sense; yet the castrated parts of Uranus lead to the birth of Venus, Reason here implying, I think, that the love Venus promotes is of itself barren (since the castrated lose their fertility though not necessarily their erectile function) unless it is directed to procreation and renewal of the species.

The lover asks for her indulgence regarding his Love, whose sorrows are his alone. He is pledged to Amor and to his love of the Rose, and he claims his loyalty as a small wisdom. If he swore to serve Reason he would break faith with the God of Love, and would deceive both. The Lover then gives his final rejection of Reason's advice, and Reason departs.

**CHAPTER XLIII: FRIEND:
(LINES 7257-8096)**



Reason now departs, and Friend appears, to whom the Lover tells the whole tale of his adventures, ending with how Ill-Talk alerted Jealousy so that the Lover fled, and how Fair-Welcome was imprisoned. Friend reassures him, and urges him to stay loyal to the God of Love, and to avoid Jealousy's Castle for the time being, and also Ill-Talk who has caused Fair-Welcome's downfall. The Lover if he does go near the tower, by some chance, should avoid betraying Fair-Welcome, and if he meets Ill-Talk should seek to appease him. Ill-Talk is cunning, and should be met with cunning, he who deserves burning. (Tarsus is mentioned, the city of ancient Cilicia, one of whose deities was Sandon, an equivalent to Hercules. An effigy of the god was burnt on a pyre, and the worshippers thereafter celebrated his deification. See Dio Chrysostom: XXXIII, 47).

The Lover must serve then, and flatter, not only Ill-Talk but also the Crone who guards Fair-Welcome, and even Jealousy herself. He should lull them, especially the latter two, into believing his good intentions, Jealousy seeks to exclude all others from any pleasure, yet that is foolish, the candle's flame is not lessened because many receive its light. Friend's good advice then is to start on a course of deception, since no other weapon is to hand. Amorous Love is thus linked (by Jean) with trickery and deceit, another aspect of the foolish ways of Amor.

Friend suggests all manners of deception to be used if the Lover manages to by-pass Ill-Talk: he should appease the other guards (Resistance, Shame and Fear) with gifts, make promises, and weep, if necessary provoking tears with a slice of onion! He should send messages but never sign them in his own name, for security; and should never use children as messengers, they always divulge everything. He should still be

courteous if rejected, and should allow himself to be pursued rather than pursuing, yet always plead the rightness of his cause where possible, since nothing is lost by doing so, and everyone is flattered by the pleas of others. He should never declare his actual intent but always speak of true and pure love, and should be careful not to devalue his claim by excessive gifts.

Then again, the Lover should not hesitate, and allow rivals to steal a march on him, for no one who likes the Lover will prevent him from pleading. He should always tackle the keepers when they are in a good mood, or still smarting from Jealousy's rebukes. He should gather the Rose then while he can, at the right moment, forcefully, since the beloved will appreciate forcefulness and prove regretful if it is not evident, but if there is true resistance, and the keepers object strongly then the Lover should desist and beg forgiveness. Friend (with Jean) is therefore in no way supporting rape, 'no' indeed means 'no', the beloved should not be forced to the act, and the Lover must be patient until Fair-Welcome is again present. This is a crucial passage, since though the Romance is an 'Art of Love' it is not in itself misogynistic, despite misogynistic passages placed in the mouths of certain Personifications. Jean is careful to display his admiration and respect for women, as we shall see later.

The Lover should pay attention to Fair-Welcome's aspect and manner, and behave in that same way. A serious person expects a serious lover; a foolish one is pleased by a fool. The Lover should adapt, and serve (the speck of dust quip is a direct steal from Ovid: *'Ars Amatoria'* Book I. v). Note that the object of the Lover's attentions is Fair-Welcome, again giving a definite bisexual flavour to Fair-Welcome's role, since it is the woman who is shown such attentions in Ovid.

**CHAPTER XLIV: THE PATH OF WEALTH:
(LINES 8097-8266)**



he lover protests at the idea of using deceit and treachery, and wishes to tackle Ill-Talk openly, but Friend replies that Ill-Talk is a traitor, and treachery in dealing with treachery is acceptable. Complaining about Ill-talk is of no use, since slander is only strengthened by publicity. Regarding treachery, Ganelon is mentioned who supposedly betrayed Roland at the pass of Roncevaux in 738AD (see the *chanson de geste*, 'The Song of Roland' popular in the 12th and 13th centuries) when Charlemagne fought against the Moors of Spain. The Lover accepts Friend's advice, but asks if there is a quicker way to reach the castle and the Rose-enclosure.

The Friend now speaks about the Path of Wealth, and his own experience. This shift of the narrative from Reason to experience begins with Friend and is reinforced by Wealth, False-Seeming and the Crone. Thus the illogicality and foolishness of Love can be contrasted with both Reason and ancient authorities, and with experience in the 13th century world, giving a double authority to the narrative.

Wealth's road, created by Foolish-Largess and leading to the castle of Jealousy, is called Give-Too-Much. It is not for poor men, and only requires a simple left-turn (to the sinister side) away from plain Largesse, or Generosity. The castle is weak when approached from this road, and needs no more force to take it than Charlemagne (742-814AD) would have needed to take Germany (a jest, since it took Charlemagne thirty years of warfare to conquer the Germanic regions, in creating his Frankish Carolingian Empire in Northern and Central Europe and Italy.) Poverty prevents Friend and other poor men from re-entering that road. Friend spent all his wealth there; deceiving his friends and spending their loans in the process. Wealth accompanies a man down that road, but Poverty leads him back again.

**CHAPTER XLV: POVERTY:
(LINES 8267-8374)**



riend now gives an extensive portrayal of the state of poverty. He stresses that his counsel is derived from his own experience, and that gives it authority. This emphasis, I think, indicates a shift taking place in the 13th century from blind faith and received wisdom to experience and experiment. Though Reason depends heavily on ancient authority, whether from Greece and Rome, or the Scriptures, the knowledge, especially scientific knowledge that Jean reveals later (astronomy, optics and alchemic pre-chemistry in particular) is derived from demonstration, experiment, and experience. It adds to what I regard as Jean's free-thinking credentials, in radical politics, religion, and natural philosophy, faced with the resistance of the traditionalists, as shown by Bishop Tempier's condemnation of the works of Aristotle (1277) for example.

Friend says that, rendered poor, he can only live now by cunning and deceit. We have a re-iteration of Reason's message on the frailty of Fortune and the loss of apparent friends when ill-fortune occurs. In dire need only one good friend was still left to him, who indeed rallied to his side.



'Poverty'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); c. 1320 - c. 1340
The British Library

CHAPTER XLVI: FRIENDSHIP: (LINES 8375-8712)



riend now gives us a fine eulogy on true friendship. True friendship is not only of the heart but also proven by harsh experience. False-friends like false beggars are hypocritical, and the mere news of his own losses drove his false-friends away. But true friendship is undying, and a friend lives on in the memory even after their death. The example of Pirithous and Theseus is quoted, Theseus having sought for his friend in the underworld (a myth-variant. Note that the Pirithous/Theseus friendship had by then acquired homo-erotic overtones),

Poverty however is worse than death. Solomon is selectively quoted (Note 'Proverbs':10.15, 14.20, 19.4) Jean is quoting in a mischievous way. Just as Reason produced conflicting arguments, that sexual union is necessary for procreation, but that the Lover should avoid pursuing it, so Old Testament references can be produced to support the acquisition of wealth rather than to frown upon it, unlike the New Testament, and the mendicant orders e.g. the Franciscans with their Lady Poverty. Wealth is fine in fact, says Friend, and there is a path to the Rose, through largesse; although those with lesser wealth should give only moderately to avoid impoverishing themselves. There follows a section on appropriate small gifts, and the benefits of giving.

Friend now prophesies that if the Lover follows his instructions Amor and Venus will capture the castle of Jealousy, and the Lover will win the Rose. However the Lover must then learn how to retain and keep the Rose, as a lover must with any woman if she is wise, courteous and good, and does not sell her body. Friend first characterises all women as greedy for gain, and disloyal (remember that it is the somewhat suspect Friend who speaks thus, not Jean directly). He refers to Juvenal as an authority ('Satires'

VI). But Friend then concedes that there are exceptions to the rule, and if the Rose is such then the Lover must improve himself and not just rely on his youth which will fade, but get learning and wisdom too. Though again Friend concedes that wealth is valued more highly than wisdom, and condemns women for their undue prizing of wealth in this age.

Friend thus contrasts their own time with the Golden Age (see Ovid 'Metamorphoses' Book I: 89-112) where 'lovers were loyal and proved true' and there was no greed.

**CHAPTER XLVII: THE GOLDEN AGE:
(LINES 8713-8772)**



riend describes the Gold Age as one of equality, with shared possessions and faithfulness, therefore needing no kingship or lordship, echoing Reason's earlier vision of a commonwealth, and continuing Jean's subversive theme on the superfluity of monarchy in such an age (though placed in the mouths of his Personifications, Reason and Friend). There is a fundamental conflict between love and lordship or mastery. There is therefore conflict in marriage when a husband seeks to exert mastery, by constant criticism or by force, and where the wife seeks freedom beyond the marriage. Friend now generates the typical speech of a jealous husband in those circumstances, and here we have an example of nested discourse, the jealous husband's speech layered within Friend's advice, placed in turn within the Lover's narrative, and the author's poem. We should therefore be additionally careful not to thoughtlessly attribute the whole of the jealous husband's misogynistic (though witty) outbursts to Friend, to the Lover, or to the author Jean.

**CHAPTER XLVIII: THE JEALOUS HUSBAND:
(LINES 8773-8848)**



he jealous husband's tirade exemplifies Jealousy in action, though another aspect of jealousy than the Lover has been victim of. The husband's jealousy is possessiveness shown towards the wife (mingled with some envy for her other male companions) rather than the guarding of the Rose that the Personification of Jealousy exhibits. That in turn is an allegorical metaphor for the way in which the virgin Rose, the beloved, must guard herself from unwelcome amorous and sexual attentions; self-possession and chaste behaviour in other words.

The husband's irrational jealousy is backed by threats of force, if not actual force.

**CHAPTER XLIX: THE WIFE'S FRIVOLITIES:
(LINES 8849-8967)**



he husband upbraids his wife for the expense she causes him and the company she keeps. He refers to Theophrastus (c371-c287BC), Aristotle's successor as head of the Lyceum and his work 'Aureolous'. This literary construct, the Golden Book of Marriage, was actually written by Jerome (c347-420AD) and it is typical and amusing that Jean has the jealous husband quote a spurious authority for his comments; 'the patience of the saints' is mentioned a few lines later to point up Jean's knowledge that the 'Aureolous' is here misattributed.

References are made here to Penelope the loyal wife in Homer's 'Odyssey', and Lucretia who committed suicide after being forced by Tarquinius (Livy Book I:chapter 57). There are no such virtuous and single-minded women now, claims the jealous husband.



'Lucretia'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France; 2nd quarter of the 14th century
The British Library

CHAPTER L: ON LOYALTY IN WOMEN:
(LINES 8968-9307)



f there are such women now, they are scarcer than phoenixes (the reference is to Valerius of Zaragoza, d.315AD: ‘Opuscula’ 24; though it is not clear that the bird referred to there is the phoenix), another joke since in myth there is only ever one phoenix at a time. Such a woman is indeed as rare as a white crow or a black swan. There might however be one or two in existence, says the jealous husband. Juvenal also commented on their scarcity (‘Satires’ VI).

The reference to a second Valerius is to the ‘epistle to Rufinus against marriage’ which was wrongly attributed to Valerius Maximus (early 1st century AD) and once again Jean points, humorously, to an erroneous source. Phoroneus was the primordial king of Argos, who was a culture-giver to his people, and was mentioned by Pliny the Elder, but the Leonce (Leontios?) reference is obscure.

There is then reference to Abelard and Eloise. She argued against marrying Abelard, wishing them both to remain free and independent. Abelard was castrated in punishment for their sexual relationship, while Eloise continued to defend her love of him. Jean points here to the madness and subversive nature of love, and continues his castration references, but in doing so points the reader to the history of those lovers, and to the French secular tradition of love versus religious and social propriety that ‘Aucassin and Nicolette’ also belongs to.

The jealous husband then gives us another diatribe on the foolishness of women’s dress and fashions. Boethius (‘Consolations of Philosophy’ XXXII) is referenced in passing in regard to Aristotle’s comments on the lynx’s powers of vision. Beauty is at war with Chastity, the husband claims, Beauty always proving the stronger.

**CHAPTER LI: ON CHASTITY IN WOMEN:
(LINES 9308-9696)**



omen who dress for appearance are waging war on Chastity and will be damned, while the chaste will not, as the Sibyl suggests in Virgil ('Aeneid' Book VI:402, with regard to Proserpine). The jealous husband suggests men and women should stick to the beauty God gave them, not adorn themselves. And then the wife, after flaunting herself all day, when the husband tries to make love to her at night feigns a headache etc. He describes her wild behaviour with a company of wild youths, and accuses her of adultery, of rendering him a cuckold, of bringing shame on him. This is a picture remember of Jealousy, not a statement of Jean's or even Friend's opinions on married women or married life. The husband is a potential if not actual wife-beater.

Saint Arnold of Soissons was the patron saint of brewing and hop-picking, so (Jean jests), the patron of drunken lechery also. Women are all innately desirous of the act, and no man can achieve lordship over them, all husbands are cuckolds or potential cuckolds. Hercules (the Solinus quote is from 'De Mirabilibus Mundi' V) was deceived by Deianeira and Samson by Delilah (The Bible: 'Judges' XVI).

The tirade continues and mounts to a crescendo. The wife's mother is accused of aiding and abetting, and conspiring to sell the wife's body, being an old whore herself.

**CHAPTER LII: THE WIFE-BEATING HUSBAND:
(LINES 9697-9842)**



he husband's nested speech ends and we revert to Friend's narration. The jealous husband will progress to wife-beating. Friend characterises all women as desirous of freedom and ruthless in their actions and desire for revenge if they are treated in such a way. The misattributed 'Valerius of Zaragoza' is again referenced in the above context.

Friend now takes the woman's side. The jealous man is an oaf and a fool, who has failed to make his wife a companion, and an equal. Love dies where lovers attempt lordship and mastery and, as a result, marriages often fail. In ancient times folk loved freedom and chose friendship instead of marriage (a nicely subversive thought). Jean here slips in a link passage regarding the gold of Araby and its non-availability for buying freedom, in order to take us back to the Golden Age and Jason (of the Golden Fleece).



'The wife beater'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
Two Poems, Codicile de Jean de Meung
The British Library

**CHAPTER LIII: THE GOLDEN AGE RE-VISITED:
(LINES 9843-9948)**



fter the reference to Jason (see Ovid: ‘Metamorphoses’ Book VII) we have Friend’s description of the Golden Age (to add to Reason’s equally subversive one) in which no one sought lordship, and all were equal, until Fraud, Covetousness and others invaded the world. Poverty brought Larceny along, whose father was Faint-Heart. Laverna is mentioned, the Roman goddess of thieves. The people were riven by slander, hatred etc. and possessed by a greed for gold, and an avaricious desire to acquire possessions. Land was parcelled out, goods were hoarded but subject to theft, and so the people chose an overlord to protect their possessions.

**CHAPTER LIV: THE ORIGINS OF KINGSHIP:
(LINES 9949-10358)**



hey chose one of themselves, a villain or commoner, says Friend. But since the guardian of the possessions was liable to attack, taxation followed, and the path of increasing power led to kingship, to the uneven distribution of wealth, and to a decrease in love and an increase in greed until women even sold themselves for gold.

Friend returns to his advice-giving. The young male lover should get learning and acquire skills. He should never blame the beloved even if she has other lovers; even if he catches her in the act (recall the Mars/Venus episode earlier, with Vulcan as the jealous husband). He should respect her freedom; ‘grant her space’. He should avoid accusing her, defend her reputation, never strike her, and if she abuses him he should turn the other cheek and welcome it in her service. If he doesn’t she’ll soon flee, especially if he is poor (!) He has to learn to be wise and suffer, and make love to her to appease her.

If he’s rich and maybe has another mistress he can be more blasé, but should be careful that the two are not aware of each other, since there’s nothing as vicious as a woman betrayed. If he is caught out, then he should lie, and try to appease her with love-making. If she worms something like the truth out of him he must blame the other mistress and swear it will never happen again.

He should never boast of his mistress’s attributes and skills (especially sexual) since that shames her, and should keep all hidden, though he may tell his loyal friends who will keep his secrets. He should tend her when she’s ill, and pretend to dream about her swift recovery and readiness to make love again. But women are slippery like eels, and he will be lucky if he finds a true one who won’t be flighty. Above all he should swear that she is

beautiful, whether she is or not, since all women like praise. And he should let her do as she pleases; women hate to be criticised.

The Lover finds solace in Friend's advice, and thinks it better than that of Reason (as he would, since Friend is a foolish lover, also, and Friendship is closer to the beloved than Reason will ever be. I note again my view that the Personifications are stations on the path of seduction that leads to 'fin amour' and the erotic climax of the Continuation.) Sweet-Thought now returns to the Lover, along with Sweet-Speech, though not Sweet-Glances since he is, as yet, still too far from the Rose.

**CHAPTER LV: THE LOVER SETS OUT FOR THE CASTLE:
(LINES 10359-10398)**



he Lover, ignoring Friend's warning, sets off immediately, pleasing 'himself alone', to find the Castle of Jealousy, along the left-hand ('sinister') track, seeking the shortest way there. Friend's experience is insufficient to deter a true Lover from the path towards his love.



'The Dreamer coming to the castle and leaving Friend'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, N. (Artois or Picardy); c. 1340
The British Library

**CHAPTER LVI: WEALTH:
(LINES 10399-10662)**



he Lover comes upon Wealth and her unnamed companion, and asks the way to the road of Give-Too-Much. Wealth guards the road and denies him access, describing it as a road shunned by the wise, full of pleasures, but leading to Poverty. Poverty, we learn, had Hunger for a chambermaid, whom she made nurse to Larceny.

Hunger lives on stony ground ‘at Scotland’s end, where all is bare’ (I leave the reader to appreciate the joke), and Jean gives us a fine description of this Personification. There are other ways to Poverty, idleness is one, and Hunger is ever her companion. When Poverty is failing, Hunger stirs up Larceny (whose father is Faint-Heart) to seek out what she needs.

Wealth refuses the Lover access to the road since he has insufficient cash in hand. Love is folly and madness, as Reason advised, she says, but the Lover has scorned Reason, and always ignores her, Wealth, choosing to love for love’s sake alone.

So the Lover departs, and wanders on, meanwhile doing everything he can to follow Friend’s advice regarding the appeasement of Ill-Talk and the other guards (Resistance, Shame, and Fear) without approaching the Rose. It is at this point that he meets again with the God of Love.

**CHAPTER LVII: THE GOD OF LOVE AGAIN:
(LINES 10663-10764)**



he God of Love, having tested the Lover's loyalty, reappears and questions him as to his affairs and his execution of Love's commandments. Love chides him for abandoning Hope, and listening to Reason. The Lover again swears his allegiance and hopes to die in service to Venus, in the act which brings most delight, an appropriate ending.

Amor accepts the Lover's attestation of loyalty, pardons him, and asks him to repeat Love's 'Ten Commandments'. The reader should note throughout the Continuation the laughter, mockery, subversion, obscenity and blasphemy, which Jean injects, and the verse translation conveys, reflecting the humour and wit of the original. Jean is no great respecter of convention, religious, political or otherwise, and his humour and wit places him in the great Classical tradition of Ovid, Propertius, Juvenal, Apuleius and Petronius. Remember that Reason has condoned the use of any word that reflects the truth. There can be no humourless meaning buried in the allegory. It does what it says, it exposes Love and sexuality in the 13th century, and in all centuries, as an irrational folly and madness, and yet the driving force of the species, and its source of greatest delight.

**CHAPTER LVIII: LOVE'S TEN COMMANDMENTS:
(LINES 10765-10806)**



he Lover repeats his catechism and then summaries his position, lacking Sweet-Glances, the Rose lost to him, Fair-Welcome in prison, and yet himself not without Hope. Amor then assures him that he and his forces will attack the castle of Jealousy and free Fair-Welcome.

**CHAPTER LIX: FALSE-SEEMING:
(LINES 10807-10864)**



Love now summons his generals (whom Jean lists) including False-Seeming with his female companion strict Abstinence. False-Seeming was engendered by Fraud on Hypocrisy, and he and Abstinence are the least honourable there (Jean specifically singles out religious hypocrisy for comment). Amor is concerned at False-Seeming's presence, while Abstinence defends her lover.

**CHAPTER LX: LOVE ADDRESSES HIS TROOPS:
(LINES 10865-11312)**



e now have a crucial passage in which Love addresses his generals and the troops. He first laments the imprisonment of Fair-Welcome who is vital to him, now that he lacks Tibullus, and the other Latin love-poets, Gallus, Ovid and Catullus (the bisexual poet's name here emphasised by the rhyme scheme). There is a fine description of his and his mother Venus' mourning for Tibullus, she grieving more for that poet than for her dead Adonis (of whom more later). The Lover is here identified as Guillaume de Lorris.

The God of Love then embarks on a piece of prophecy. Guillaume will pen the Romance, which he holds dear, to the point where Jean Chopinel of Meung-sur-Loire will continue it, forty years or so after Guillaume's death. There follows an amusing portrait of Jean himself, who will continue the dream and then awake and continue the written Romance to its end, with the winning of the Rose. The God of Love will come to him to rouse him to this task which is a penance for any wrongs he has committed (towards Love rather than sins in general), and Jean will then sing his Romance through the kingdom of France. It will be called The Mirror of Lovers (that is, a glass in which lovers may see themselves portrayed, as long as those lovers reject Reason, rather than a tract or treatise on Love. Jean's intention is a description of his society and love as actualities rather than subjects for debate). The God of Love then asks his army to pray for Guillaume/Jean and for all lovers to come who will fight against Jealousy.

Jean, in this chapter, highlights for us the fourfold layering of time employed in the Continuation, and gives us an early use of literary 'time-travel'. There are two layers of temporal reality: that in which we read this

Romance written in the 13th century which fulfils Amor's prophecy; and that in which Jean is actually writing Amor's speech, after Guillaume's death. He also brings us two layers, throughout, of fictional dream-time: that in which Guillaume is alive as the Lover in the dream and therefore narrates at times in the first-person as the Lover, even though he is not in reality the author and narrator; and that in which Jean, the true author and narrator, writes in the first-person at times, even though he is not identified as the Lover. Jean overlays these last two layers in such a way that the Lover and narrator becomes Guillaume/Jean, even though we know that Guillaume is here the fictional Lover and Jean, in reality, the narrator.

It is worth noting here also Virgil's earlier use of prophecy in the 'Aeneid' (Anchises re Marcellus, in 'Aeneid' VI), and Dante's later use in 'The Divine Comedy' (Cacciaguida's in particular, re Dante himself, in 'Paradiso' XVII). Prophecy is a useful literary device for bridging past, present and future. A work can be set in the past like the Dream (forty years, or more, earlier) or the 'Divine Comedy' (in 1300) and so a past moment can prophesy in the literary present a future moment whose reality is already known outside the literary work.

The generals now announce that they are agreed on their strategy, except for Wealth who declines to fight, since she scorns this Lover who has ignored her. The disposition for the battle against the guardians of the Castle with its Roses, is that False-Seeming and Abstinence should move against Ill-Talk (to deceive him); Courtesy and Largesse against the Crone (to flatter and bribe her); Delight and Concealment against Shame (to overcome her); Boldness and Security against Fear (to eliminate her); and Openness and Pity against Resistance (to disarm him).

The generals urge Amor to seek his mother Venus' consent and aid, but he proves reluctant. In another key passage, Amor comments that his battles are not hers, in other words amorous Love and erotic Love do not coincide, though both are in play. From the perspective of the whole Continuation I read this as meaning that Jean, like Guillaume, sees the conquest of the Rose in amorous terms not merely erotic, and the winning of the Rose is through emotional love from the heart as well as physical

love of the body. Erotic love without amorous love, where Venus is present but Amor is absent, is a form of trade. Erotic love is simply a market where the buyer wins nothing, and where what he gains temporarily can be readily commandeered by another. Venus bankrupts foolish men, and Amor swears that he will punish Wealth who has failed to fight, while he praises poor men who love better than the rich, and more loyally. He will bankrupt the wealthy, and his generals assure him the ladies will assist with all their wiles!

The generals then ask that False-Seeming be allowed to fight alongside them with his companion Abstinence, and Amor agrees.



'False-Seeming and Amor'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central? (Paris?); c. 1380
The British Library

**CHAPTER LXI: AMOR CO-OPTS FALSE-SEEMING:
(LINES 11313-11576)**



he God of Love appoints False-Seeming to his army, as King of the Rascals. False-Seeming has a vile reputation for perjury, deceit and disguise so Amor asks him to explain where he might be found and how he might be recognized by his troops. False-seeming is reluctant to be specific about the troops since unveiling hypocrisy would bring trouble; truth which runs counter to appearance would expose their guile and cruelty. Amor however insists that False-Seeming speak about himself.

False-Seeming says that he must be looked for in the world, and also in the cloister. He goes where he is bidden and best hidden, and he is indeed best concealed among poor vestments (that is among the monastic orders). False-seeming quickly absolves himself of accusing true religion, or the truly humble and faithful, whose lot is poverty, though he dislikes it. It appears from the Continuation that this was Jean's own position, a believer, in a Christian society, respectful of the genuinely religious, but disdainful of the posturing of mendicant preachers and the hypocrisy of the power-seekers of the monastic orders.

There follows a strongly condemnatory passage regarding false religion, 'the habit makes not the monk' (logic's razor and Fraud's thirteen branches are to do with 13th century hair-splitting moral casuistry in the university. Tybalt is the Prince of Cats in Reynard the Fox, a 12th century cycle of allegorical fables.) False-Seeming dwells with those 'who do not as they say'. Amor protests that there are true believers amongst the secular, and Fair-Seeming agrees. There have been many apparently ordinary folk who were saints free of pride (the reference to the eleven thousand virgins is to the legend of Saint Ursula of Cologne. Jean's sense of humour is lurking here, though!) Good hearts make good folk, not religious robes.

(Ysengrin the wolf and Belin the sheep are again characters in Reynard the Fox). If the hypocrites are within the Church then the Church itself is in trouble, since the cruel remain cruel regardless of their dress.

False-Seeming offers to advance Amor's company if they befriend him. He is a traitor and master of perjury, and compares himself to the mythological Proteus who could change form at will (See Ovid: 'Metamorphoses' Book VIII: 725 onwards).

**CHAPTER LXII: RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY:
(LINES 11577-11984)**



e now have a further passage on religious hypocrisy. Fair-Seeming may take the form of man or woman, and says ‘my deeds are other than my words.’ Dressed as a holy person he fleeces the rich, avoids the poor, and justifies it by claiming the rich need his attentions more. However excess wealth and extreme poverty is to be avoided. He quotes Solomon (Vulgate Proverbs XXX.8 ‘Give me neither beggary nor riches’). The rich are foolish, the poor inevitably sinful. The Apostles, according to the Bible, laboured to support themselves but then shared their surplus wealth.

The able-bodied should work, not idle about in poverty, living off others. False-Seeming quotes Justinian (‘Corpus iuris civilis Iustinianei’). Saint Paul also says men should labour and share what they have with the poor (‘Ephesians’: 4.28). Saint Augustine recommended work in his suggestions on monastic life (‘De opere Monachorum’ etc.) and such was practised by the Augustinian order.

CHAPTER LXIII: BEGGARY: (LINES 11985-12592)



alse-Seeming nevertheless describes some valid cases where beggary is acceptable. But he then aligns with William of Saint-Amour (c1200-1272), and his withering attack on the mendicant orders (In: 'De Periculis novissimorum temporum' 1256AD), and all those who pretend to poverty but with ulterior motives. William was exiled in 1257AD, but later returned to France.

Amor questions False-Seeming more closely. The rich and the falsely-religious, he replies, prey on the poor and amass wealth, the rich overtly, the religious covertly under the mask of false-seeming and hypocrisy. A damning portrait of the falsely-religious follows. False-Seeming quotes the Bible ('Matthew', 23). These are also people who use defamation and slander for gain, boast of advancing those whom they favour, and obtaining 'proofs' from them of their excellence. They interfere in others' business, acting as notaries etc. They eschew the hermit's life and hang around the wealthy, are servants of the Antichrist, and fleece honest people by demanding gifts in return for absolution.

The dispute in 1255 between the University of Paris and the mendicant orders is now mentioned, in which Aquinas was involved. Essentially it boiled down to a power-dispute about the number of chairs of theology held by the Dominicans and Franciscans compared to the secular clergy and canons, a dispute which simmered on throughout the later part of the 13th century. A contentious work called 'The Eternal Gospel' ('Evangelium aeternum' 1254) based on the teachings of Joachim of Floris, and probably written by the Franciscans is also mentioned. False-Seeming characterises this as an attack on the Pope and clergy, which will ultimately fail, but which would if successful do False-Seeming a power of good by elevating his hypocritical friends.

Fraud rules everywhere, in religion and at court, claims False-seeming (Jean's Continuation is intended for the wider public, not Guillaume's specifically courtly world) and gives the example of the Beguins, a lay religious order, supposedly devoted to poverty but here condemned as seeking wealth.

False-Seeming now tells Amor that he will cheat him too, if he does not treat False-Seeming well. False-Seeming claims he will be loyal, but confirms that he will continue to practise deception even were he to swear not to! The forces of Amor now prepare to attack the Castle of Jealousy.



'False Seeming and Abstinence talking with Ill-Talk'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); c. 1320 - c. 1340
The British Library

CHAPTER LXIV: FALSE-SEEMING AND ILL-TALK: (LINES 12593-12666)



moment to take stock is needed, as it is easy for the reader (and the writer!) to get lost in the detail. After Reason's discourse, Jean has been following the arc of Experience, starting with Friend's portrait of Jealousy, continuing through Wealth's comments regarding the quick but dubious road to success, and following with False-Seeming's exposure of hypocrisy in love and elsewhere. Jean is providing a picture of his society, highlighting the path of seduction (Rational acquaintance, deepening friendship, gifts and flattery, hypocrisy and deceit), and revealing a clear-eyed, realistic, view of amorous and sexual love. If that view seems somewhat jaundiced or cynical, in the tradition of Juvenal, then it should be remembered that it is displayed through Personifications, each of whom has a unique perspective on the matter. Nevertheless it has perennial application in any broad human society!

This investigation of everyday Experience, which supports Reason's view of the Lover's foolishness and Love's madness, will culminate in the Crone's speech and lament. We will then have received the views of both Reason and Experience, theory and demonstration, before Nature enters upon the scene. The Lover though is still here intent upon his course.

With regard to the Mock-Epic meanwhile, Amor's forces have gathered, a strategy has been agreed, and Venus' aid will be called upon if required. The first prong of this attack on Jealousy and her castle, will now take place with False-Seeming and Abstinence approaching Ill-Talk.

They agree to go dressed as religious folk, she in the guise of a hypocritical Beguine (who appears to have a very dubious relationship with her confessor). False-Seeming is dressed as one Brother Cutler (in my translation, to chime with the knife which he conceals) presumably a topical

reference to a real individual which is now obscure. False-Seeming limps along with a crutch, and carries a cut-throat razor up his sleeve (echoed by Chaucer's 'smyler with the knyfe under the cloke', see 'The Canterbury Tales': The Knight's Tale, also perhaps derived from Jean's contemporary Boccaccio).

**CHAPTER LXV: ILL-TALK:
(LINES 12667-12746)**



he two now approach Ill-Talk, who is deceived by their holy appearance. False-Seeming looks like a Dominican (therefore irreproachable Jean suggests, tongue-in-cheek, as are adherents of the other mendicant orders!) although appearances are forever deceptive. On being asked why they are there Abstinence explains that they go about preaching and would like to deliver a sermon to him. Ill-Talk is agreeable.

**CHAPTER LXVI: ABSTINENCE'S SERMON:
(LINES 12747-12846)**



Abstinence begins the sermon by blaming Ill-Talk for his ill-intentioned garrulousness. Ill-Talk has slandered the Lover and Fair-Welcome, she claims, and will be punished for his idleness and his deceitfulness. Ill-Talk contests this, and says that he truly believes the Lover kissed the Rose with Fair-Welcome's permission; it is no slander.

**CHAPTER LXVII: FALSE-SEEMING'S SERMON:
(LINES 12847-12932)**



alse-Seeming then takes up the case. The slander must be untrue because the Lover honours Ill-Talk, he says, and neither the Lover nor Fair-Welcome harbour thoughts of approaching the Rose; if they did approach Ill-Talk would know of it. Taken aback, Ill-Talk asks their advice as to what he should do. Take confession, replies False-Seeming, administered by him since he is high-priest of all the Orders and their confessor (he embodies hypocrisy as do monkish confessions!) and will grant him absolution.

**CHAPTER LXVIII: FALSE-SEEMING SLAYS ILL-TALK:
(LINES 12933-12956)**



Il-Talk kneels to confess and False-Seeming then slits his throat with the razor (deceit conquers slander). They toss the body into the moat and enter the now unguarded castle.

CHAPTER LXIX: THEY MEET THE CRONE:
(LINES 12957-13164)



bstinence and False-Seeming, having entered the castle, are now joined by Courtesy and Largesse. They encounter the Crone who guards Fair-Welcome and seek to win her with flattery, gifts, and assurances of esteem, asking that the Lover might gain access to Fair-Welcome. The Crone therefore is being requested to play the classic role of go-between (compare the various chambermaids in the Latin love-poets, or Pandar in Chaucer's 'Troilus and Cressida').



'Fair-Welcome talking to the Crone'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, N. (Artois or Picardy); c. 1340
The British Library

They ask her to take Fair-Welcome a chaplet of flowers as a token. She is afraid of Ill-Talk but they inform her of his death, and that unless there is necromancy or devilry afoot he cannot slander her. She then agrees; the Lover though must wait, keep quiet and well-concealed, and not attempt to 'have his way' with the Rose.

False-Seeming is hopeful that the Lover will reach the Rose. The Crone might, after all, be delayed in Church, and Jealousy absent. In one way or other, perhaps with Friend's help, the Lover will meet with Fair-Welcome, and open a path to the Rose.

The Lover agrees to wait, while the Crone goes to Fair-Welcome, who does not trust her or her words. But she prepares nonetheless to give him good news concerning the Lover.

**CHAPTER LXX: THE CRONE AND FAIR-WELCOME:
(LINES 13165-13310)**



he Crone, acting as a go-between, now tells Fair-Welcome about the Lover and about the death of Ill-Talk who had plagued him, and shows him the chaplet which the Lover has sent as a gift. Fair-Welcome is reluctant to take it, for fear of Jealousy. The Crone tells him to say it came from her, and so avoid any blame.

**CHAPTER LXXI: THE CRONE'S ADVICE:
(LINES 13311-13598)**



he Crone now offers Fair-welcome her wisdom regarding love, being a woman of the world, who has played the field in her youth, one who has been a courtesan, a lady of the night, and is knowledgeable in the ways of amorous and sexual love. Now old, she had once been famed for her beauty and in great demand, pursued by too many suitors and lovers to count (the reference here to master Albus, Al-Khwarizmi, is to the Persian master, Muhammad ibn-Musa al-Khwarizmi, c780-c850AD, of Baghdad, who produced works on mathematics, astronomy and geography. His work on algebra was notable, and the terms algebra and algorithm are derived from the title of his treatise).

The Crone sets out to inform the Lover and crucially she speaks from experience rather than theory: 'all I know the practice taught me, tis experience hath made me wise'. Jean here completes his survey of the experience of amorous Love, to add to Reason's theorising about it, as previously presented by Friend, Wealth, and False-Seeming, in order to provide us with a view derived from Reason and Experience to balance that of Nature and Genius (the sexual urge) to follow. We have also been moving towards a progressively more cold-eyed view of amorous and sexual love, and the crone will intensify that hard-headed realism, from the perspective of old age, in educating the youth before her.

She has deceived in love and been deceived, she says, and having had fun in her youth has seen that life evaporate with age and the loss of her beauty (see Horace: 'Odes' Book I.25, for a comparable warning to Lydia about old age). She speaks about the revenge she would like to take on those who later abandoned her, but remembers the good times (Villon's 'Ballad of the Belle Heaulmière' is clearly based on these and subsequent

passages) and how she lived off the earnings from her amorous and sexual adventures. She is now in the service of Jealousy, and guarding Fair-Welcome and the Rose, but as we will see is still very much of the party of love, though Fair-Welcome remains dubious about her intentions, as he tells the Lover later. She now offers to tell lovers all about the dance of love.

**CHAPTER LXXII: THE GAME OF LOVE:
(LINES 13599-13765)**



he Crone teaches a wholly cynical view of amorous and sexual love, as a game in which the heart should be withheld in order to satisfy the flesh. She therefore encourages Fair-Welcome (and all lovers) to dispense with the last two of Love's Ten Commandments, regarding generosity and fixing the heart in a single place. The wise seducer and lover, and the wise woman of the world, will guard their wealth and prove fickle, while selling their love at the highest price.

She intends to speak of the five arrows (the five senses) and how to fire them and aim them truly. A lover should also dress well, and only cease such things when he has learnt the lesson of a little song about Pygmalion which she has sung to him. (The full Pygmalion story will appear later in Chapters CVI-CVII) The lesson of the Pygmalion myth, as of the Narcissus myth in Guillaume's Romance, is a warning about single-minded obsession with the wrong object of love, in Narcissus' case his own form, in Pygmalion's the statue he has created, which only becomes a true object of love when brought to life by Venus.

The Crone recommends deceit in love. The gods, Jupiter for example, behaved adulterously and were fickle in love, and so human lovers may follow their example, and swear falsely as they did. Men and women should play the field, and find more than one source of profit from doing so (the reference to Saint Liphard is to the saint of Meung-sur-Loire who drained the marshes there c520AD, as the lover should drain the wealth from the marshes of amorous love! Most of the oaths in the Continuation, I note, bear some amusing inner reference to the text, the saints are not chosen at random)

CHAPTER LXXIII: TRICKS AND WILES: (LINES 13766-14444)



n the subject of fickleness and disloyalty the Crone now gives us the tale of Dido, Queen of Carthage (see Virgil: 'Aeneid') who was abandoned by Aeneas and committed suicide. We then have mention of Phyllis who thought herself abandoned by Demophon (see Ovid: 'Heroides' II) and likewise committed suicide; of Oenone abandoned by Paris (see Ovid: 'Heroides' V); and of Medea abandoned by Jason (see Ovid: 'Heroides' XII).

The Crone now speaks of the skills a young woman should acquire in order to succeed in the game of love. She must drive men to distraction, weep if necessary, dress to kill, coiffure her hair or wear a fine wig, use cosmetics, avoid any trace of ugliness, and keep herself clean (especially Venus' chamber!) She should behave prettily while in company, dine well but gracefully at table, and avoid appearing or being drunk or falling asleep (for the reference to Palinurus see Virgil: 'Aeneid' V, 814).

A young woman must seize the day, and not let her youth pass without exploiting it to the full. She should let herself be seen and go about to events and entertainments. She should go wherever 'the God of Love prances' where 'he and the Goddess school do keep, and chant the mass to all their sheep' (the sheep will reappear in Genius' mock-sermon later). She should dress and walk when abroad in a manner to catch the eye. She should cast her net widely and some fool will arrive to offer her protection. She should avoid travellers, however, who are by nature flighty and handsome men who are too proud of their beauty.



'Dido'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central? (Paris?); c. 1380
The British Library

The woman of the world should avoid making promises, unless money is received in exchange, keep men guessing, and draw them in slowly, pretending love rather than feeling it, and not giving twice without reason. Once an unfortunate victim is in her grasp he should be thoroughly plucked of all his wealth; she should co-opt her family and servants to assist in the process. We then learn the various ways to fleece a man, through loans never repaid etc.

She must pretend to be afraid of her husband or parents or guardian, and so love-making with her lover must be carried out covertly; she should also pretend to be jealous of his other lovers, and feign to be loyal only to him. She should pretend, indeed, to be as jealous as Vulcan was regarding Venus, who was caught in adultery with Mars.

**CHAPTER LXXIV: VULCAN, VENUS AND MARS:
(LINES 14445-14542)**



ean now gives us the tale of Vulcan, Venus and Mars (see Ovid: 'Metamorphoses' Book IV, 167) with passing references to the beauty of Absalom ('The Bible' 2 Samuel 14:25) and Paris (according to Homer: Iliad III).

A crucial passage follows in which the Crone explains that 'all women are born free' and only limited in action by the marriage laws (framed by men), and that a woman is equipped by Nature to love any man, and he to love any woman. Women therefore look to love freely, and widely. In the past men seized a woman if they desired her, and wars were fought over them, so the marriage laws were instituted to regulate society. (Though this passage clearly reflects 13th century institutionalised misogyny, with its adverse view of women, in line with the Christian ethos at that time, Jean via the Crone expresses his view here and elsewhere that women naturally have equal status with men).

The mention of Nature in the Crone's speech allows Jean now to give a description, through her, of Nature's powers, and the mad forces of Love.

CHAPTER LXXV: THE CRONE'S LAMENT:
(LINES 14543-15307)



he caged bird longs for freedom, says the Crone, and so does a woman. So too does a man who chooses the religious life and then repents of it. He is like a fish (the religious symbol denotes a Christian, since Christ fished for souls) trapped in a net (the repetition of this monastic theme in the Continuation suggests it might have had personal resonance for Jean). The Crone quotes Horace (see 'Epistles' I, X.24) and says that 'every creature would exercise its true nature'. Thus Venus has every excuse since Nature overrides training, and as in the domesticated creatures (cats, horses, cattle) instinct overrides habit. The marriage laws are too strict, claims the Crone, in restricting a woman to only one man, and vice versa.

Free-will can be exercised by any person, though shame and fear may restrain them; 'Nature rules' and the crone in her own life has had many lovers; and would have had every man, and every man would have gone with her, if they could, except perhaps for some 'madman' who was deeply in love with the one woman. 'So we are controlled by Nature', says the Crone, 'who incites us thus to pleasure.' This is a key passage since Jean is now setting up Nature against Reason and Experience, while still confirming that true love is madness. This is how the Continuation maintains all views in balance; amorous and sexual Love is mad and foolish, as confirmed by Reason and Experience, and yet Nature is all-powerful, driving human beings to procreation through the enticement of amorous love and sexual pleasure. Jean is seeking to confirm Guillaume's aims, but in a wider environment, while exposing the mingling of amorous and erotic forces within Guillaume's courtly nexus, which Guillaume's Romance part-conceals within the allegory. The Crone therefore represents a pivotal point between Reason/Experience and Nature/Sexuality, and acts as a literary go-

between as well as an actively allegorical one. The themes of Nature, free-will and sexuality will be explored more deeply later.

As regards Mars and Venus says the Crone, Vulcan would have done better to keep quiet and let her have her way, rather than bring shame on himself and her. Husbands should suppress jealousy, while women of the world should feign it with their lover, and suggest they will take another lover in revenge, which is bound to increase the lover's ardour. She must juggle appointments with her lovers and use one to rouse the other, making the latter feel she and they are taking risks, She must take the lover to bed, but keep in the shadows to veil her appearance, and be sure she is 'clean'. They should seek to achieve mutual climax, but if love-making disinterests her she should still feign a climax and appear grateful.

She should keep him waiting for his audience with her, but not too long, and ensure they make love in private, securely and secretly, she feigning fear of her spouse. If her spouse is watching her she should get him drunk, and the servants if necessary unless they are doing her errands; or she should make an excuse that she needs to go to the public baths, and then meet her lover there or elsewhere. No husband can set a sufficient guard on a wife seeking liberty, There is a reference here to the myth of Argus, Juno's guard, who had a hundred eyes (see Ovid: 'Metamorphoses' Book I: 662-668).

She should avoid witchcraft and the dark arts (Belenus, is the hermetic Apollo, originally a Celtic sun-god but also a part of the esoteric lore surrounding Hermes Trismegistus, contained in the 'Hermetica' writings, probably of Greek origin, and the reference may be to such lore in works ascribed to Apollonius of Tyana, c15-100AD, under the name Balenus) Medea could not hold Jason with her witchcraft, nor could Circe detain Ulysses (see Homer's 'Odyssey' Book X). She should also avoid giving any man costly gifts, trivial ones will do. Generosity is not the female forte (in passing Jean has a dig at religion).

The Crone's lament now details her regrets on the passing of youth, the advent of age, and the lost wealth she once acquired all of which she gave away, much of it to her true love, a rascal, who beat her and sponged

off her but whom she always forgave because he gave her such pleasure in bed. (Again, she is the archetype for Villon's 'Belle Heaulmière', and some of Heine's more cynical poems also come to mind). He lived a spendthrift life and she whored to support him, but both ended in poverty as time passed. There, the Crone warns Fair-Welcome you will arrive too, if you are not careful.

The Crone has now brought us to the core of Love's madness and to the recognition of Nature's irresistible power over men and women. This is the point where the warnings of Reason and Experience meet the urgings of Nature and Love. We now revert to the Mock-Epic.

Fair-Welcome has listened to her lament, and speculates about whether the castle can be captured, which he doubts. There is little about Ill-Talk said within the tower (since he is dead and cannot now bring slanderous news) but the three remaining guards (Resistance, Shame and Fear) feel well-equipped to fight off any attack. Fair-Welcome explains to the Crone that her warnings are not relevant to him (he knows little of love, has what he needs, and never dabbles in magic) and that he is ambivalent about the Lover's affection for him. Nevertheless he will receive the Lover in a friendly manner, so long as Jealousy is not aware of their meeting. The Crone reassures him and he returns to his room while she goes off to find the Lover, give him the news, and tell him how to enter the castle. The Crone episode here is also then a crucial means of advancing action in the Mock-Epic.

**CHAPTER LXXVI: THE LOVER ENTERS THE CASTLE:
(LINES 15308-15378)**



he Crone advises the Lover to enter the castle by the rear; she will open the back door to the hidden passageway, a door which has not been opened wide for two months easily (there is a blatant homo-erotic reference here, as with much of the material surrounding the sexually amorphous Fair-Welcome). He does so, and finds that Amor and his Company have broken into the castle and are gathering there. False-Seeming and Abstinence (pregnant with the Antichrist, i.e. representative of the mendicant orders who prophesy the Antichrist's coming) are there, and Sweet-Glances arrives to lead the Lover to Fair-Welcome.

CHAPTER LXXVII: THE LOVER MEETS FAIR-WELCOME:
(LINES 15379-15428)



eing the son of Courtesy, Fair-Welcome greets the lover with a courteous flourish, and the Lover replies in kind. Fair-Welcome offers the Lover whatever is in his power to grant, and the Lover immediately gains the opportunity to approach the Rose.



'The Lover talking with Fair-Welcome'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, N. (Artois or Picardy); c. 1340
The British Library

**CHAPTER LXXVIII: RESISTANCE:
(LINES 15429-15558)**



esistance has overheard their conversation, and now challenges the Lover, while Shame and Fear, the other guards, appear at his outcry. They seize and bind the Lover, and then berate him for having abused Fair-Welcome's offer by seeking the Rose. He has deceived both Fair-Welcome and the Crone. Fair-Welcome is now taken, beaten, and bundled off to his cell in the tower again.

**CHAPTER LXXIX: THE LOVER IS ASSAILED:
(LINES 15559-15698)**



he three guards assail the Lover, while he seeks to flatter them and begs to be imprisoned alongside Fair-Welcome. Resistance vehemently refuses. If all lovers were locked away then they would never lose a rose, except to the villains who seek to use force, men who should be hung or banished (again Jean stresses through his characters the need for consent in amorous and sexual love) The Lover protests Fair-Welcome's innocence, and cries for help to the attacking forces.

**CHAPTER LXXX: THE COMPANY OF LOVE AID HIM:
(LINES 15699-15758)**



oth sides now gather together and, swearing to win or die, prepare for battle. But before the conflict, the author makes a series of pleas and apologies.

**CHAPTER LXXXI: THE AUTHOR ASKS FOR PARDON:
(LINES 15759-15786)**



he author/lover, Jean/Guillaume, now addresses 'lovers good and true' and again promises them a new 'Art of Love' which will show the path of amorous seduction and conquest which guarantees the winning of the Rose. Anyone troubled by anything they hear should await the further expounding of the Dream, which will resolve their questions. I take this to mean that the significance of the allegory will be understood as a psycho-drama, an alternative literary way of perceiving the emotions, attitudes and so on, associated with real-world amorous and sexual love, not that there is some other hidden meaning in the text, veiled by irony, concealing some deeper religious or secular significance. I would contend that the Continuation merely sets out to achieve what it in fact does, to show the ways of love, and the conflicts of heart and head involved, to a wider audience than the courtly audience of Guillaume's Romance, but with the same intent.

**CHAPTER LXXXII: THE AUTHOR TO THE LORDS:
(LINES 15787-15824)**



he author/lover now makes an appeal to the sympathetic (male) members of his audience, which I take as a genuine, and not deliberately ironic (though humorous and slightly tongue-in-cheek) appeal from Jean to his readers to understand that the apparent subversion, obscenity, blasphemy or whatever of his text, is necessary, because (as Reason part-authorised) the subject demands it. They should therefore pardon him, and defend him before his critics. Sallust is mentioned (see 'Bellum Catalinae' 3.1) regarding the difficulty of conveying deeds in words. The author is forced to write as he does in order to convey the truth.

**CHAPTER LXXXIII: THE AUTHOR TO THE LADIES:
(LINES 15825-15934)**



aving appealed to the men, the author/lover now appeals to the ladies who read or listen to romances. If he has said anything overly critical of women he asks them not to blame him, since it was never his intent, but rather blame his authorities, those other writers whose works he has read and even quoted, since they must be the liars not himself. His intent is to educate women not attack them ('for it is good to know all things'). The truth about love was written long before by poets and others who knew about such things, and the truth of whose works has been attested.

If he has offended the religious, through his portrayal of False-Seeming, then he did not mean to offend the truly religious, rather his target was and is hypocrisy, religious or secular, those who profess to abstinence, for example, and yet devour what they can (this is aimed particularly at the mendicant orders). Those who are wounded by his words about hypocrisy are those who practise it. The rest seek to know themselves and are therefore immune to his words. He ends with a pledge to Holy Church to amend whatever seems absurd, if he can (the tongue-in-cheek implication being that Holy Church may be so riven with hypocrisy it does not know itself, and if wounded is therefore complicit).

**CHAPTER LXXXIV: OPENNESS FIGHTS RESISTANCE:
(LINES 15935-16146)**



e now have a pleasant allegorical description of Openness in battle against Resistance. A reference is made to Renouart Au Tinel, hero of ‘Aliscans’, a *chanson de geste*, which describes a fictional battle between Christians and pagans (Aliscans is presumably from the Alysamps, or Elysian Fields, at Arles, a Roman necropolis; the ‘tinel’ is Renouart’s stick or baton, which he wields in the tale). Pity appears, to assist Openness, and bears the *misericorde* (which was a long narrow knife used to slay a mortally wounded knight to put him out of his misery).

Pity’s tears soften and weaken Resistance, who is urged on by Shame, she claiming that if resistance fails, Fair-Welcome will allow access to the Rose, and she will be open to greed (lust); rape; unwanted pregnancy etc. (the elaborate metaphorical/allegorical description here is easily interpreted). Shame now attacks Pity; then Delight in turn appears who attacks Shame. Shame strikes Delight to the ground, but is then countered by Skilful Concealment who captures and defeats Shame.

**CHAPTER LXXXV: FEAR FIGHTS BOLDNESS:
(LINES 16147-16247)**



ear now attacks Concealment, who is aided by Boldness, whom Fear now lays low. Security, in turn, attacks Fear. There is a reference to Hercules' defeat of Cacus (see Virgil: 'Aeneid' Book VIII) where Fear was much in evidence.

**CHAPTER LXXXVI: A GENERAL MÊLÉE ENSUES:
(LINES 16248-16302)**



Security and Fear grip each other tight, while a general battle ensues between the forces of Amor and those of the Castle. Amor's troops receive the worst of the conflict, and so the God of Love sends Openness and Sweet-Glances to ask help of Amor's mother, the Goddess Venus. Meanwhile the opposing armies forge a truce.



'Amor leading his army to the castle'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, N. (Artois or Picardy); c. 1340
The British Library

**CHAPTER LXXXVII: VENUS IS ASKED FOR AID:
(LINES 16303-16346)**



he messengers arrive in Cythera (Kythira, in the Greek Isles), the island of Venus-Aphrodite, who was born from the sea nearby (Jean is pointing us back to the castration myth, and Saturn/Cronos again). Venus meanwhile is out hunting with her lover, Adonis.

**CHAPTER LXXXVIII: VENUS AND ADONIS:
(LINES 16347-16430)**



ean now gives us the myth of Venus and Adonis. Venus warned her lover to avoid the most dangerous creatures when hunting; he disobeyed and was killed by a wild boar (See Ovid 'Metamorphoses' Book X). Jean employs this example to exhort lovers to always pay heed to and believe their beloved, whatever she says, and to ignore Reason.

In our mock-epic however, Adonis is still alive, and Venus now returns to Cythera with him. The messengers ask for her aid against Jealousy, and she vows to help her son and to burn the castle to the ground.



'Hunting Scene'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central? (Paris?); c. 1380
The British Library

**CHAPTER LXXXIX: VENUS SPEEDS TO AMOR'S AID:
(LINES 16431-16456)**



enus is drawn through the air in her chariot by eight turtle-doves (traditional emblems of the Goddess of Love) and flies to the aid of her son Amor, who meanwhile has broken the truce (Jean stresses love's fickleness).

**CHAPTER XC: VENUS JOINS THE ATTACK:
(LINES 16457-16552)**



Amor now seeks his mother's urgent help, and she agrees to war against Chastity and Jealousy, and urges Amor to ensure all men fight in his company. Amor concurs saying that 'none within our sight will be as men of worth approved if they love not, or are not loved.' Amor says he detests those who spoil his pleasure by shunning the paths of love, and when they do he could almost die of grief, and would if he were mortal (there is an echo of that thought in Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'). Without the joy that it creates, he says, love is reduced to nothing but the God of Love himself, a dreadful loss: 'For where is the true life other than in the arms of one's lover?' This is a common sentiment in medieval French literature, (see for example 'Aucassin and Nicolette', Eloise's letters to Abelard, and the lyric 'Est-il paradis, amie') representing a secular strain of amorous defiance that continues into later times. There is, I think, no trace of irony in the Continuation here, despite the air of humour and mockery that always lingers about Amor's speeches; Amor, after all, has claimed Jean as being of Love's Company in Chapter LX, and why should we not believe what he says?

The deities and their forces then swear to attack the castle, taking their oath not on the Trinity, but on the bows and arrows and flaming torches of Venus and Amor. At this point Jean breaks off the action, so that we might hear from the Personification of Nature.

**CHAPTER XCI: NATURE:
(LINES 16553-16850)**



aving reached, on the path from Reason through Experience, the point where Venus joins the fight, attention now turns to Nature, whose fundamental purpose is the continuance of the species (from a modern scientific perspective Nature is purposeless, even if the process of Natural Selection gives living entities an appearance of design and intent. As far as the 13th century was concerned however, Nature was created by the deity and fulfilled a divine purpose).

Reason and Nature are not here opposed in a direct sense, since Reason, if we recall, also agreed that the purpose of sex was procreation; though amorous and erotic love was nevertheless to be avoided. However we are here in the realms of the actual as opposed to the theoretical. Nature instils a sexual drive in the species (personified as Genius) which provokes desire, such that in love there is both pleasure and delight associated with the sexual act, (female consent to the act is required, while any use of force was previously deemed unacceptable). In terms of urging the species to amorous love and sexual pleasure, Reason and Nature are therefore opposed.

Nature is seen at her forge, creating new lives, and therefore outrunning Death, and keeping the species from extinction. We are shown a panoply of individuals, at their different pursuits (with a sly dig at religious hypocrisy again). None can escape Death, even the physicians who stave it off must die. We are given a list of famous medical men: Hippocrates (Greek, c460-370BC), Galen (Aelius Galenus of Greek Pergamon, 129-c210AD), Razes (Persian, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Razi 854-925AD), Constantine ('the African', Italy, 11th century) and Avicenna (Persian, Ibn Sina or Abu Ali Sina, c980-1037AD), all of course long dead.



'Nature forging a baby'

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central? (Paris?); c. 1380
The British Library

If only a single example of a species survives the species is not extinct (a jest, since a single individual could not perpetuate the human species). That prompts a remembrance of the fabled Phoenix that resurrects from the flames of its funeral pyre.

Nature creates new specimens to populate the earth, while Art imitates Nature though imperfectly. Art and science will never learn (Jean prophesies, incorrectly) how to imitate or isolate the elements of life, and how to recreate them as if by some species of alchemy, though alchemy (as a primitive chemistry) is valid and compounds may be altered to create new compounds. (Glass can indeed be made by heating sand and charcoal derived from bracken, as 'forest' glass. Base metals too can be obtained by purification and refining techniques). The belief that all metals could be derived from mercury and sulphur derives from Zosimos of Penapolis (Egyptian, 4th century AD) and later writers who proposed that precise mixtures of these two elements allowed the underlying volatile and non-volatile 'spirits' to produce the different metals.

Nature is seen to be grieving for an act of which she repents (her forging of human beings) and even wishes to leave off the work. The author cannot here portray her or her beauty, nor could the famous philosophers or the Greek classical artists, Parrhasius Apelles, Myron or Polycletus, let alone Pygmalion (in the myth which we shall hear later, as the Crone promised).

**CHAPTER XCII: NATURE'S BEAUTY:
(LINES 16851-16954)**



e now have the tale of Zeuxis the Greek sculptor, and his failure to portray Nature (derived from Cicero: 'De Inventione', II.I.1). Jean amusingly and at length denies his ability to describe Nature and then uses a series of comparisons to attempt just that, Nature being a fountain of light etc.

Nature, overhearing the oaths sworn by Amor and Venus to involve all men in amorous Love and to capture the Castle of Jealousy, realises she has been deceived, and that the human beings she creates are fated to pursue amorous pleasure and delight not merely their task of procreation. She believes she has acted foolishly and the foolishness and madness of Love is thus again highlighted.

Nature goes to seek out Genius, her priest, who is saying a form of Mass, Nature's Mass, which consists of reading out all the mutable forms Nature has made (Nature is sacred, the world her temple, therefore his role as a priest is not unreasonable). Genius, the god of place, who arranges and orders what Nature creates, represents here also the urge to specific form, to procreation, to the sexual act. Being a priest though he may of course also be a religious hypocrite given to hyperbole, and we should be wary of his tempting but simplistic description of the Paradise Garden presented later, designed perhaps to entice the foolish lovers among Love's army.

CHAPTER XCIII: NATURE AND GENIUS:
(LINES 16955-17062)



ature wishes to confess her error in creating human beings, and Genius expresses his willingness to hear her confession, conceal what she does not wish to be known, and grant her absolution (there is a clear hint of the hypocritical preacher in this, especially the automatic granting of absolution for a sin that will recur in the future, that same absolution in advance which Dante condemns with regard to Guido da Montefeltro, see 'Inferno' Canto XXVII: 58-136). Genius urges Nature not to weep over her error; though her tears, he deduces, might indicate some great sin. Women however can equally be moved and angered by trifles, he claims, and refers to Virgil ('variorum et mutabile semper femina; woman is often various and changeable', see Aeneid IV: 569), to Solomon (possibly a variant of Ecclesiastes 7.26), and to Livy.

Genius now continues in a spirit of mild misogyny; women can't keep a secret, but he who reproaches a woman for it, and even beats her, will be on the receiving end of her anger. Genius then enters into a digression on the subject of feminine loquaciousness, and male foolishness.

**CHAPTER XCIV: HUSBAND AND WIFE:
(LINES 17063-17220)**



e now have a dialogue between husband and wife, the husband being portrayed as a fool, and the wife as the verbally dominant partner, as she urges him to confess his secrets. The whole thing is full of Jean's good humour (for example the reference to Saint Peter, who is of course the stone, or rock, on which the Church was founded) while the relationship between husband and wife is fundamentally, despite appearances, a loving one.

CHAPTER XCV: THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS:
(LINES 17221-17412)



he husband confesses under pressure, and the wife now has matter to threaten him with in case of need. It is a warning, says Genius (mockingly) to all men to keep silent on such occasions, and he gives us a poetic piece of hyperbole concerning the serpent in the grass, a reference again to Virgil ('Eclogues' III.1, 108) from which all should flee. The hyperbolic style and somewhat inflated language, given the context, is typical of Genius, who shows us wilder, madder aspects of existence than Reason. Representing natural order and disorder, and the natural urges, we might anticipate that he is something of an extremist, and one who disregards convention, so we should expect bawdiness, obscenity, even blasphemy in his mockingly subversive speeches. He is reminiscent of the nature god Pan in Greek myth, and his ethos is the Roman Saturnalia, a period when the world was turned upside down, and servants were masters for the day (compare the character of Trinculo in Petronius' 'Satyricon').

Genius now counterbalances his misogyny with a slighter gentler view. More liberally, the husband should allow her freedom to come and go, even to be involved in business affairs if she is competent. (Again we should remember the patriarchal nature of Jean's society. It saw the wife as virtually a possession of the husband's, a view that the laws of the time supported, her main purpose procreation, but she was to be valued and cherished, honoured and served in that role.) However she should not be given too much power, or be privy to the husband's secrets, or she will, according to Scripture, become a problem. Lovers too should treat the woman well but keep silence regarding matters that are not to do with her. Fools of course, will do the opposite. Genius then quotes Solomon, and the example of Samson and Delilah.

He excludes Nature from his warnings however, she who has always proved loyal and true. Genius begs her to cease her weeping, and then prepares to hear her confession.



'Delilah cutting Samson's hair'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central? (Paris?); c. 1380
The British Library

CHAPTER XCVI: NATURE'S CONFESSION: (LINES 17413-17724)



Nature starts her confession with the Creation myth, in which the deity forms the world from nothing. The content is mainly taken from Ovid ('Metamorphoses' Book I) rather than the Bible and Genesis, Jean indicating that Genius is a pagan priest of a pagan goddess, Nature. This mixture of Classical and Christian material is a feature of the whole Continuation (consider Venus and Amor) and of Dante's Divine Comedy also, which is of the same historical period, a feature therefore of the 12th and 13th century renaissance in Classical studies paralleled by intense theological debate.

Nature we therefore conclude is of earlier creation than the Christian religion. This imitation of a Christian confession, for a sin that was not a sin, given to an imitation of a Christian priest, can thus equally be seen as genuine regret for a primal error confessed to a true priest of nature. She then says that she was appointed by the deity, through his love for her, to be his chambermaid, and Vicar and Constable (a vicar was a deputy for a superior, while a constable was a keeper of a noble household, originally a keeper of horses, or creatures in Nature's case) She guards the golden chain of the elements, the chain of existence that leads from the deity to the lowest element earth, and the forms of all things; and all the creatures obey her, except for mankind.

This is not, she says, a complaint against the heavens, which carry the stars that influence precious stones below, and carry the planets in their Ptolemaic epicycles (the planets in orbit appear to progress and regress in the sky. Ptolemy, c100-170AD refined the geometrical model of planetary movement of Hipparchus, c190-c120BC, to explain this, by means of epicycles, loosely wheels within wheels. The Ptolemaic system was superseded by the Copernican model, based on elliptical planetary orbits

round the sun). The thirty-six thousand year cycle of the heavens described is the Platonic Great Year whereby the heavens were assumed to return to their same exact configuration after that period (which is invalid scientifically, though the earth's polar axis does rotate through 360 degrees during that period, approximately). The 'seven planets' of the medieval period were taken to be the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn in that order, the Moon occupying the sphere nearest Earth, Saturn that furthest away from Earth.

Nor does Nature complain of the planets, though the moon has dark patches on its surface, due to the sun's light passing through the moon there, but being reflected elsewhere. An analogy is claimed to be light passing through glass which does not reflect while a dense or simply reflective surface 'returns' the light (eye-beams were assumed to be light rays directed from the eye to objects and being reflected so that the eyes could see, rather than the simpler scientific reality of rays of light entering the eye randomly. The homo-centric nature of medieval thought is here exemplified). The digression to describe the moon's appearance (serpent, tree and reclining man) seems on the face of it quite wayward; the image unlike the normal moon-face we see. I suggest however that if one looks through an inverting non-corrected telescope, or in the medieval case at the moon seen by means of a 'camera obscura' or pinhole camera (a large dark chamber with a hole through to the exterior, aligned to a bright full moon, is sufficient), then the inverted and reversed image does appear something like the description given, especially if seen in a subsequent drawing rather than at the time.

The planets move smoothly in their epicycles along their orbits, through the twelve astrological houses of the Zodiac, retarding the heavens so that life on earth is possible (the sun at 'the centre' is not a Copernican insight but the position of the sun in Ptolemy's model, in the fourth sphere from the earth, between triplets of planets: Moon, Mercury, Venus then Mars, Jupiter, Saturn.) the sun being at a distance not too far or too close to sustain that life (the Goldilocks' zone in modern science, not too hot or too cold). The sun, Nature says, illuminates the planets and stars, sharing out its light.

We now get a charming reference to the Greek myths, with Night as the spouse of Acheron (the realm of the underworld) and mother of the Furies (see Aeschylus: 'Eumenides'). The deity set the heavenly bodies in the sky to light the darkness, creating the harmony of the spheres, which is the source of all melody, and the 'planets' influence all things on earth (via their astrological aspects) in substance and accident (content and attributes) creating a harmonious mingling of the four elements (earth, water, air, fire). The body's humours are controlled in this way, and we die shrivelled, and dry, unless we die prematurely of one of the elements; being hanged (air), drowned (water), burnt (fire) or buried (earth), or (in an amusing passage) in some other way. Untoward deaths cause Nature consternation, since they spoil her plan, being caused by human folly and lack of moderation.

CHAPTER XCVII: DESTINY AND FREE-WILL: (LINES 17725-18300)



fter this excursion through medieval science, which stresses the influence of the heavens, nature highlights the folly of those who perform unnatural acts. Firstly Empedocles (c494-c434BC) who threw himself into Mount Etna's volcanic crater (according to Horace: 'Ars Poetica' and others), then Origen (c184-253), who supposedly castrated himself (according to Eusebius in his 'Ecclesiastical History').

Some claim such things are fated from birth, but the heavenly influences do not determine the future completely, says Nature; the natal disposition may be altered in various virtuous ways, and even erroneous paths may be rectified by the use of Reason; the powers and influences of the planets and constellations are in accord with reason, and do not operate against it.

Nature (with Jean) now tackles the thorny question of free-will and predestination. The strategy adopted here is to start from the assumption that God exists and is all-powerful and all-knowing, which is indeed the tacit medieval assumption. Therefore free-will must exist, otherwise human beings would have no responsibility for their actions, good or evil, said actions being pre-determined and outside their control; indeed God could not judge human beings, and so the deity would not be all-powerful. Equally divine prescience of future events must exist and be absolute, or God would not be all-knowing. Therefore it follows from the above that both free-will and absolute prescience must both be valid simultaneously. Note that without free-will the object of love would no longer be a choice, and human beings could not pursue true love rather than inferior versions of it. It is thus vital to Jean's view of Love that human free-will exists.

The use of *reductio ad absurdum* would of course suggest an alternative interpretation, that since free-will and pre-determination cannot both be true some aspect of the assumption must be wrong (assuming them to be opposites, since if one's choices are pre-determined to end in only one way, rather than being the results of a determined but not-predetermined process of choice, then choice is no longer free). Nature's conclusion as to God's prescience also leaves open the problem of evil. If God is all-knowing and all-powerful, then evils and disasters are a morally repugnant part of God's intent.

It is worth spending a few moments on the atheistic scientific view, that pre-determination is impossible (there are too many unknown and often seemingly random variables for any mind to know or compute the outcomes of all events and processes); that nevertheless all is determined (future states follow inevitably from current states, though with apparently random quantum effects at a level below coherent and continuing structure); and that there is no inherent conflict between free-will (human choice) and determinism (the inevitable flow of processes according to physical laws). In this modern view, current configurations of the world constrain future configurations and therefore the outcome of any choice, but the process of choosing includes all internal mental inputs as well as external ones. In other words our future comes to be through us, not despite us, and that is what it means to be a living individual: we are our choices. Determination does allow prediction, based on experiment and theoretical laws, but not direct knowledge of the as yet non-existent future, whereas pre-determination would require a complete knowledge of all events, past, present and future, which in this view is impossible in practice and probably also in principle.

It is the misuse of free-will that Nature condemns in mankind, and that is why Jean has included Nature's speech about free-will, which is not a digression or extraneous to the matter (there is nothing chaotic in the Continuation, all its seeming digressions are pertinent). Nature deems the idea that mankind does everything through necessity as repugnant; instead anything can be changed by the exercise of Reason and free-will. There is an irony here since the drive to procreation, Nature's aim, may override

free-will, and the Lover indeed rejects Reason; but then Love is madness, and the Lover is a fool. Nature's view of things, like Reason's earlier, is somewhat idealistic.

Nature (with Jean) considers some variant views on the manner of God's prescience, and discounts them (for example, God's prescience is driven by events, His knowledge is of tendencies, etc.) in favour of God being all-powerful, a view which Nature celebrates. (If God does not exist of course, the opposite of the base assumption, then all these hair-splitting, tortuous discussions are rendered irrelevant, along with all theology)

A long passage follows on human choice through the exercise of free-will, which leads to the conclusion that though the heavens may influence character and the human heart, and direct the mind's tendencies, free-will can modify that influence to strengthen it or diminish it. Destiny and Fate are thus the names we give to our disposition or tendency towards certain outcomes, rather than being absolutes. The passage on human choice leads to the myth of Deucalion who through exercise of free-will and reason escaped the flood.

**CHAPTER XCVIII: DEUCALION AND PYRRHA:
(LINES 18301-19296)**



ature tells the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha who created people from stones after the Flood (see Ovid: 'Metamorphoses' Book I, 313) thereby exercising free-will and foresight. Joseph showed foresight too in feeding the people of Egypt (Genesis 47: 13-27) and so could other folk do in order to endure a harsh winter (Jean is having fun with this Breughel-like scene). The mind and soul through free-will can conquer circumstance, the mind alone is the cause of its own unease (compare Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' and his character's musings)

Nature (like Jean) is clearly niggled by the matter of free-will and pre-destination, and we have another passage condemning those who blame God for their own wrong choices, misunderstanding the provision of free-will the deity made, or the true meaning of pre-destination.

Nature asserts that the dumb creatures, especially the domesticated ones, having neither language nor Reason, cannot exercise free-will or they would rebel against their masters. All creatures possessing higher Reason however have the ability to exercise free-will and so cannot claim a creature's ignorance; such minds have no excuse.

Having complained about the heartache and labour the whole matter causes, Nature (with Jean) returns to the question of celestial influences. These influences firstly control the weather (there is a nice pseudo-classical piece here concerning the flooded landscape, with the deities associated with Nature, namely Bacchus, Ceres, Pan, and Cybele mentioned, along with the minor deities of landscape, the Satyrs, Fauns and Naiads, Nymphs, Dryads, and River-gods, and Aeolus god of the winds).

The influences, via the weather, produce rainbows, and we now have a

section on optics, derived from Aristotle (*'Meteorologica'*) and Ibn al-Haytham (c965-c1040AD, *'The Book of Optics'*). The workings of variously shaped mirrors are described (and the need for experiment to confirm theory reiterated, a pre-requisite for modern science) which leads to a diversion back to the myth of Venus, Mars and Vulcan, with Genius throwing in a little misogyny which Nature appears to agree with, that women are bold in deceit. The author/Lover quickly adds a disclaimer from Solomon, concerning the high worth of a good woman.

Further properties of mirrors are discussed, including their ability to deceive the eye; the significance of this digression being that the Continuation is the *'Mirror for Lovers'* in which they see themselves reflected; their image clear or distorted, close or distant, heightened or diminished, bright or tarnished. Next follows a further digression concerning visions (Nature is garrulous, and Jean is having fun here), images in disturbed minds, dreams etc. which leads us back via Scipio's dream to the Dream itself, and then to misconceptions about those dreams which possess a realistic feel, involving apparent faery journeys where their souls enter houses through the cracks, crevices and *'cat-flaps'*, the soul leaving their body, a soul which can be prevented from returning if the body is turned about, head to foot. Yet the body is dead without the soul, says Nature, and none can be resurrected except by the deity.

After this long digression Nature returns to the subject of celestial influences, including comets which do not mark the deaths of kings and princes any more than they do that of poor men, but influence things below in accord with the dispositions and tendencies caused by the planets. Kings do not deserve such special note, as all men are equal at birth as far as Nature is concerned (Jean is being politically subversive without deviating from the truth) it is Fortune that does all the rest. The significance of this digression from our theme is that all folk are equal before Love as all are born equal in Nature.

**CHAPTER XCIX: NOBILITY:
(LINES 19297-20028)**



here is now a passage concerning true nobility, which is acquired by exercise of virtue and cannot be inherited (subversion again). Jean gives us, in Nature's speech, a defence of clerks, learned men, who know the virtues and vices of the world, since they are literate and can study; though a clerk who does not practise nobility of spirit is worse than other men, since he sees the higher path and takes the lower.

Nature then lists some rules men should follow to acquire nobility, including courtesy and honouring women (all this is a little tongue-in-cheek, suggesting that Jean is mocking the courts and courtiers, and Guillaume's whole courtly world, in favour of his world of learning, and the common man). Knights like Sir Gawain (see Chrétien's Arthurian tales) or Robert of Artois (presumably Robert I of Artois, 1216-1250, Louis IX's brother, killed on the seventh crusade, though his son Robert II was also a valiant knight who died at the Battle of the Golden Spurs in 1302) are noble men, and so are men of learning.

Kings and emperors honoured the ancient philosophers and writers, men like Virgil who was granted land at Naples, and Ennius (c239-c169BC, the Roman poet) in Calabria. (The chateau of Lavardin, west of Orléans, is also mentioned, the ruins of which are on a promontory above the little River Loir not the larger Loire, a chateau which in Jean's day belonged to the Lord of Vendôme. Thus he may have had some personal connection with the nobility there.) Such learned men are not honoured these days. Those who seek nobility through another should be despised for not having earned it themselves. There follows a long (highly subversive) diatribe against those who inherit nobility but fail to acquire it personally, ending with further comments about comets which exist independently of human concerns.

It is worth mentioning here that Jean's comments against hypocritical religion and false nobility, coupled with his championing the innate equality and 'Inner Freedom' of human beings, are the most subversive of his attacks on the social order, though in neither case does he purport to attack true religion or genuine acquired nobility. It is hardly surprising that the Romance was so popular in its day, since it said (deniably, in the voices of his Personifications, though Jean nowhere explicitly denies it) much of what intelligent men and women thought, but were inhibited from uttering publicly, while itself being 'only' a work of literature.

Next, the celestial influences also cause meteorites which people think of as falling stars, though that is impossible due to the stability of the heavens. They also produce eclipses, control the intensity of the seasons, and regulate the tides.

Nor does Nature, in this confession of hers, complain of the elements, which obey her laws, nor the plants, nor creatures, but only of Mankind the aim of all her labour. Nature gives Mankind, formed in God's image, being, life, and feeling. Mankind possesses intellect and understanding beyond the creatures, yet though 'a new world in miniature' ('O brave new world': Shakespeare: 'The Tempest') acts 'far worse than any creature.'

All that Nature makes is corruptible, and the gods too are only immortal because God wills it so. Nature references Plato (in 'Timaeus') who appreciated the distinction between the supreme deity and the lesser gods including the Olympian pantheon, but was not possessed of the full Christian revelation. There follows a celebration of the Trinity, of God as the Creator, of Christ and the Incarnation, which, Nature claims, was foreseen by Virgil (an interpretation of the Sibyl's prophecy in 'Eclogue' IV) and by Abu Ma'shar (787-886AD, known as Albumasar; the Persian astrologer, in the 'Great Introduction to Astrology') The Feast of the Virgin is celebrated on the eighth of September, when the sun is in Virgo.

Nature now complains more bitterly of Mankind who scorn her laws, and whom nothing satisfies (a view echoed later in Goethe's 'Faust'). She advances her view of man following the Fall (see the Bible: 'Genesis') he is 'the slave of all the vices...though free to seek the good', in a tirade worthy

of Juvenal. However all must die, and be punished appropriately. Nature summons up classical myths those of Ixion, Tantalus, Sisyphus, the Danaids, and Tityus (see Ovid: 'Metamorphoses' Book IV, 440, and Book, X 1) who suffer tormenting and frustrating punishments in Hell. So ends Nature's complaint against mankind.

Nature's complete monologue has taken us through a number of apparent digressions (being a woman she is prolix and garrulous, according to her own admission), though the whole positions her as an agent of deity (handmaid, deputy and keeper of the house), who extends the life of the species, yet is forced to complain of human beings who disobey her laws despite possessing free-will. Nevertheless, she will now send Genius, her priest, to encourage the God of Love and his host in attacking Jealousy's castle. Nature is thus aligned with Amor, since the urge to love and sexuality supports her aim of procreation. Genius represents the ordering of the world which includes that specific sexual urge in human beings, and forms the link between Nature herself and Human Love; Amor who is amorous Love, being distinct from Venus who represents sexual Love, though born of her, while she is his ally against those forces hostile to love.

**CHAPTER C: GENIUS IS SENT TO AMOR:
(LINES 20029-20136)**



Nature sends Genius to Amor, who loves her, she says, and strives to serve her. He is to carry her greetings to Amor, Venus and the whole of Love's host, with the exception of False-Seeming and Lady Abstinence whom Nature mistrusts as hypocrites and deceivers. Nevertheless they too should be absolved if they are found to be helping the cause of true love!

Jean's humour bubbles away beneath the surface, throughout the remainder of the Continuation. There is an element of mockery and foolishness attendant on Genius, appropriate to the madness and foolishness of the sexual urge, which gives a Saturnalian flavour to the proceedings. And then Genius is a priest, therefore potentially a deceiver in his somewhat simplistic promises to the faithful, especially when he conjures up visions of their reward in heaven (akin to Villon's 'painted paradise with harps and lutes' in his 'Testament').

Nature commands Genius to excommunicate all those who oppose her, but to absolve all those who follow her laws and seek to continue the species, and 'whose thoughts are on loving well'. They will be pardoned not just for past sins in breaking her laws but all those sins to come (note again the unacceptability of such prior absolution to the Church) so long as they are otherwise virtuous (with this loophole Jean suggests perhaps that homo-eroticism, or more certainly bi-sexuality, is a forgivable transgression against Nature). Here we are following Nature's religion rather than Mankind's with Genius as priest. Genius therefore is to extend Nature's pardon to true lovers for the trouble they have caused her.

After Nature's confession, Genius grants her absolution, while her penance (for having created mankind) is to go back to her forge and labour

away again. Genius meanwhile sets off to pardon all true lovers, having doffed his clerical wear and donned secular clothes ‘as if for a dance, not a fight’ (Jean indicates Genius’ essential levity, to set against Reason’s gravity).

**CHAPTER CI: GENIUS IS WELCOMED:
(LINES 20137-20206)**



Genius arrives and is greeted by all. False-Seeming has fled, and Abstinence follows, not wishing to be seen alone with a priest in his absence ('even for four gold bezants', Jean mockingly hints at her price and the priesthood's sinfulness). Amor dresses him as a bishop, while Venus is overjoyed and presses a burning brand in his hand, to use during the act of excommunication. Genius, as the priest of Nature, now mounts to the lectern to deliver his sermon, and give judgement on the lovers

CHAPTER CII: GENIUS GIVES HIS SERMON: (LINES 20207-20408)



Genius appeals to the authority of Nature who administers the deity's power on Earth through the heavenly influences, which we heard all about in her long speech. (Jean therefore stresses the divine authority of Nature, matching that of Reason, and nothing in the text suggests irony in this respect. They are equally authoritative, divinely created, and independent of one another, the one being physical the other spiritual, which was an orthodox position to take. Jean's subversion, where it appears, concerns the corruption of either, through hypocrisy, or through the misappropriation and misuse of power).

Genius thereby excommunicates those who flout Nature's laws, but takes upon himself the deeds of all those who love well and 'labour' in her service (being himself representative of the sexual urge in Mankind) who will have their reward in heaven. He regrets Nature having given certain men and women pen and book, hammer and forge, plough and field (metaphors for male and female sexual parts) only to have them neglect or misuse them (that is fail to employ the sexual act for procreation).

Genius has a problem with the question of those who turn away from procreation deliberately, since the deity surely created all folk equal, with similar desires, and the reason for creating some without such desires, if that is the case, escapes him. But barren folk, this includes those who deliberately abstain from sex, as among the mendicant orders, and those who choose other forms of sexuality, e.g. the homosexual followers of Orpheus (see Ovid: 'Metamorphoses' Book X, 1 et al), are surely to be condemned and excommunicated. Genius' mocking style of speech may be misleading here. Humour is not necessarily irony. Jean is having fun with the character of Genius, but the message delivered is no different than that

of Reason, to fulfil Nature's directive: the purpose of sex is procreation. Genius therefore exhorts the men to employ themselves in sex, and they will certainly be pardoned for it, if they do so with right intention.

**CHAPTER CIII: GENIUS EXHORTS ALL LOVERS:
(LINES 20409-20812)**



Genius exhorts the men of Love's company to plough the furrow, and be lusty sexual partners. He refers to Cadmus' ploughing of the ground, and sowing of the serpent's teeth (Ovid 'Metamorphoses' Book III, 95-104). He tells them that they have two advantages in their current campaign against the Castle of Jealousy, their opponents are weakened, and two of the Fates are with them; only the third, Lachesis, who shortens the duration of life, is against them, and she can be overcome by procreation, at least in terms of prolonging their lineage. They must do as their parents and ancestors did, and cheat Lachesis, who feeds the hungry maw of Cerberus, the guardian of the underworld, where the three Furies await sinful folk, along with the three judges of the dead (Minos, Aeacus and Rhadamanthus). They must 'live and love well' and avoid the twenty-six vices which they will find, if they look for them, in the Romance of the Rose itself (consider the images on the wall of the garden, and outside Paradise).

Genius now gives a tongue-in-cheek account of the reward they will earn in heaven, if they follow the recommended path. Just as the Hell to which sinners will go is here the pagan Hell of the myths (Dante gives us a Christian version), so the Heaven reserved for the virtuous procreators is something of a caricature (Jean is mocking the hypocritical priests and their promises to the faithful, which is not to say that he rejects the Christian belief in an afterlife). If the true lovers obey Nature's command, and are virtuous, and also preach Genius' words throughout the land, then they will arrive after death at the parklands of Paradise. Since Nature is speaking through Genius, the picture drawn is one of natural pastoral bliss, full of the sheep-like flocks of the virtuous, led by Jesus as the Good Shepherd

(and equally as the Lamb of God, which is a little confusing), a picture to be contrasted with Guillaume's Garden of Pleasure in the original Romance.

Paradise is a place of the eternal moment, where 'all is day and that forever', with no night (note the dew that sweetens the plants at the root, and compare the opening lines of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales') and no corruptibility. Jean cannot resist comparing it to the Age of Gold, and thence takes us back to the Saturn castration myth (since we are in something of a Saturnalia here) and that paradoxical act which should lead to barrenness, but in fact sees the birth of Venus.

Castration is a sin, says Genius (Jean is thinking of Abelard, and of Origen, again) and those who commit it are sinners, since they destroy the ability to procreate, and create eunuchs who, like women, are full of evils. (Genius' view derives from Nature, not Jean, who has previously apologised to the ladies!) But Jupiter, in the myth, sought power, and having gained it, issued his only commandment (says Genius).

CHAPTER CIV: JUPITER'S COMMAND: (LINES 20813-21428)



Jupiter's command is a licence to one and all to do as they please (a libertarian instruction, based on the exercise of free-will) and to seek pleasure, the sovereign good, just as Jupiter himself did (being sexually promiscuous as the myths show). Genius refers to Virgil ('Georgics' Book I) and the Golden Age, yet again, a time when all was held communally. That pastoral world Jupiter ruined, inventing hunting and other arts, so that some creatures became slaves to others, a harsh world (he quotes Ovid: 'Ars Amatoria', II.43 and refers to Ovid's 'Letters from Exile') where 'ills drive the mind to stir' (necessity is the mother of invention). Genius takes us through the Ages of Mankind, and the deterioration of the world, till we reach the age of iron.

Genius now stretches his Paradise metaphor to its full extent, with a further description of the sinners and the saved, the black sheep and the white (full of Jean's humour and gentle mockery of priestly hyperbole), ending with a prayer to God and the Virgin to allow the true lovers entry there.

We now have a comparison of Genius' park of Paradise, with Guillaume's Garden of Pleasure (thereby comparing Jupiter's libertarian commandment with the Christian faith, and, despite the stretched metaphors, in a fairly serious manner). The Garden is surrounded by a square wall, the park is round (spherical, the furthest inner sphere of the heavens). The ten images on the Garden's wall are compared with all the evils, and all the earthly things, and the heavens which are seen outside the inner sphere of Paradise, all of which are corruptible, they are 'the dancers that will pass, as will the dancers on the grass,' as seen by Guillaume's Lover. The fountain of living things now described is not Guillaume's

fountain beneath the pine, which was the perilous pool Narcissus gazed into (in his self-obsession, rejecting the true path of love, through failing to know himself in the manner recommended by the philosophers). Guillaume's fountain is an inferior one, containing in the crystals a clouded pair of eyes, and is not born of itself, for the garden's fountain and the light within it comes from outside.

Genius now describes the eternal fount, flowing from the three springs of the Trinity, born of itself, which flows from a great height, and on its slopes bears a humble olive tree which is so nourished that it outdoes Guillaume's proud pine. There is a scroll on the tree for those who can read (Jean's humour again, the sheep may have some difficulty!) proclaiming it the fountain of life, while the olive tree bears the fruit of salvation. There is a triple-faceted gem in the fountain (representing the Trinity again) which illuminates the park, and is the sun that moves everything (see the last line of Dante's 'Paradiso' in the 'Divine Comedy'). The day there is eternal; the light strengthens the eyes, and enables onlookers to perceive themselves and all things clearly, unlike the obscurity of the fount in the Garden of Pleasure. This park is fairer than Adam's earthly paradise (in 'Genesis').

Genius asks the lovers to say which is preferable, the Garden of Pleasure or the parklands of Paradise. The former hastens on death, the latter brings everlasting life. Genius then gives the lordly lovers a summary of Nature's commandments, to live in accord with her, to indulge in the sexual act (within reason!) and procreate, and to practise virtue, including compassion (this is inherently a secular creed, since it is Nature's creed).

Genius completes his speech, so as not to weary all, and hurls his 'candle' into the audience (the whole world), the smoke and flame of which fanned by Venus, sends out its odour to permeate all women. Amor now spreads the contents of the speech abroad, being a judgement with which no 'man of discernment' disagrees. All the audience indeed agree, having been pardoned, in a unique everlasting pardon, and Genius then vanishes (into the texture of the world, as that spirit ordering all times and places, and fuelling the sexual urge), leaving the army ready for battle, and set to capture and raze the Castle of Jealousy.

**CHAPTER CV: VENUS ATTACKS THE CASTLE:
(LINES 21429-21590)**



enus now demands the castle's surrender, a demand which Shame (the daughter of Reason) defies. Venus then threatens to burn the castle and all in it; Fair-Welcome, she threatens, will then allow everyone to take the Roses (remember it is Venus, cupidity, who speaks here, not Amor; sexuality rather than true Love) and they will give or sell themselves freely. Some men will come secretly to the act (clergy as well as secular!) others overtly, whose sin should be considered less. Some too will shun the heterosexual act altogether, which is in defiance of Nature's command regarding procreation.

Venus denies that Reason (and Shame) can ever point the way to true love. She fires her burning arrow at a statue sited between two pillars on the wall of the castle (a sexual metaphor for the female genitals between the two legs, the statue being symbolic of woman, and mildly blasphemous here as an image of the virgin female), and into the inner sanctuary of the statue (i.e. into the vagina) which is the enclosure, the Rosebush and the Rose all in one (thus kindling female sexuality). While the Gorgon's gaze turns men to stone (see Ovid: 'Metamorphoses', Book V: 149) this statue revives them, and causes the species to be continued in propagating humanity (the statue is on the outside of Jealousy's castle and attainable, since Jealousy cannot touch the sexual act itself).

The Lover/author now states his wish to touch the statue, since it contains virtue/power, and so beautiful that nothing, not even Pygmalion's statue compares.

**CHAPTER CVI: PYGMALION:
(LINES 21591-21692)**



can now gives us the tale of Pygmalion (see Ovid: 'Metamorphoses' Book X, 243), a passage to match Guillaume's use of the Narcissus myth. In both cases a perverse love is indulged, that of Narcissus for his own image, that of Pygmalion for the statue he has created, neither are focussed on Nature's path of procreation. Narcissus will die of unrequited love, while Pygmalion will be saved by Venus' bringing the statue to life (though ill consequences follow in the story of Myrrha and the death of her son Adonis). Pygmalion is aware of his own perversion, and indeed compares himself to other foolish lovers, specifically Narcissus. He is in a better state than narcissus though, since he can at least hold and kiss his statue, though he asks the statue's pardon for his coarseness of speech (and Jean's sexual metaphors!)



'Pygmalion kneeling before the statue'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); c. 1320 - c. 1340
The British Library

**CHAPTER CVII: VENUS BRINGS THE STATUE TO LIFE:
(LINES 21693-22048)**



Pygmalion acts towards his statue as any foolish lover does towards his mistress, dressing and adorning her (though not masking her face in jealousy as the Saracen Muslims do), granting her gifts, chaplets, and a ring. He then marries her in a wedding overseen by the pagan gods, Hymen and Juno (since it cannot be a Christian marriage, pagan Venus not the Christian deity has given the statue life). The wedding celebrations follow with enough noise to drown out God's thunder (Christian disapproval) the description of the festivities including a comprehensive list of Medieval musical instruments.

The statue however cannot respond to him and, captive to what he has conceived, he falls beneath the 'madness' of her spell (confirming love again as a mad and foolish impulse). Pygmalion now prays to the goddess Venus outside her temple (calling her a saint, blasphemously) and swears to abandon Chastity if Venus will bring his statue to life. He returns to his statue to find her alive, the blood beating in her veins. The two lovers now embrace, and thereafter express mutual love. All is not quite well since one of their descendants is Myrrha who again suffers from a perverse love (for her father Cynaras: see Ovid: 'Metamorphoses' Book X, 298) and gives birth to the ill-fated Adonis, Venus' lover (thus Venus' act rebounds on herself, with Adonis' death, and Pygmalion's perverse love is not fully corrected by her intervention even though it leads to procreation).

The Lover tells us again that the statue in the wall of the castle is much fairer than that created by Pygmalion. Further sexual metaphors follow, as the Lover expresses his desire to penetrate the wall, by seeking entrance into the statue's sanctuary for which he asks God's help, and which is to be identified by the reader with the enclosure, the Rosebush and the Rose. Venus then attacks the Castle with her bow and fiery arrow.



'Pygmalion praying before the temple'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, N. (Artois or Picardy); c. 1340
The British Library

**CHAPTER CVIII: VENUS RAZES THE CASTLE:
(LINES 22049-22500)**



he guardians Resistance, Fear and Shame flee the burning Castle of Jealousy, abandoning Reason (and her message of equanimity in misfortune). Courtesy then appears to save her son Fair-Welcome from the flames, accompanied by Openness and Pity. She tells him Ill-Talk is dead, and Jealousy disempowered, and that he should therefore take pity on the Lover and grant him access to the Rose, driven on as he is by Amor. Courtesy quotes Virgil: 'Amor vincit omnia: Love conquers all' (a variation in the order of the words of 'Eclogues' X, 69, a phrase which indeed sums up the Continuation, and is repeated by Chaucer in 'The Prioress's Tale' from 'The Canterbury Tales'); this says Courtesy is a 'good and true' statement. Fair-Welcome agrees and the Lover rushes off to the sanctuary/Rose and the fulfilment of his wishes.

A long extended series of sexual metaphors follows, which display the Lover's barely concealed delight in obscenity, yet we should remember that Reason allowed all words to be used that state the facts of Nature, and that are appropriate to the matter in hand. Jean gives us here the Lover's credo (and quite possibly his own): 'let us on narrow paths go free, that lead us on, delightfully, seducing us, intriguingly, not those cart-roads full of strife, we who seek the pleasant life.' For the pleasant life is the life of Pleasure and the Pleasure-Garden, though of course the Lover is but a mad fool.

We now have a digression on rich women who are old and wary, and young ones who can be entrapped as the fowler traps the birds, with 'a string of sounds yet pure deception' which might well be Jean's description of the Romance itself or at least of the arts of Love it describes. Lovers may follow the road of wealth acquired by loving rich old women, or pursue young maids, 'all's fair' that Amor demands, and it is 'good to try all things',

though the Lover's admonition to try the bad in order to know the good, has a questionable double meaning, that of suffering for knowledge, or sinning to repent. Things thus go by contraries, and one must know a thing's opposite to understand the thing itself.

The Lover now reaches the sanctuary, and the sexual metaphors continue. Call it bawdy, obscenity, or whatever, in the spirit of Petronius and Apuleius, it is but thinly veiled (in the manner of James Joyce in 'Ulysses', that Joyce who prayed in 'Finnegans Wake': 'Lord, heap miseries upon us yet entwine our arts with laughters low'). There is more than a hint of blasphemy also in this penetration of the Virgin. The Lover succeeds however in his endeavour of thereby winning the Rose's bud. If the reader dislikes the joyous bawdy and the play of word and metaphor, recall that it is the mad and foolish Lover who is speaking, not the voice of Reason or of Jean (except that it is Jean's voice, of course, that we hear throughout the Continuation).



'Venus setting fire to the castle'
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Roman de la Rose*
France, Central (Paris); c. 1320 - c. 1340
The British Library

**CHAPTER CIX: THE LOVER WINS THE ROSE:
(LINES 22501-22580)**



Continuing the sexual metaphors, the Lover enters the sanctuary, plucks the Rose, sheds his seed, and apparently impregnates the Rose, ‘see you how wrong I was in this’ yet is merely following Nature’s and Love’s commands. Fair-Welcome will forgive him, though he has been forceful and forgotten his pledge not to mar the Rose in any way. His method though is not in-itself suspect, since Nature, and Genius, and Amor, and Venus most of all, have aided him, and if foolish he has ever been open and frank with them (and us). And he thanks the host of lovers, who have supported his efforts, all of whom he hopes God will never remove, but excludes from his thanks Reason who tried to turn him from his quest, Wealth who refused him entry to her road, Jealousy, and all the enemies who opposed him. And so the Lover gathers the Rose, and so the Dream ends.

AFTERWORD



ean thus completes the Mock-Epic with Venus pre-eminent in capturing the Castle of Jealousy and defeating Love's enemies, while he also draws the Lover's Quest to a close with this final conquest of the Rose. So ends the mutual Dream, dreamt by Guillaume de Lorris and completed by Jean de Meung, with the help of the ever-present God of Love.

The arc of the combined Mock-Epic is a full realisation of the art of literary allegory with its use of Personifications not merely for action but also as literary voices in dramatic monologue. Jealousy is thus defeated by Love and Fair-Welcome is set free to greet future lovers.

The process of the Quest has set Reason and Experience against Nature (and her priest Genius), Amor (the drive to mutual love) and Venus (the sexual urge), a process in which the Lover has rejected Reason and Experience in favour of Nature and Love, and in particular amorous and sexual love.

By use of the Personifications, Jean has also marked out during the Quest, the stages of seduction and conquest from rational acquaintance (Reason), through friendship (Friend), gifts (Wealth), flattery (False-Seeming) and use of a go-between (the Crone) to the achievement of a private meeting (Fair-Welcome), rousing the urge to procreate (Nature), stirring the sexual urge (Genius), and so reaching a final climax.

Jean takes Guillaume's courtly structure and ideas, and extends them to the wider world of the common man, highlighting the limitations of the Garden of Pleasure through the views of Reason and the Personifications representing Experience, but siding in the end with the Company of Love. The conflict which is genuine, may be seen as one in which Reason and Experience are readily acknowledged, true religion and a benign social order

endorsed, and Love viewed as a primal foolishness, a madness even, (inherently ridiculous, and deserving of mockery and relentless humour) but one in which Love nevertheless conquers all; ‘Amor vincit omnia’.

With regard to Jean’s authorities, I think it is clear that he steals from many, but commits to none, and that to read the works of Boethius, or his other Medieval sources (Aelred of Rievaulx, Alain de Lille, Andreas Capellanus, and Claudian for example) especially the theologians, as representing his precise views, is invalid. He was a poet not a philosopher or theologian, and he takes what he needs to express his position without fully endorsing the theology, or philosophy, the homophobia, or misogyny of his sources. When he does appear to endorse, it is in favour of the middle-path of moderation, and a broad tolerance. He clearly loved men and women and their antics, he found both sexes foolish at times, but he apologises in the text, without real irony, for any words of his that might be construed as being directed against women, or true religion, or genuine love, while in the figure of Fair-Welcome he gives us an androgynous character in a relationship that more than hints at the homo-erotic.

Jean draws on the major Roman writers, Ovid, Virgil, Horace, and Juvenal in particular; and so employs an entertaining mixture of pagan mythology and Christian lore, which Dante also gives us in *The Divine Comedy*. Jean’s world is pagan with Nature, while being Christian with Reason.

As regards Jean’s political and religious subversion, I suggest he was in favour of a fairer society, where inherited nobility did not automatically hold power, and where the wealthy aided the rest, and that he dreamed himself of a Golden Age; and in religion was opposed to hypocritical preachers, and the power-seeking mendicant orders, though not critical of true religion as he saw it. His mockery, bawdy, blasphemy even, is in the service of a basic good humour, and reflects the everyday world of his 13th century society. He is not a rebel as such, but nor is he a conformist, rather he is simply a free-thinker.

The Continuation then is a fulfilment of Guillaume’s original, but for a wider and less constrained audience. Courtly love, ‘fin amour’,

metamorphoses into ‘true love’ and explicit sexuality (though we should remember that sexuality and eroticism was also a central part of the tradition of courtly love exemplified by the Troubadours, though less explicit and more socially codified than in Jean’s world). Jean goes beyond Guillaume but does not deny him, and both are about the same business, an ‘Art of Love’ for the uninitiated and the experienced, a ‘Mirror for Lovers’ for those seeking love and entangled in love. Both Guillaume and Jean seek to show the path to the winning of the Rose.

In the complete work all views are embraced, and all have their say: Reason and Experience (in its various forms) question the Lover’s mode of amorous sexuality, seen as foolish and ultimately to be conquered or outlived; Nature and Genius have their say, embodying the physical world and the primal urge to continue the species, viewed as an instinctive madness yet serving the fundamental need for procreation: the Mind and the Heart, then, are here forever at war. Meanwhile Jealousy and her cohort give way ultimately (or there would be no true lovers) before the onslaught of Love, but put up a worthy fight in this the ‘ancient dance’. All is seen with clear eyes; this is human reality (still!), and yet all is also a Dream, a Romance of the mind.

The Lover, our dubious hero, sees and hears all, but is not deterred from his Quest for the Rose. He may be a madman, but is he not our madman? As for Love, all Reason and Experience is against it, all Nature and the human heart is for it.



THE END OF ‘WINNING THE ROSE’

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Anthony Kline lives in England. He graduated in Mathematics from the University of Manchester, and was Chief Information Officer (Systems Director) of a large UK Company, before dedicating himself to his literary work and interests. He was born in 1947. His work consists of translations of poetry; critical works, biographical history with poetry as a central theme; and his own original poetry. He has translated into English from Latin, Ancient Greek, Classical Chinese and the European languages. He also maintains a deep interest in developments in Mathematics and the Sciences.

He continues to write predominantly for the Internet, making all works available in download format, with an added focus on the rapidly developing area of electronic books. His most extensive works are complete translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

