The *Roman de la rose*: Nature, Sex, and Language in Thirteenth-Century Poetry and Philosophy

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Short Abstract

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Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Roman de la rose* (*The Romance of the Rose*), written in Paris in the 1270s, presents a vast amount of philosophy and natural science in vernacular poetry, while engaging thoroughly with contemporary, local philosophical and institutional debates. Taking this into consideration, this study investigates how the *Rose* depends for its meaning on questions around human nature, natural philosophy, and the philosophy of language that were being discussed and debated in the University of Paris at the time of its composition. It suggests a reading of the poem as a work of philosophy that uses Aristotelian ideas of nature and what is natural to present a moral framework – at times explicitly, at times implicitly – within which to assess and critique human behaviour. The concepts of the unnatural and the artificial are used to discuss sin and its effects on sexuality – a key concern of the *Rose* – and on language. The *Rose* is shown to present itself as artificial and compromised, yet nevertheless capable of leading imperfect and compromised humans to moral behaviour and towards knowledge which can only ever be imperfect. It is read as a presenting a rhetorical kind of philosophy that is *sui generis* and that appeals to human desire as well as to the intellect. The specific issue of usury and its relation to avarice is examined, studying contemporary theological and philosophical treatments of the question, in order to illustrate similarities and contrasts in the *Rose*'s theoretical methodology to more orthodox modes of philosophical enquiry. Finally, the poem's valorisation of pleasure and of the perversity inherent in artificial productions is explored to show how poetry, though deviating from the strictures of dialectical language, is nevertheless productive and generative.

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This study argues that the *Roman de la rose* (*The Romance of the Rose*) is a poem that approaches questions of philosophy in a different way to the conventional methods of Scholastic enquiry available to thirteenth-century thinkers in Paris, and it investigates what kind of philosophy can be expressed by such a fictional allegorical dream-narrative.

INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the thirteenth century, the University of Paris experienced intellectual scandal and controversy as debate about Aristotelian ideas and fears about their threat to orthodoxy resulted in Étienne Tempier's 1270 and 1277 condemnations of philosophical and theological errors. As masters in the Arts Faculty staked claims for the importance of philosophy, Jean de Meun – closely associated with the Artists and probably a master himself – wrote a poem that claims to conceal secrets of philosophy to those who would know how to discover them.

While there has some attention to aspects of the poem's intellectual context in the modern period, literary critics of the *Rose* have focused more on its literary heritage and intertextual games to understand it, while intellectual historians have largely neglected it. The true extent and originality of its interaction with thirteenth-century philosophy has thus gone unexplored. While the *Rose* is a poem about love and what it means, it also treats larger questions about nature and the natural. It considers both the extent to which nature can be used as an ethical yardstick and humankind's place within the natural world.

CHAPTER 1

Against a strain of criticism that sees the *Rose* as irreducibly ludic and as resisting any fixed coherent meaning, chapter 1 asserts the poem's debt to Aristotle's conception of nature, particularly as expressed in *Physics*, II. 2, in representing a unified account of the workings of the natural world. The Aristotelian content of the figure Nature's account of the world, in particular, is analysed. On the basis of this analysis it is shown that while the many speakers in Jean's continuation of the *Rose* often contradict each other and provide different accounts of the world, none of the text's discussions of natural philosophy suggests that sexual desire is not natural or that it is *a priori* sinful. Moreover, in its treatment of ethics, sins and misdeeds are consistently understood as being actions by which humans act against nature. Aristotelian accounts of the natural are used to understand La Vieille's discussion of the artificial restraints placed by society on human's natural sexual impulse. This consistent understanding of both nature as rooted in natural philosophy and of sexual drive as natural is used as the basis for a theoretical framework within which to make sense of Genius' ironic condemnation of the celibate and his demand for their castration.

Treatment of the *Rose*'s Aristotelianism is tempered by a consideration of its theological aspect, and the *Rose*'s repeated myth of the perfectly natural Golden Age is read to figure the Fall and the resultant corruption in human nature. The nature of *concupiscentia* and the body's revolt against reason are studied, starting with Augustine and seeing how his ideas operate in twelfth- and thirteenth-century theology, in order to show that Jean de Meun, while less pessimistic about sexual desire, nevertheless shows human nature to be vitiated and does not believe that living totally naturally is possible in this life. The *Rose* signals itself as an artificial text, as a flawed production that could only be created in a postlapsarian state. It can be used to understand the world and to help make moral decisions based on nature as an ethical value, so that the natural world and one's fellow humans can still be understood, although without the possibility of complete knowledge. Humans can act naturally although not perfectly naturally, and the very impossibilities and paradoxes of the *Rose*

ultimately contribute to its message about the lack of perfection in anything that is not wholly natural, including all human endeavours unaided by God's grace.

CHAPTER 2

Faux Semblant is the centre of chapter 2 and his self-description as a wolf in sheep's clothing is used to analyse both the sinful artificiality of hypocrisy and the potential for sinful humans to become like animals. It considers the wolf and its use in medieval culture as a symbol for rapacity and as a means of understanding disordered human desire and the failure of reason to prevail over the appetitive soul, especially as used in satires or critiques of those in religious orders. Faux Semblant's lineage in antifraternal satire, following Rutebeuf and Guillaume de Saint-Amour, is shown to link questions of the hidden nature of bestial desire to political satire. This hidden truth is also used to show the unreliability of artificial clothing and, by extension, of conventional human communication. There is a consistent theme in the imagery of the continuation of the *Rose*, according to which humans are transformed metaphorically into wild beasts when they think only of satisfying their pleasures and desires. Thirteenth-century accounts of how sin disorders the soul and renders humans beast-like – particularly Albert the Great's *De animalibus* and Henri d'Andeli's poem, the 'Lai d'Aristote' – draw on Aristotle's works on animals. The *Rose* shares the interest of contemporary writers in the boundary between human and beast and, while suggesting reason and learning as a remedy to a life lived in the pursuit of desires, acknowledges man's capacity for being a wolf to man, and human beings' capacity for monstrous and tyrannical behaviour.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 asserts the *Rose*'s status both as an ethical and as a rhetorical text in order to show both its concern with the nature and morality of speech and communication and also how it uses theoretical knowledge in a manner different to the dialectic of philosophy that dominated theoretical enquiry in the thirteenth-century university. Boethius' *De topicis differentiis* suggests a fundamental distinction between rhetoric – which considers the contingent problems of the hypothesis – and dialectic – which considers the theoretical,

scientific thesis. The importance of the Ciceronian rhetorical manuals in Scholastic and wider medieval culture is then discussed, with the opening of the *De inventione* providing a theoretical basis for understanding the relationship between wisdom and eloquence, the result of rhetoric. The question of the status of eloquent speech as natural or artificial in Cicero and his commentators is outlined to show how Cicero allows for ambiguity in thinking about human artifice in speech and its naturalness. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and Giles of Rome's commentary on it introduce questions of psychology to the working of rhetoric, which is seen, in contrast with dialectic, to function through the appetitive as well as the intellective part of the soul. The second half of Chapter 3 shows how the *Roman de la rose* draws on this range of rhetorical theory to articulate an understanding of how knowledge and desire work in fallen humans, and how eloquence, including poetry, can be used to lead humans towards the good and towards the truth.

The Neoplatonic literary tradition of the *integumentum*, in which theoretical truths can be identified under the artificial covering of poetry, short-circuits the distinction between the theoretical knowledge of dialect and the practical, ethical concerns of rhetoric, while making poetry an apt vehicle for knowledge. The discussion of the *integumentum* by Raison is the result of a failure in her attempts to use the methods of dialectic to talk about love thus necessitating the move into rhetoric's less secure methods. The *Rose* is understood as new kind of rhetorical-philosophical text that, while following medieval traditions of the moral usefulness of poetry going back via twelfth-century allegoresis and the prosimetrum tradition at least as far as Horace, blurs the boundaries between education and entertainment, between dialectic and rhetoric.

Drawing again on Cicero's *De inventione* and its account of the dangers of rhetoric, its lack of direct connection to truth, and its capacity to deceive, this chapter returns to Faux Semblant, who demonstrates the need to be able to interpret literary texts and other humans in order to identify their underlying truths. His sermon is examined more closely to show the shifting relationship to truth and self-interest in his utterances. The *Rose* insists that its audiences make

sustained hermeneutic efforts to establish what lessons they are to draw from those who present themselves as knowledgeable in the text and beyond. By using the artificial fictions of necessarily imperfect, rhetorical speech to present and at the same time to conceal truths, the *Rose* offers a less certain but more flexible method of understanding questions of morality, psychology, and nature, a method to supplement, if not to rival, the rigid certainties of the philosophers' dialectic.

CHAPTER 4

Next, this study discusses the possibilities of poetry's drawing on philosophical principles to answer theoretical questions around the nature of money, avarice, and usury, and then its use of methods proper to poetry to suggest theoretical solutions not possible in philosophy. Usury's status as a sin against nature is discussed in theological sources, and then Aristotle's analysis of the function of money, the status of desire, and the immorality of usury is outlined followed by a reading of commentaries made by Aquinas and Albert the Great to show their articulation of the unnatural infinity of usury, understood in relation to Aristotelian teleology. Usury's infinity is linked to the infinity of human desire, as typified in avarice, which is, moreover, shown to be idolatrous, as discussed by Aquinas and Giles of Rome, drawing particularly on Ephesians, 5.

It is against the backdrop of this understanding of the place and use of money as it evolves over the course of the thirteenth-century that the *Rose*'s discussion of money is investigated. Usury and money are particularly important for thinking about the framework of the natural within which the *Rose* can treat questions of ethics. Avarice is not simply the root of all evil but it entails the unnatural pursuit of the artificial. In this sense, is against nature both in terms of ethics and in terms of metaphysics, just as it is for Albert and Thomas. This chapter demonstrates how Raison's *exemplum* of the *ribaut de Greve* who carry out manual labour on the banks of the Seine draws on Aristotle, Aquinas, and Albert, and makes similar claims for the infinity of desire and the unnatural aspects of usury and the acquisition of money. Through the figure of Dame Peccune (Lady Coin), the *Rose* links avarice to idolatry and to courtly love, via the rhetorical

device of allegory, not available to the dialecticians. This provides a means for sexual desire, which Raison also subjects to an Aristotelian analysis, to be understood in relation to avarice, and for both to help demonstrate the concept of the sinful as unnatural as depicted in the *Rose*.

CHAPTER 5

The queerly unnatural and infinite aspects of sexual deviation are considered alongside poetic language and artistic creation. An extended analysis of the use of metaphors in Alain de Lille's *De planctu Naturae*. Queer theory is used to offer an insight into the anti-teleology of the sodomitical as understood both by Alain and by Jean de Meun. It is shown that language repeatedly attempts and fails to suture the gap in meaning occasioned by sodomy that cannot be articulated except through imperfect metaphors, and which, through metaphor, spreads, and threatens to cause the whole system of meaning to start unravelling. The artificial, figurative language used to discuss unnatural sexual practices is hopelessly self-contradictory, this suggesting poetry and even language itself as tainted by the corruption of sin. Jean de Meun's appropriative, rhetorical translation of aspects of the *De planctu Naturae* is understood as a generative deviation from Alain de Lille's text, as he reworks the Latin author's figures of Natura and Genius and deliberately distorts and undermines their agendas. According to this model of the production of a new text from rewriting an earlier one, the translator does not merely pass down an inherited textual body, but refashions a new text from existing material. The *Rose* shows that writing, painting, or sculpting require the combination of the impersonal drive of Genius and the personal choices of the ego. These personal choices result in deviation from the given model, a translation that cannot be truly faithful, that strays from the wholly natural path and that results in the queerness at the heart of all artistic creation. The exemplary figure of this queer production of art is Pygmalion, whose unnatural desire results in the fashioning of an artificial sculpture that is brought unnaturally to life by Venus, or, metonymically, sexual desire. Pygmalion is used to understand the *Rose*'s valorisation of poetry's perverse paradoxes and its presentation of itself as a flawed, artificial, but nevertheless productive and generative text.

CONCLUSION

The pleasure derived from reading the *Rose* is not its sole function, but, in a manner analogous to the pleasure of sex, ultimately geared towards other ends, the inculcation of moral behaviour and the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. The *Rose*, as an artificial product made by a fallen human, will necessarily deviate from those ends and as a result there will be moments in which consideration of the entertaining surface of the text does not lead to greater understanding and, as with courtly love or avarice, or sodomy, unnatural pleasure and infinite desire will disrupt any misguided attempts to control meaning and to impose usefulness on a text. It presents knowledge in the frame of a fiction, that is to say in a text whose relationship to truth is never assured. This promised knowledge is always incomplete, and it signals the incompleteness of all human attempts to convey knowledge. Such uncertainty places a greater interpretative load on the reader or listener who must decide what value there is in a useful but always flawed authority. The flawed nature of the text is formative and necessary for bringing flawed readers closer to the always limited knowledge to which their always limited reason has access. The *Rose* is understood as a hybrid, imperfect project whose aim is the necessarily imperfect and incomplete use of enjoyment for intellectual and spiritual profit, which is to say, for education. In our fallen state, humans cannot arrive at the total knowledge available in Heaven. Accordingly, the *Rose*, as a fallen text, both frames our epistemological lack and suggests itself as a partial remedy.

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Illustrations

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ORTHOGRAPHY
I have maintained the orthography of the editions of Latin texts cited. This means that the orthography of Latin citations is not consistent throughout the thesis.

TRANSLATIONS
Where bibliographical details of a translation (or edition with translation) of a text are given, translations will be those of the editors, except where stated. Otherwise, all translations will be mine.

TEXTUAL REFERENCES TO PRIMARY SOURCES
With the exception of citations from the *Roman de la rose* (*Romance of the Rose*), all references to primary sources are given in footnotes. For reasons of clarity, references to verses from the *Rose* will be included in the main body of the text.

CROSS-REFERENCING
References to page numbers given without the name of a source (for example, 'Cf. p. 120.') refer to pages within the thesis itself.

WORD COUNT
The word limit for this thesis, as approved by the Director of Graduate Studies, is 95 000 words. The total words number 94 879.

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Introduction

THE MEDIUM AND THE MESSAGE

The medium by which questions of philosophy are posed and answered shapes and limits what kinds of answers are available.[1] The ostensibly univocal language of Parisian Scholastic writing in the thirteenth century results in the assertion of certainties about the world, about human nature, or about matters divine. Reading an article of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae*, for example, leaves the reader in no doubt as to what the correct answer is to such questions as whether or not it might be appropriate for the holy spirit to take a visible form,[2] whether law is the object of justice,[3] whether the ascent of Christ was cause of our salvation.[4] (In all cases, the answer is unambiguously affirmative).

In the *Summa*, questions are freed from any situated social context; they are voiced in the third-person singular passive: *videtur quod* (it seems that). Unlike in the twelfth-century dialogues of Honorius Augustodunensis or Peter Abelard, for example, the question is not voiced by an individual or even by the roughest outline of a character, but is almost wholly abstract. Let us take as an example a question from the *Prima Secundae*. The proemium to *Quaestio* 40 starts as follows:

> Consequenter considerandum est de passionibus irascibilis: et primo, de spe et desperatione; secundo, de timore et audacia; tertio, de ira.
> (Next the irascible passions are to be considered: first, hope and despair; second, fear and boldness; third, rage.)[5]

It is not said by whom these passions will be considered. The questions appear to be raised by a pure intellect untroubled by individual markers, quirks, or bias. The future passive 'considerandum est' is an imperative and this, coupled with

[1] Cf. Berel Lang, *The Anatomy of Philosophical Style: Literary Philosophy and the Philosophy of Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), especially, p. 18.
[2] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, vols. 4-12 in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII edita* (Rome: Ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1888-1906) (henceforth *ST*), Ia, q. 43, a. 7.
[3] *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 57, a. 1.
[4] *ST*, IIIa, q. 57, a. 6.
[5] *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 40, pr.

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[5] *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 40, pr.

progression – *consequenter* – from the previous questions gives the impression of the necessity of a purely rational enquiry. There appear to be no markers of a subjective decision about the direction of the enquiry, shaped by an individual's taste or personal preference. Instead the philosophical disquisition seems to follow a path determined solely by the reason that guarantees its truth. Let us examine one article to consider the style. The issue to be resolved is the following:

> Ad tertium sic proceditur. Videtur quod in brutis animalibus non sit spes.
> (In terms of the third question discussion proceeds as follows. It seems that brute animals do not possess hope.)[6]

The *videtur quod* might seem curiously detached. It does not seem that way to anyone in particular; we are dealing with speculation about a virtual opinion. Three arguments are espoused in favour of this virtual opinion, all three depending on the idea that, since hope is an intellective process, brute animals are incapable of it; citations of John Damascene, Aristotle, Augustine, and Paul are combined with spare, concise argumentation. For example,

> Praeterea, Augustinus dicit, *super Gen. ad Litt.*, quod *animalia moventur visis*. Sed spes non est de eo quod videtur, *nam quod videt quis, quis sperat?* Ut dicitur *Rom*. VIII. Ergo spes non est in brutis animalibus.
> (In addition, Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad litteram*, IX. 14, that 'animals are moved by visual stimuli'. But hope is not of that which might be seen, for, as it is written in Romans 8: 24, 'who hopes for what he sees?')[7]

After these three arguments, comes a brief, almost cursory, *sed contra* in the form of a syllogism:

> Sed contra, spes est passio irascibilis. Sed in brutis animalibus est irascibilis. Ergo et spes.
> (However, hope is a passion of the irascible part of the soul. The irascible is found in brute animals. Therefore so is hope.)

[6] *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 40, a. 3, ag 1.
[7] *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 40, a. 3.

The principles upon which the objections were raised are rejected. Hope is not restricted to the rational, appetitive part of the soul (the will), but is also found in the irrational, appetitive part of the soul (of which the irascible is part, along with the concupiscent).[8]

The *responsio* to this question asked by nobody is the only part of the question in which any argument is offered by an identifible person. It is not a *responsio* (an answer), in fact, but a *respondeo* (I answer).

> Respondeo dicendum quod interiores passiones animalium ex exterioribus motibus deprehendi possunt. Ex quibus apparet quod in animalibus brutis est spes.
> (I answer that it is to be said that the interior passions of animals can be discerned from their exterior movements. From these it appears that brute animals have hope.)

What follows in the *respondeo* is a discussion of the evidence of hope in the behaviour of hunting animals, and the conclusion that the sensitive appetite of brute animals, like the natural appetite of insensitive creatures, differs from human will, which comes under the rational part of the human soul. It differs in that the reason the brute animals follow is not interior to them but exterior. It is that of God who instituted their nature. It is in this way that hope and despair exist in animals, in a manner analogous to artificial things, i. e. stemming from the external reason of their maker's intellect. Before disproving each of the earlier arguments in favour of the opposite argument the *respondeo* concludes elegantly that 'per hunc modum in animalibus brutis est spes et desperatio.' (In this way brute animals have hope and despair.)[9] The term *repondeo*, a written remnant of the university practice of the oral *quaestio disputata*, suggests a speaker, a controlling intellect, although what then follows is further

[8] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Sentencia libri 'De anima'*, vol. 45 in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII edita* (Rome/Paris: Commissio Leonina/Vrin, 1984), III. 8, pp. 240-42. The question of the relationship between the appetite and the intellect will be touched on throughout chapter 2 and in chapter 3, pp. 119-22.
[9] *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 40, a. 3, co. Cf. *ST* Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 2; q. 26, a. 1; q. 35, a. 1. This response will be relevant for the discussion of the relationship between beasts and humans discussed in chapter 2, but for now I wish principally to examine the style of the *quaestio* and its implications.

ratiocination without any markers of individuality or specificity on the part of the narrating voice. The result is a conclusion that – according to the internal logic of the *quaestio* – does not depend for its truth on any factors besides necessary argumentation and the truth of the premisses that underpin that argumentation. The question is universal, the answer unequivocal. The posing of a question to which the only responses are affirmative or negative in a text presided over by a controlling, magisterial intellect (in this case the authoritative Angelic Doctor) results in unambiguous philosophical conclusions that claim a privileged relationship to truth rooted a in philosophical *scientia* that depends ultimately on logic, or dialectic. Aquinas was hardly a typical figure, but his theoretical writings, and his *Summa theologiae* in particular, are prime examples of the Scholastic method of determining unambiguous theoretical truths. This is not to say that there was no scope for doubt or disagreement in the vast range of what has been called Scholastic writing, or indeed that all Scholastic writing is identical in its truth claims. Nor is it to claim that theoretical writing in the thirteenth century was free from ambiguity. However, following the principles of Aristotle's *Organon*, the use of language in the *quaestiones* and *lectiones* of University Masters implies an understanding (or an ideal) of a *scientific* philosophical and theological language that is monologic, monovalent, and untainted by the bias of the speaking subject, and that excludes the confusions of ambiguous or double meanings.[10]

In this thesis I will attempt to show how, through a radical experiment in poetry, a different kind of philosophy could be articulated via a different, literary medium. If Scholastic methods dominated the Faculties of Arts and Theology at the University of Paris, the 1270s saw a radical new experiment in the use of the medium of allegorical poetry to investigate theoretical questions. Jean de Meun, the author of the continuation of the *Roman de la rose*, lived in Paris, was intimately connected to the Faculty of Arts, and was almost certainly a Master of

[10] Cf. Marie-Dominique Chenu, *La théologie comme science au XIII^e siècle*, 2nd edition (Paris: Vrin, 1943), especially pp. 13-32**;** Aquinas, *Expositio libri Posteriorum*, vol. I*: 2 in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII edita* (Rome/Paris: Commissio Leonina/Vrin, 1989), I. 14, p. 5; and *In Metaphysicam Aristotelis Commentaria*, 3rd ed., ed. by M.–R. Cathala (Turin: Marietti, 1935), 7. 15. 5 (1610), p. 467. (Henceforth *In Post. An.* and *In Meta.*)

Arts, teaching philosophy at the University of Paris.[11] Official philosophical methods lead to definitive, authoritative statements in Latin which could be validated or rejected (and at worst condemned as heretical *errores*). Jean, however, using the vernacular, wrote a vast, dazzlingly complex, and ambitious poem that conceals its philosophy under cover of a love story.[12] The authority of the theoretical material, which is often not explicitly articulated, is undermined in advance by the compromised nature of the allegorical personae who speak, by Amant's (the Lover's) conflicted responses to the large majority of the speeches to which either he or the audience is subjected, and by the fictive framework of the whole text. The result is the absence of clear conclusions or unambiguous claims for authoritative knowledge.

THE *ROMAN DE LA ROSE*

What is this framework? In the 1230s, Guillaume de Lorris wrote a poem entitled *Le roman de la rose* (*The Romance of the Rose*), which the narrator opens with an allusion to Macrobius' *In Somnium Scipionis* and an assertion of dreams' potential to reveal truths. We are then told that some five years earlier the narrator had a dream which all turned out to be true, and which prefigures a love affair that he went on to enjoy with a women who 'doit estre Rose clamee' (who must be called Rose) (*Rose*, 44). The narrative thus begins when the narrator was twenty years old and asleep, dreaming. In his dream it appears to be May, and he walks out into the countryside arriving at an orchard, on whose walls are painted female figures representing uncourtly, abstract principles, such as Haine (Hatred), Felonie, (Felony), Covoitise (Covetousness), Avarice (Avarice), Vielleice (Old Age), and Papelardie (Religious Hypocrisy). (*Rose*, 139-460) An attractive noblewoman names herself as Oiseuse (Idleness) and grants the dreamer entry into the garden that belongs, as she tells us, to Deduit (Pleasure). The orchard is

[11] Ian Wei lends support to this general assumption by noting that in the *Rose*, 'members of all the faculties except the faculty of arts are criticised.' Ian P. Wei, *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris: Theologians and the University, c. 1100-1330* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 359-60.

[12] The text is very open about its concealment of hidden meaning. The poem opens with a discussion of the truth hidden in dreams such as the one that he will recount, saying that 'li plusor songent de nuiz / maintes choses covertement / que l'en voit puis apertement. (At night some people dream many things in a hidden fashion that are later seen openly). Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le roman de la rose*, ed. by Félix Lecoy, 3 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1965-75) (henceforth *Rose*), 18-20.

a scene of primaveral bounty and aristocratic delight in which a range of allegorical figures dance and carol. The narrating 'je' walks around the marvellous orchard until he comes to the fountain where Narcissus fell hopelessly in love with his own reflection. Despite his misgivings he looks into the fountain in which the orchard is reflected back at him. He sees a rosebush and spies the most beautiful rosebud that he has an overwhelming desire to pluck, at which point he is repeatedly shot by arrows by Amor, the god of Love, who has been stalking him through the orchard. The young man, Amant, is subjected to a sermon by Amor about the tribulations and practices of a male courtly lover. He then tries to go to the rosebud (which seems to represent the woman with whom Amant has fallen in love), while navigating a new set of allegorical figures that seem to represent the different aspects of the lady's psyche. He must prevail on Pitie (Pity) and Franchise (Openness) to help him overcome Dangier (Danger) and Honte (Shame) and to persuade Bel Acueil (Fair Welcome) to allow him to kiss the Rose. Jalousie (Jealousy) discovers this transgression and, admonishing Dangier for his failure to fulfil his role, builds an imposing castle in which the Rose is imprisoned, inaccessible to Amant, who suffers just as Amor had told him he would. After a consoling speech from Ami (Friend) and a more moralising admonition from Raison (Reason), the poem finishes abruptly as a tearful Amant bewails the misery of his situation.

This courtly dream-world, in which the conventions of the love-lyric are combined with an unfinished autobiographic narrative, does not seem like fertile ground for philosophical discussions. Yet, around forty years later, Jean de Meun was to continue the *Rose*, adding 17 500 lines to Guillaume's original 4000. Into this continuation he put a wealth of literary, scientific, and philosophical allusions, jokes, and argumentation, transforming the text and wholly overshadowing Guillaume's less known opening.[13] The double-authored *Roman de la rose* was to be copied in over 300 manuscripts, would spawn a furious

[13] Since 1980, Guillaume's text has received more attention. Cf. David Hult, *Self-Fulfilling Prophecies: Readership and Authority in the First Roman de la Rose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); *Études sur le Roman de la rose de Guillaume de Lorris*, ed. by Jean Dufournet, Collection Unichamp, 4 (Geneva/Paris: Slatkine/Champion, 1984); *Lectures du Roman de la rose de Guillaume de Lorris*, ed. by Fabienne Pomel (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012).

literary row at the turn of the fifteenth century, and is undoubtedly one of the most important vernacular works of the Middle Ages. Huge advances have been made on the reception of the *Rose* by readers in the centuries after Jean de Meun wrote the *Rose*, thanks especially to the work of Sylvia Huot and Pierre-Yves Badel.[14] However, the importance of the text's later reception, largely by laypeople, should not blind us to the immediate context of its reception as a philosophical text produced for a circle of highly educated clerics in Paris far more alive to the Latin traditions of poetry and philosophy than most – maybe all – later readers. The study of the reception history of the *Rose*, important as it is, has recently tended to overshadow the *Rose* itself.[15] Rather than consider its afterlife and reception, however, I want to consider the *Rose* in relation to the context of its composition. How did Jean de Meun change Guillaume's text and, more importantly, *why*?

Jean continues Guillaume's dream vision by reintroducing the two speaking figures who attempted in their different ways to console him, Raison and then Ami. Raison reappears and counsels Amant on how to avoid the transient goods that come from pursuit of pleasure and material goods, drawing heavily both from Boethius' *De consolatione Philosophiae* and, especially, from Alain de Lille's *Anticlaudianus* in her description of Fortune's wheel (*Rose*, 5869-6144). She discusses the purpose of money, drawing on Aristotle,[16] the ontology of judicial corruption, the capacity for poetry to contain philosophical truth, the relationship between word and thing, the nature of youth, and the advantages of dedicating one's life to reason. Raison's speech is a full three-quarters the length of Guillaume's poem. It is clear that poetry is now serving a very different function; it has become a medium for philosophical discussion. Ami reappears

[14] Cf. Sylvia Huot, *The Romance of the Rose and its Medieval Readers: Interpretation, Reception, Manuscript Transmission*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 16 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Pierre-Yves Badel, *Le Roman de la Rose au XIV^e^ siècle: étude de la réception de l'œuvre*, Publications romanes et françaises, 153 (Geneva: Droz, 1980); and the more recent *De la Rose: texte, image, fortune*, ed. by Catherine Bel and Herman Braet, Synthema, 3 (Dudley MA, Louvain, and Paris: Peeters, 2006).

[15] A recent *journée d'étude* entitled 'Lire le *Roman de la rose* aujourd'hui' that took place at the BnF in Paris on 18 January 2013 is a case in point. Of the ten papers, given, nine discussed the later reception and manuscript tradition of the *Rose* and one focused on the allegory of Guillaume de Lorris.

[16] Cf. chapter 4.

before Amant to suggest a range of tricks for winning a lady's affections. He also discusses a time before laws in the Golden Age, draws heavily from Ovid's *Ars amatoria*, and tells the story of a wife-beating husband who spouts hyperbolic misogyny. Amor then returns, this time with his whole court, offering to help Amant get his Rose. He even enlists the help of Faux Semblant (False Appearance), who, dressed as a friar, incarnates the principles of hypocrisy and mendacity. Faux Semblant gives a speech that alludes heavily to the works of Guillaume de Saint-Amour and Rutebeuf, while expounding verses from Matthew about religious hypocrisy. Before an assault on Jalousie's castle we overhear two conversations. Inside the castle, Bel Acueil receives instruction from the Rose's chaperone, La Vieille, including advice about how to use sexual charms to trick men out of money, drawing again from Ovid and reflecting Ami's speech earlier. She also lectures Bel Acueil on human beings' natural inclination towards freedom and on the etiology of sexual desire, drawing on Aristotle's *Historia animalium*. The focus then shifts up to the heavens where Nature leaves off working at her forge, where she hammers new creatures into existence. She receives advice from her priest and other self, Genius, about why men should not trust women, before she launches into an extended 'confession'. This confession contains discussion of the movements of the planets and their effects on human agency, whether or not humans have free will given God's omniscience, the nature of optics, the nature of dreams, and the Immaculate Conception, among other topics. Genius then descends to read a sermon, ostensibly dictated to him by Nature, to Amor's army in which he condemns anyone who abstains from procreative heterosex, and describes the Parc de l'Agneau, an allegory of heaven which he explicitly compares (favourably) to Deduit's garden and to Narcissus' fountain from Guillaume's text. After recounting the Ovidian story of Pygmalion, the narrator describes the descent of Venus who fires a burning brand into the castle, which Amant, carrying a pilgrim's long rigid staff and a scrip containing two hammers (figuring male genitalia), then manages to penetrate. He vigorously shakes the bush and spills his seed into the Rose. The dream then ends abruptly, as does the entire poem.

Theoretical ideas presented in the context of this erotically charged allegory have quite a different valency to those expressed in the sober Latin prose of the commentaries or *summae* of the University Masters. Why, then, did the erudite Jean de Meun continue the *Rose* by putting so much philosophy and theoretical knowledge into a text whose narrative he makes into a bawdy and often offensively misogynistic erotic conquest? What kind of philosophy, moreover, can be conveyed by a text that narrates a dream dreamt by someone long-dead, that is peopled by poetic fictions, and that concludes with one of the most detailed, if nominally euphemistic, sex-scenes in medieval literature? The second of these two questions will be the focus of the many body of this thesis; in the introduction, I want to suggest an answer to the first.

1270S PARIS: CONTESTATION AND CONDEMNATION

The Paris of the 1270s, where Jean undertook his continuation of the *Roman de la rose*,[17] was in the throes of ideological and intellectual controversy and contestation. The early history of the University is marked by the rise of Aristotelian philosophy and the efforts of thinkers in the Faculties of Arts and Theology to accommodate it. Aristotle's works on natural sciences and his *Metaphysics* were banned in 1210 and then again in 1215 by Robert de Courçon.[18] Pope Gregory IX announced a provisional ban of these texts in 1231 pending the production of censored, acceptable versions of the texts,[19] which was renewed in 1263 by Urban IV.[20] In 1255, however, all of Aristotle's known works were on the curriculum of the Arts Faculty in the University of Paris.[21] The

[17] For discussion of the dating of the *Rose*, cf. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le roman de la rose*, ed. by Ernest Langlois, 5 vols. (Paris: Firmin-Didot, Champion, 1914-24), I. 17-19. Langlois places the date between 1275 and 1280 on the basis of the inclusion or omissioin of events in the lives of Manfred of Sicily, Conradin, and Charles d'Anjou in the *Rose*'s account of their political struggles at *Rose*, 6607-48. Félix Lecoy uses the same passage to suggest that the *Rose* was written at some point between 1268 and 1282 (*Rose*, pp. vii-viii). Both editors are rightly cautious and attest a certain degree of uncertainty as to the dates. No one has doubted that the *Rose* was written in Paris.

[18] *Chartularium Universitatis parisiensis*, ed. by Henri Denifle and Émile Chatelain, 4 vols. (Paris: Delalain, 1889-97) (henceforth *CUP*), I, 70-71; I, 78-79.

[19] *CUP*, I. 137; I, 143-44.

[20] *CUP*, I. 427-28.

[21] *CUP*, I. 278. Cf. Pierre Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'Averroïsme Latin au XIII^e siècle*, Collectanea Friburgensia, 8 (Fribourg: Libraire de l'Université, 1899), pp. 27-37. For discussion of censure and condemnations in the University, cf. Luca Bianchi, *Censure et liberté intellectuelle à l'Université de Paris (XIII^e–XIV^e siècles)* (Paris: Belles lettres, 1999); J. M. M. H. Thijssen, *Censure*

controversies continued in the late 1260s with the debates between a group of the Artists, led by Siger de Brabant and Boethius of Dacia, and theologians, notably Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, over certain tenets of Aristotelian philosophy as mediated by Averroes, his Arabic commentator, in particular concerning the ideas that the world had no beginning and that all human beings share the same soul. It is not my intention to go into the details of these debates in this thesis; it is, however, worth noting that the University of Paris, the intellectual centre of theology in Western Europe, was home to new philosophical doctrines that were perceived to threaten the very foundation of theological truth. One text that was to cause particular anxiety was Boethius of Dacia's *De summo bono* (ca. 1270),[22] which drew on book X of Aristotle's *Ethics*, possibly mediated by a reading of Avicenna's commentary on the *Metaphysics*,[23] to suggest that the sovereign purpose of human beings was theoretical contemplation.[24] The (mis)reading of Boethius that understood him to argue that such perfection was possible in this life clearly did not square with the Church's teaching that the true end of humans is to be found in salvation and heaven.

The 1260s and 1270s saw a concerted attempt by some Masters in the Arts Faculty to consider the world outside of the strictures of theological control and to make philosophy an autonomous method of intellectual inquiry, even if treating certain heretical philosophical propositions as merely hypothetical rather than as certain.[25] It does not seem, however, that thinkers that have been

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and Heresy at the University of Paris, 1200-1400 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

[22] Cf. Boethius of Dacia, *Opera*, ed. by Niels Jørgen Green-Pedersen and Jan Pinborg, 2 vols, Corpus philosophorum danicorum medii aevi, 6, II. xlvii-xlviii.

[23] Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by William D. Ross, rev. by James O. Urmson, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. by Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols., Bollingen Series, 71 (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984; Clayton GA: InteLex, 1992), II, 1727-1867, X. 7-8, 1177a11-1179a33; Avicenna, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, ed. by Simone van Riet, 3 vols, Avicennus Latinus (Louvain/Leiden: Peeters/Brill, 1977-83), IX. 7; II: 510-15. Unless otherwise stated, all references to Aristotle's texts are to *The Complete Works of Aristotle*.

[24] Boethius of Dacia, *De summo bono*, in *Opera*, II. 369-77. Boethius states that the 'vita beata', the blessed life of delight in contemplation is the 'maius bonum quod homo a deo recipere potest et quod deus homini dare potest in hac vita.' (72-73; p. 372) (It is the greatest good that man can receive from God and that God can give to man in this life.)

[25] Alain de Libera, 'Faculté des arts ou faculté de philosophie? Sur l'idée de philosophie et l'idéal philosophique au XIII^{e} siècle', in *L'enseignement des disciplines à la Faculté des arts (Paris et Oxford, XIII^{e} – XV^{e} siècles): actes du Colloque international*, ed. by Olga Weijers and Louis Holz,

termed 'Averroist' were opposed to established religion, but the tension between 'philosophy' and 'theology' can be seen in the delicately cautious proemium to a commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* written by a member of the Arts Faculty in 1273. It opens thus:

> Cupientes in studio et contemplatione veritatis bene vivere prout est possibile in hac vita, intedimus tractare de rebus naturalibus, moralibus et divinis, sententiam et ordinem Aristotelis prosequendo.
> (Desiring to live well in the study and contemplation of the truth, as far as it is possible to in this life, we intend to treat of natural, moral, and divine matters in following the philosophy and order of Aristotle.)

We see the study of natural philosophy justified by the philosophical ethic of an ideal life that consists of the contemplation of truth. There is an important qualification, 'prout est possibile in hac vita', lest the reader misunderstand the author's intention and number him with those heretical thinkers, real or imagined, who would claim that perfect happiness is possible in this life, as Boethius seemed to in the *Summo bono*.[26] What follows only confirms this anxious desire not to be seen as presenting a threat to the intellectual status quo:

> In hoc nullatenus praeiudicantes veritati fidei orthodoxae, quae manifestata est lumine divinae revelationis, quo non fuerunt philosophi in quantum huiusmodi illustrati, sed communem et consuetum cursum rerum attendentes nec de divinis miraculis disserentes, de ipsis rebus rationis lumine iudicarunt, in hoc non contradicentes theologicae veritati, quae habet cognosci lumine altiori.
> (We are in no way casting doubt on the truth of orthodox faith which was made manifest by the light of divine revelation, by

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Studia artistarum, 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), pp. 429-444, p. 430. Cf. also Alain de Libera, *Penser au Moyen* Âge (Paris: Seuil, 1991), especially, pp. 122-29; 177-80, which draws on Jacques Le Goff, *Les intellectuels au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Seuil, 1957).

[26] Cf. p. 10, n. 24. The commentator on the *Physics* may well be alluding to and qualifying Boethius' phrase 'in hac vita', Alternatively, he may be echoing Aquinas' qualification of Aristotle's conception of happiness at the end of his commentary on the *Ethics*, when he says that '[a]ttendendum etiam quod in hac vita non ponit perfectam felicitatem, sed talem qualis potest competere humanae et mortali vitae.' [It is to be understood that he does not posit perfect happiness in this life, but happiness as far it is possible in a human and mortal life.] *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, vols. 47: 1-2 in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII edita* (Rome: ad Sanctae Sabinae, 1969), X. 13. 141-43; II. 595. Cf. also his *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 1-5, where the imperfection of happiness 'in hac vita' is discussed at length.

> which light the philosophers as such were not enlightened, but closely observing the common and habitual course of things and not discussing about divine miracles, they judged things according to the light of reason, and in this are not in contradiction to the truth of theology, which must be known by a higher light.)[27]

The author is walking a theoretical tightrope, expounding Aristotle while being careful to acknowledge the necessary limitations of pagan philosophers. Even so, the assertion that Aristotle's philosophy will not impinge on revealed Christian truth does not prevent the author allowing himself to express truths not necessarily compatible with Sacred Doctrine. He is, so he says, merely expounding Aristotle's thought.

Such overt care not to transgress the rules of philosophy (while still allowing for the possibility of expressing unorthodox theoretical positions) takes place in the context of Étienne Tempier's 1270 condemnation of thirteen errors allegedly being taught in the Faculty of Arts in Paris.[28] Tempier's second, Papally-authorised, and significantly longer condemnation of 1277 is evidence of the continuation of doctrinal dispute and the policing of philosophical investigation, banning 219 errors supposedly taught at Paris (although some manuscripts also include a 220nd error).[29] Some of the teachings condemned clearly target notable Averroist philosophical positions, such as article 40 – 'Quod non est excellentior status quam uacare philosophie.' (That there is no more excellent status than be at leisure to philosophise.)[30] Roland Hissette suggests that Boethius of Dacia's *De summo bono* is being clearly targeted here.[31] The 1277 condemnation did not simply target the Faculty of Arts; some of the *errores* bear close resemblance to positions held by Thomas Aquinas and by Giles of Rome.

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[27] *Ein Kommentar zur Physik des Aristotelis aus der Pariser Artistenfakultät um 1273*, ed. by Albert Zimmerman, Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie, 11 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968), p. 3.
[28] *CUP*, I, 432.
[29] *La condamnation parisienne de 1277: nouvelle édition du texte latin, traduction, introduction et commentaire*, ed. by David Piché and Claude Lafleur (Paris: Vrin, 1999), pp. 24 and 242.
[30] *La condamnation*, pp. 92-93. I am following Piché and Lafleur's numbering; cf. *La condamnation*, p. 62. This was numbered article 1 by Mandonnet, who reordered the *errores* of the condemnation by theme rather than appearance in the manuscript and whose numbering Roland Hissette follows in his *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 mars 1277*, Philosophes médiévaux, 22 (Louvain: Publications universitaires, 1977).
[31] Hissette, p. 16.

The latter's *Apologia* describes how he found himself censured and dismissed from the Theology Faculty on the basis of his commentary of Book 1 of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.[32] Jean de Meun wrote his *Rose* in the context of a University convulsed by intellectual controversy that lasted throughout the 1270s and whose effects could be felt even after the condemnation of 1277. In this context, the decision to smuggle a range of philosophical discussions into a text that appears to be a courtly dream narrative about a young man plucking a *Rose* can be understood as a means of conducting philosophy both in secret and in plain sight.[33] In the dream-orchard of Deduit, Jean de Meun succeeds in creating a fictional space for the discussion of ideas in a way that will not be seen as a threat to orthodox doctrines. Who would take seriously an allegorical figure speaking in octosyllabic French verse in the fictional dream-vision of a love-crazed, and in any case, long-dead Guillaume de Lorris? Jean de Meun is, however, very much engaged in philosophy. I do not want crudely to attempt to identify Jean de Meun as a radical Aristotelian seeking to smuggle in doctrines banned by Tempier.[34] Rather, I seek to investigate his radical experiment in writing

[32] Kent Emery Jr. and Andreas Speer, 'After the Condemnation of 1277: New Evidence, New Perspectives, and Grounds for New Interpretations', in *Nach der Verurteilung on 1277: Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts. Studien und Texte*, ed. by Jan A. Aertsen, Kent Emery Jr., and Andres Speer, Miscellanea mediaevalia, 28 (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2001), pp. 3-19, pp. 5-6. Cf. Giles of Rome, *Opera omnia, III. 1; Apologia*, ed. by Robert Wielockx, Testi e studi per il 'Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevii', 4 (Florence: Olschki, 1985). Kent and Speer, following, Wielockx, suggest that the 1277 condemnation was an attempted first step towards the eventual condemnation of the hugely influential Aquinas, with Giles' expulsion an intermediary step before the never-completed targeting of the Angelic Doctor. For more bibliography of debates around Wielockx's claim, cf. Emery and Speer, p. 6, n. 9.

[33] Cf. David Hult, '1277, 7 March: Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose*', in *A New History of French Literature*, ed. by Denis Hollier (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 97-103, pp. 97-98. Hult suggests that the use of French as opposed to Latin strongly suggests that the *Rose* was intended for an audience 'on the fringes' of the academic community, 'possibly as a source of entertainement satirizing intellectual issues without incurring the kinds of ideological strictures imposed upon writings in Latin' (p. 98), although how these 'fringes' are to be understood is far from clear.

[34] Steven P. Marrone downplays of the event of the 1277 condemnation, seeing a larger trend of a return after the 1270s to the more moderate use of Aristotle before the excessive 'devotion to Aristotelian purism' of the period ca. 1240-ca. 1270. Cf. his 'Aristotle, Augustine and the Identity of Philosophy in Late Thirteenth-Century Paris: The Case of Some Theologians' in *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277*, ed. by Aertsen, Emery, and Speer, pp. 276-98, p. 279. The *Rose*, which, despite its repeated and sustained use of Aristotle, puts Aristotelian discussions and ideas alongside a vast range of material from other philosophical authorities and traditions, seems rather to fit within this trend than with an uncompromising Aristotelianism.

philosophy in the 1270s against the backdrop of censorship and conflict.[35] It should be clear from the quick summary of the text given above that philosophy and philosophical ideas are very much at stake in the *Rose* and I propose to investigate how they work.

THE CRITICAL CONTEXT

Up until now, criticism on the *Rose* has not considered the *Rose*'s engagement with contemporary philosophy in a sustained manner. Recent work in France has focused on the functioning of allegory in the *Rose*, notably in the work of Armand Strubel.[36] This makes the *Rose* susceptible to diachronic readings whose context is formed of earlier allegorical texts rather than contemporary theoretical concerns. Noah Guynn's consideration of the *Rose* in the allegorical tradition allows him to focus particularly on the text's inherent misogyny and on the ludic nature of its treatment of signification and truth in the context of an allegorical tradition rather than a contemporary intellectual context.[37] Incisive analysis of the *Rose* in relation to medieval literary theory has been carried out in a significant way by Alastair Minnis, who situates Jean de Meun in relation to Ovidian texts and to a medieval understanding of satire (recently developed usefully in an article by Mary Frances Brown).[38] Sylvia Huot has persuasively explored the use of Boethius, Ovid, and Virgil by Jean de Meun and has looked beyond explicit citation of authors to suggest 'the often unacknowledged web of allusions to prior texts that so richly informs the poem.'[39] Most recently, David

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[35] I am not suggesting that the *Rose* is written in direct response to the 1277 condemnations; however, it should certainly be understood as reacting to the debates out of which the condemnation emerged.

[36] Armand Strubel, '*Grant senefiance a': Allégorie et littérature au Moyen Âge*, Moyen Âge-Outils de synthèse, 2 (Paris: Champion, 2002, repr. 2009), pp. 138-50; and *La Rose, Renart et le Graal: La littérature allégorique en France au XIII^e siècle*, Nouvelle bibliothèque du Moyen Âge, 11 (Geneva and Paris: Slatkine, 1989), especially pp. 199-224.

[37] Noah D. Guynn, *Allegory and Sexual Ethics in the High Middle Ages*, New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave, 2007), pp. 137-70. Guynn, following R. Howard Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies: A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983) (discussed at pp. 24-25). He differs from Bloch in assigning greater ideological purpose to the *Rose*, although Guynn's ideological focus is solely on sexual politics.

[38] Alastair Minnis, *Magister amoris: The Roman de la rose and vernacular hermeneutics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Mary Frances Brown, 'Critique and Complicity: Metapoetical Reflections on the Gendered Figures of Body and Text in the *Roman de la Rose*', *Exemplaria*, 21: 2 (2009), 129-159.

[39] Sylvia Huot, *Dream of Lovers and Lies of Poets: Poetry, Knowledge, and Desire in the Roman de la Rose*, Research Monographs in French Studies, 31 (London: Legenda, 2010), p. 5.

Rollo has focused on the pleasurable transgressions of reading in the *Rose*, a text he understands as hermaphroditic, extending Simon Gaunt's understanding of the poem as a 'queer' text.[40] Rollo, like Guynn, situates the *Rose* in a tradition of allegorical texts going back via Alain de Lille to Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae* and the commentary made on it by Remigius of Auxerre.[41] This related interest in gender and gender confusion in relation to knowledge and the *Rose* has been particularly advanced by articles by Sarah Kay and Sylvia Huot.[42]

Study of the *Rose* has focused, then, on its relation to earlier allegories, particularly Alain de Lille's *De planctu Naturae* and to Latin authors, especially Ovid, more recently with an increasing focus on issues of gender and sexuality. The past ten years, however, has seen a greater attempt to link the *Rose* to its intellectual context and to knowledge, most obviously in the collaborative project led by Adrian Armstrong and Sarah Kay, which has suggested ways of thinking what kind of knowledge is offered by verse as opposed to prose.[43] In the 1940s, Gérard Paré's identification of philosophical themes and lexis in the *Rose* promised to make the *Rose*'s philosophical engagement a subject for investigation.[44] Subsequent attempts to study the philosophical context of the *Rose*, by D. W. Robertson and John V. Fleming, while considering intellectual currents informing the *Rose*, suffer from their attempts to see Jean de Meun as a mere reproducer of Latin philosophy and theology rather than to examine if and

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[40] David Rollo, *Kiss My Relics: Hermaphroditic Fictions of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Simon Gaunt, 'Bel Acueil and Improper Allegory', *New Medieval Literatures*, 2 (1998), 65-93.

[41] The *Rose*'s debt to twelfth-century Neoplatonic literature, and especially to Alain de Lille was particularly illuminated in Winthrop Wetherbee, 'The Literal and the Allegorical: Jean de Meun and the '*de Planctu Naturae*', *Mediaeval Studies*, 33 (1971), 264-91.

[42] Sarah Kay, 'Women's Body of Knowledge: Epistemology and Misogyny in the *Romance of the Rose*', in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. by Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 211-35; Sylvia Huot, 'Bodily Peril: Sexuality and the Subversion of Order in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose*', *Modern Language Review*, 95: 1 (2000), 41-61.

[43] Adrian Armstrong, Sarah Kay, *et al.*, *Knowing Poetry: Verse in Medieval France from the Rose to the Rhetoriqueurs* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011).

[44] Gérard Paré, *Le Roman de la Rose et la scholastique courtoise*, Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales d'Ottawa, 10 (Paris/Ottawa: Vrin/Institut d'études médiévales, 1941); and *Les idées et les lettres au XIII^e siècle* (Montréal: Centre de Psychologie et de Pédagogie, 1947). Cf. also Gisela Hilder, *Der scholastische Wortschatz bei Jean de Meun: die artes liberales*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie, 129 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1972).

how Jean de Meun might be engaging more actively with the more authoritative writers on whom he draws.[45] In the past decade, Daniel Heller-Roazen has productively used medieval conceptions of grammar to think about contingency in the *Rose*, although his work, like Jessica Rosenfeld's study of the enjoyment of poetry through the lens of Aristotle's *Ethics*, does not consider the specific ways in which Jean de Meun's work relates to the theoretical currents of the second half of the thirteenth century. Their appraoach is rather to take a broad philosophical principle (contingency for Heller-Roazen, enjoyment for Rosenfeld) and, after an initial chapter discussing the philosophy, to read the *Rose* as literature through the theoretical lens of that principle.[46] One clear attempt to situate the *Rose* within the field of intellectual history is a chapter by Mary Franklin-Brown in a work on Scholasticism and 'encyclopaedic' writing, which, although brief, acknowledges the *Rose* as a text engaged with contemporary intellectual trends.[47] Another is a section of a chapter in the work of Ian Wei, who notes that '[t]o those who study the University of Paris [...] almost every line of Jean's continuation seems to invoke debates that gripped the university or to make reference to some aspect of its basic culture.'[48]

There is a lacuna in studies of the *Rose* in which a lack of consideration either of the philosophical or the historical context in which the *Rose* is written means that the true extent and originality of its interaction with thirteenth-century philosophy has gone unnoticed. This has often led to the philosophical and moral purpose of the text being either neglected or else anachronistically misrepresented by literary critics. On the other hand, intellectual historians have

[45] D. W. Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962); John V. Fleming, *The Roman de la Rose: A Study in Allegory and Iconography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), and particularly, *Reason and the Lover* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). David Hult makes this critique persuasively in 'Language and Dismemberment: Abelard, Origen, and the *Romance of the Rose*', in *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose*: *Text, Image, Reception*, ed. by Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), pp. 101-130, p. 109.
[46] Daniel Heller-Roazen, *Fortune's Faces: the Roman de la Rose and the Poetics of Contingency* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Jessica Rosenfeld, *Ethics and Enjoyment in Late Medieval Poetry: Love after Aristotle*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 85 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
[47]Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World: Encyclopedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
[48] Wei, p. 363. He discusses the *Rose* at pp. 357-74.

understandably paid little attention to what appears to be an allegorical courtly poem. In Dante studies, however, Ruedi Imbach has set a precedent in considering Dante's work, philosophical and literary, in relation to established, institutional thought.[49] Like Dante, Jean de Meun carried out a huge project to translate theoretical knowledge into the vernacular, thus making it accessible to a lay audience. In any translation, there is modification and interpretation, however,[50] and for Jean de Meun that modification is never innocent but is carried out with an acute awareness of the philosophical issues of his time. I want to suggest the *Roman de la rose* as a text 'doing philosophy' in a new way and in a way worthy of attention for scholars engaged in the history of ideas. Looking at Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae*, we saw a version of the authoritative theoretical discussion of thirteenth-century Scholasticism, rooted in certainty, truth, and seriousness. This thesis will show the *Rose* as engaging in a different kind of theoretical discourse, more complex and ludic, yet nevertheless also serious.

THE THESIS

The key point that I want to make is that the *Roman de la rose* is a text concerned with ethics and concerned with knowledge. The lack of intellectual context in *Rose* studies has led to a serious blind spot, whereby the style of the text can be discussed – the how – but not its intellectual purpose – the why. The *Rose* engages in a far more sustained way with Aristotelian philosophy – with ontology, epistemology, and with ethics – than has been acknowledged. It is not simply about love and its meaning, but also about larger questions about nature and the natural. It is about the extent to which nature can be used as an ethical yardstick and it is about humankind's place within the natural world. It is about the loss of the natural plenitude of the Garden of Eden due to uncontrolled desire and it is about the artificial means (including poetry) used to negotiate that loss. If the thirteenth century saw a range of *Summae* and *Specula* attempting unified perspectives on a range of topics, the *Roman de la rose*, which names itself as a

[49] Ruedi Imbach, *Dante, la philosophie et les laïcs*, Initiations à la philosophie médiévale, 1 (Paris/Fribourg: Cerf/Éditions universitaires, 1996). Cf. also his article, 'Filosofia dell'amore: Un dialogo tra Tommaso d'Aquino e Dante', *Studi medievali*, 43 (2002), 816–32.
[50] Cf. chapter 5.

'*Miroër aus Amoreus*' (*Mirror for Lovers*) (*Rose*, 10621), is a *Speculum* not just of love, but of nature.

Jean de Meun's playful text self-consciously draws on earlier texts and assumes knowledge of the original texts on the part of its audience for the jokes to function. Extended reworkings of Aristotle or Cicero or Ovid or Alain de Lille depend on an audience's intimate familiarity with the source texts for their humour and their potential meaning. This approach can be compared fruitfully with the intertextual poetic composition practised by François Villon and his fifteenth-century contemporaries. Jane Taylor demonstrates clearly how the meaning and humour of their *jeu sérieux* depend on a detailed knowledge of earlier texts.[51] A reading of the text that fails to take into account the intertextual hinterlands of the *Rose*, poetic and philosophical, will fail to grasp the hidden senses enclosed with the text. Jean de Meun makes possible the discussion of controversial questions in a poem that requires close and sophisticated reading to reveal truths which are not expressed in clear, authoritative, monovalent language but which must be pleasurably deduced from the mysteries of the text. This practice will be discussed most explicitly by Raison in her justification of *integumenta* as a means of philosophy.[52] In addition, the use of such a fictional veil to hide a putative hidden knowledge allows the *Rose* to contradict itself, to offer mediating voices and to sustain a degree of uncertainty about the knowledge it conveys. The *Rose* takes nature as the starting point for its ethical discussions, and its playfulness manifests itself in another way, in that it shows that the natural is not an unalloyed good, and is not sufficient as a guide to ethics. Poetry reveals itself to be a highly flexible and sophisticated way of presenting a philosophy of nature and the natural in a way that is entertaining and that allows for the possibility of uncertainty. The term 'entertaining' is not innocent. As will be discussed in chapter 3, fallen humans need to be lured by pleasure into

[51] Cf. Jane Taylor, *The Poetry of François Villon: Text and Context*, Cambridge Studies in French, 68 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 6-32, and especially pp. 13-15. The term 'jeu sérieux' is coined by Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet when discussing the intertextual nature of fifteenth-century poetics, *La couleur de la mélancolie: la fréquentation des livres au XIV^e siècle, 1300-1415* (Paris: Hatier, 1993), p. 49.
[52] Cf. pp. 114-19.

understanding how it is they should behave, and the benefits and perils of pleasure, literary and otherwise, are at stake throughout the work.

The *Rose* offers a wide range of approaches to philosophy, but with a broad, unifying understanding of how nature can be comprehended. Jean de Meun treats questions from different spheres of knowledge in different ways, and in order to appreciate his theoretical interventions, slightly different approaches will be required for each chapter. In all cases, I consider earlier or contemporary texts or ideas that Jean de Meun signals, explicitly or implicitly, in the *Rose* in order to establish an outline of the intellectual field from which the *Rose* takes its bearings and against which it defines itself. The method is to identify what intellectual or intertextual apparatuses would be needed to make sense of the questions at stake. For example, if the poem repeatedly compares vicious humans to wolves, what textual traditions will allow us to understand the context and the subtext of the comparison? If the teleology of money and the nature of usury is discussed, what is the philosophical framework in Paris in the 1270s for discussing such a question? In what debates does the *Rose* intervene and what is the nature of its interventions?

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER

Chapter 1 considers what nature might mean in the *Rose*. It examines the canonical text for understanding the concept of nature in Paris in the second half of the thirteenth century, Aristotle's *Physics*. Nature in the *Rose* is intimately tied up with the sexual drive and the need for reproduction. The figure of Nature and her speech on the natural world represent a particular philosophical game in which aspects of Aristotelian natural philosophy are played off against Augustinian ideas of human nature being corrupted by sin. By considering the interplay of Aristotelian and Augustinian perspectives on nature, I suggest the framework for a philosophy and an ethics of the natural in the *Roman de la rose*.

Questions of mendacity and rapacity depend on the idea of fallen humans, and Faux Semblant, who describes himself as a wolf in sheep's clothing, figures both lies and a vicious lust for power in humans. In order to make sense of the image

of the wolf in sheep's clothing, in chapter 2 I consider its history in medieval satire in order to understand Jean de Meun's own satirical engagement. Scholastic approaches to the human-animal divide, notably that of Albert the Great, are used to understand Jean de Meun's implicit philosophical reflections on how sin and questions of animality relate to sexual desire and human nature. In fact, Faux Semblant will reappear throughout the thesis, bringing together issues of sin and disordered appetite, on the one hand, and lies, fictions, and the instability of rhetorical or poetic language, on the other.

Chapters 3 and 4 are more concerned with exactly how the *Rose* differs in its philosophical approach from texts of official, Latin philosophy. Appetite and pleasure are key factors in the use of rhetoric to answer theoretical problems in preference to the dialectic of philosophy. Given humans' imperfect reason, knowledge must be seasoned with pleasurable expression to persuade the majority of people to do what is right. Chapter 3 examines the changing relationship between dialectic and rhetoric in the thirteenth century, drawing on Boethius, Cicero and his commentators, Aristotle, and Giles of Rome, in order to show how the *Rose* itself – which consists almost entirely of attempts at persuasive speech – considers the nature of persuasion and situates itself as a persuasive, rhetorical text necessary to help benighted humans achieve knowledge. Having suggested in chapter 3 how poetry can answer theoretical questions, chapter 4 proceeds to examine a particular philosophical question, namely the relationship between money and nature, and to see how Raison engages in a poetical reading of Aristotle's *Politics*, 1, and uses Aristotelian teleology to understand desire both for sex and for money. In order to understand the originality of the *Rose*'s philosophy, I consider the *Politics* as well as commentaries made on it by Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. In this way the *Rose*'s poetico-philosophical project and method is juxtaposed with the official Latin philosophy of the University. The possibilities offered by metaphor and allegory, in particular, allow for conclusions from one branch of philosophy, in this case the ontology of money and avarice, to be applied to other areas such as sexual intercourse and unnatural sexual practices.

Chapter 5 looks, for its intellectual context, not to philosophical texts but to Alain de Lille's *De planctu Naturae* (*The Complaint of Nature*), as it considers the nature of metaphorical language. Chapter 1 considered the distinction between the natural and the artificial on the basis of Aristotle's *Physics*. This chapter demonstrates how both Alain and Jean de Meun use ideas of fallen nature and sexual deviancy to think about language and poetry, and how poetry, as an artificial human production, can, despite its perverse generation of pleasure, nevertheless be productive. It sees poetic production as non-linear and anti-dialectic, as offering an alternative, distorting lens through which to arrive at knowledge. Moreover, the *Rose* is shown to signal its own limitations and those of its readers in attaining a true understanding of the world.

Brown is correct to say that

> [a] vernacular text that engages the Latin tradition to the degree that the *Roman de la Rose* does is [...] a protean creature, which takes on different appearances depending upon whether readers come to it with or without knowledge of that tradition.[53]

Up to this point, the *Roman de la rose* has generally been situated in a poetic tradition without sustained consideration of its philosophical, Latin context. The aim of this thesis is then, finally, to wrest the *Rose* away from the tower of Poetry in which it has been imprisoned and, reading through a lens of intellectual history, to reveal a different *Rose*, one pregnant with philosophy and offering a kaleidoscopic but nonetheless coherent vision of nature, of sexual desire, and of the understanding of the two through the medium of artificial and compromised fallen language.

[53] Brown, p. 153.

1

Meanings of Nature

Underpinning every other chapter of this thesis is the question of the natural, whether that be an ethical understanding of the natural (particularly chapters 4 and 5), a discussion of natural language and human communication (chapters 2 and 5), how truth and knowledge can be approached through the artificial medium of poetry (chapter 3), or the relation of human culture to animal nature (chapters 2 and, partially, 3). This chapter, then, will focus more specifically on nature itself. What does it mean for something to be natural? There can never be a single, simple answer to such an apparently simple question and Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Roman de la rose* negotiates different philosophical perspectives on questions of what is natural and how nature might be understood. In so doing, it puts forward, albeit implicitly, its own understanding of the way in which an idea of nature can be used both for providing an ethical framework and for interpreting the physical world and human interaction with it. While the *Rose* is a philosophical poem, it is not a work of philosophy *sensu stricto*, which is to say, at the least, that its methods are not those used officially in the University for expounding and resolving theoretical questions: *lectiones*, *quaestiones*, or *sententia*.[1] Moreover, the poem does not offer wholly reliable definitions of nature or of any theoretical concepts. Rather, in the discussions of its different speakers (among whom we number the Guillaume-Jean narrating voices), in their advice, their jokes and their polemics, an understanding of what is natural is implied. It is the claim of this thesis that for all the contradictions and paradoxes of the manifold voices in the text, there is a consistent engagement with the question of what is natural. The *Rose* is, then, a highly self-

[1] Cf. *L'enseignement des disciplines à la Faculté des arts (Paris et Oxford, XIII^e – XV^e siècles): actes du Colloque international*, ed. by Olga Weijers and Louis Holz, Studia artistarum, 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997); Olga Weijers, *La 'disputatio' à la Faculté des arts de Paris (1200-1350 environ): Esquisse d'une typologie*, Studia artistarum, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995); Olga Weijers, *Queritur utrum: recherches sur la 'disputatio' dans les universités médiévales*, Studia artistarum, 20 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009); Bernardo C. Bazán, John F. Wippel *et al.*, *Les questions disputées et les questions quodlibétiques dans les facultés de théologie, de droit et de médecine*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 44-45 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985); and Brian Lawn, *The Rise and Decline of the Scholastic 'Quaestio Disputata'* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1993).

reflexive meditation on literary and artistic production (and by extension on speech, language, and culture) and also a *genuine* engagement with questions of nature and of ethics.

THE *ROSE*: INDETERMINATE OR ARISTOTELIAN?

I use the term 'genuine' deliberately. It has become a claim too frequently made of Jean's *Rose* that, above all else, it valorises the principle of indeterminacy and the ludic possibilities of language decoupled from theoretical engagement or genuinely held positions. Noah Guynn, for example, suggests that

> for Jean de Meun, the dislocation of word and thing, author and text, creator and creation is the very condition of possibility for the production of meaning: in order to signify, signs must cast off concrete, identifiable intentions. The scattering of Amant's seed (like the tossing of Saturn's testicles into the sea) could thus be read not simply as a metaphorical ejaculation but as an ejaculation of metaphors, a celebration of an unfettered erotically charged play of signifiers.[2]

Daniel Heller-Roazen similarly suggests that the contingency of the *Rose* is the fundamental principle of its composition and necessarily of its meaning.[3] Perhaps the most unsustainable of these positions is that of R. Howard Bloch who claims that

> [t]he second half of the *Roman de la rose* [...] is difficult to pin down because it incarnates the very undefined principle of semiotic and sexual indeterminacy, free-floating desire, the abrogation of the rule of family and of poetic form.[4]

For all the valorisation of the *Rose* as a profoundly complex, deconstructionist *avant la lettre* (which, maybe, in a sense, it is), such modern preoccupations with complexity are curiously flattening. They simplify the text by making its many extended engagements with medieval philosophy either irrelevant or wholly auxiliary to questions of language that always point to the impossibility of certainty. Sarah Kay's contention that, for all of the *Rose*'s slipperiness, it shows

[2] Guynn, p. 150.
[3] Heller-Roazen, pp. 8-9.
[4] Bloch, p. 141.

verse to be a highly appropriate method for 'philosophical and theological reflections' is more persuasive.[5] While I agree that the medium is part of the message and the slipperiness of the *Rose* is significant for an understanding of speech and literary creation, such elusiveness is not the whole message. I want to argue in this chapter that the indeterminacy with which the *Rose* is shot through informs an understanding of flawed, fallen nature and the necessarily imperfect means by which artificial (and thus human) productions never fully succeed in the attempt to articulate an understanding of the natural.

What kind of natural are we talking about? In Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose*, Augustinian ideas about human nature and the natural are clearly signalled, as has been suggested by John V. Fleming,[6] although, as we mentioned earlier, Fleming makes Jean far too obedient a reproducer of Augustine's theology.[7] Aristotle has elsewhere been highlighted as the presiding genius of the continuation of the *Roman de la rose*. Gérard Paré asserted in 1941, without real proof or argumentation, that

> Jean de Meung, il est vrai, n'a rien d'un métaphysicien ni d'un théologien, et nous ne découvrions à peu près pas chez lui de références à Aristote; mais il a bel et bien, comme on dit, sa philosophie dont l'imprégnation donne sens et couleur au moindre verset de son poème. [8]

If we are proceeding on the basis that Jean de Meun is not a poststructuralist philosopher who happened to find himself out of time in the thirteenth century, we might appear to be faced with an apparent choice: is he a thorough-going Augustinian or is he a dedicated follower of Aristotle? Such a Duhemian dichotomy between Aristotelianising and Augustinianising approaches, however, would be both false and anachronistic. The idea of the late thirteenth century as a battleground between Augustinians such as Bonaventure and Aristotelians such as Aquinas or even Boethius of Dacia, leading to Etienne Tempier's

[5] Sarah Kay, *The Place of Thought: The Complexity of One in Late Medieval French Didactic Poetry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 179.
[6] Fleming, *Reason and the Lover*, p. 23 ('if we are to have "Augustinian sexuality" in the *Roman*, we must have an Augustinian Reason to address it'.) and pp. 64-96.
[7] Cf. p. 55.
[8] Paré, *Le roman de la rose et la scolastique courtoise*, p. 10.

condemnations of 1270 and 1277, is not tenable, as has been discussed by Kent Emery Jr. and Andreas Speer.[9] The influence of Aristotle's works on natural philosophy and on human behaviour is certainly evident in the *Rose*, as will be seen in this and in later chapters of the thesis, yet at the heart of the text's conception of a deviant natural drive, informing all discussion of human failings, is the idea so important to medieval theology under Augustine's pervasive influence, of the corruption of humanity by original sin. Issues around what nature means and what is natural recur again and again throughout the text and are at the heart of the *Rose*'s intellectual inquiry. If we are to understand both the implicit philosophy and the explicitly stated positions espoused in the text we must first look to the most important philosophical text on nature in the University of Paris in the 1270s, Aristotle's *Physics*.

Jean de Meun's text is notoriously and deliberately difficult in its refusal to present any clear and fixed idea of its underlying truth, whose glossing explanation is promised but never given. After reporting La Vieille's extended discussion of morally dubious tactics for gaining advantage, often material advantage, in the game of love, the narrator tells his audience:

> Notez ce que ci vois disant,
> d'amors avrez art souffisant.
> Et se vos i trovez riens trouble,
> g'esclarcirai ce qui vos trouble
> quant le songe m'orrez espondre.
> Bien savrez lors d'amors respondre,
> s'il est qui an sache opposer,
> quant le texte m'orrez gloser.
> (Note down what I go around saying here and you will have sufficient skill in love. And if you find anything unclear, I will clarify what troubles you, when you have heard me expound the dream. Then you will know well how to defend love should anyone know how to oppose it, when you have heard me gloss the text.)
> (*Rose*, 15113-20).

The dream is never explained, however, and this potential unified and unifying commentary that will resolve all difficulties remains teasingly imaginary. Indeed,

[9] Emery and Speer, pp. 7-8. They also provide a brief survey of recent bibliography on this question.

attempts to provide a unified reading the *Rose* generally collapse under the weight of trying to impose clarity and univocality upon a text that resists it at every turn. The poem twists and turns; it presents contradictory speeches by different figures who are set up as authorities, without adjudicating between them to determine who is correct. It seems to delight in emptying itself of the authoritative truth-claims of Scholastic philosophy in the thirteenth century.

Sylvia Huot identifies the *Rose*'s polyphonic and chaotic mode as hiding a deeper truth:

> The discourse of desire and sexuality emerges as a deflection from or resistance to some other discourse; or as a kind of undertow, hidden but still discernible in what passes overtly for a discussion of some wholly other topic.

She goes on to say that

> [t]he kaleidoscopic discourses of the *Rose* are infiltrated by something intangible, an unspoken but powerful energy that circulates through the poem: the ineffable force of desire, struggling to release itself as the drive to jouissance, and holding out the promise of a different sort of knowledge altogether – a knowledge accessed not through language, but through the body.[10]

The *Roman de la rose* has a project to valorise the sexual drive as natural and to understand its place in the order of things. The hidden, unknowable principle of the body, of the physical, that Huot rightly identifies as giving the *Rose* its force takes its cue from a concept rooted in Aristotelian philosophy.

ARISTOTELIAN NATURE IN NATURE'S CONFESSION

The most sustained articulation of what nature means and how natural creatures operate is found in the *Physics* – the *locus classicus* for understanding nature in Paris in the second half of the thirteenth century – and its medieval commentaries. In Book II of his *Physics* Aristotle defines nature not as a moral concept, not as a force that governs the world, but as a principle that is internal

[10] Sylvia Huot, *Dreams of Lovers and Lies of Poets: Poetry, Knowledge, and Desire in the Roman de la Rose* (London: MHRA and Maney, 2010), p. 5.

to a natural object and that distinguishes it from something artificial. A natural object is that which has 'within itself a principle of motion and of stationariness (in respect of place [i.e. locomotion], or of growth and decrease, or by way of alteration).'[11] William Charlton explains this idea as follows:

> Change here includes not only movement, but change of every sort such as, no doubt, the formation of organic parts like leaves and teeth, and what Aristotle has in mind at this stage is, I think, a very simple point. If we are asked why a stone when released (not thrown) from on high, falls to the ground (one kind of change of place), we may reply, simply, 'Because it's a stone'. If we are asked why a dog when it sees a rabbit gives chase (another kind of change of place), we may reply 'Because it's a dog'. [...] In these cases, rightly or wrongly, we do not feel it necessary to look outside the thing, to account for its behaviour. And wherever we feel that we can explain a thing's behaviour, partly at least, without looking beyond the thing, we think that its behaviour, and the feature it acquires or retains, is natural.[12]

Nature, then, 'is a principle or cause of being moved and of being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily, in virtue of itself and not accidentally.'[13] This definition of a natural object as having its own source of locomotion, growth or change was clearly central for Aristotle and it recurs in almost exactly the same wording in several places in the *Physics*, as well as in the famous definition of nature in Book 5 of the *Metaphysics* and elsewhere in his writing.[14] The natural is contrasted with the artificial, that which is made through skill – human artefacts such as a bed or a coat. The iron from which a knife is made, to take one of Aquinas' examples when commentating on the *Physics*, is natural. It has within it its own source of change or movement or growth, whereas the knife itself – *qua* knife – does not. Any movement that the knife has, for example falling when it is

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[11] *Physics*, II.1, 192b14-16.
[12] Aristotle, *Physics: Books I and II*, trans. by William Charlton (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), pp. 88-89.
[13] *Physics*, II.1, 192b21-3.
[14] Variants of this formula are found in the following works by Aristotle: *Physics.* II. 1, 192b21-2; III. 1, 200b12-13; VIII. 3, 253b5-6; VIII. 4, 254b16-17; *On the Heavens*, I. 2, 268b16; III. 2 301b17-18; *On the Soul*, II. 1, 412b15-17; *Generation of Animals*, II. 1, 735a3-4; *Metaph*ysics VI. 1, 1025b20-21; IX. 8, 1049b8-10; XII. 3, 1070a7-8; *Ethics*. VI. 4, 1140a5-6; *Rhetoric*. I. 10, 1369a35-b1. Cf. James A. Weisheipl, *Nature and the Middle Ages*, ed. by William E. Carroll, Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, 11 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1985), p. 9.

dropped, is accidental to its being a knife and has its origin in the nature of the iron from which it has been made.[15]

Nature is not itself a force but 'a principle of motion and change',[16] and for something to be natural, it will change. A thing's nature also changes towards an end. While both a thing's matter and its form can be called its nature,[17] the form is more properly called a thing's nature,[18] and this form is the end of the process of becoming that a natural thing undergoes.[19] Thus, natural things are in state of motion and change; they are in a state of becoming. As R. G. Collingwood puts it, '[t]he world of nature is [...] for Aristotle a world of self-moving things. [...] Nature as such is process, growth, change.'[20] Innate desire, particularly sexual desire, constantly impels humans forward, and is, however much corrupted by sin, a natural phenomenon.

We will return to Aristotelian ideas about nature in relation to the sexual drive after a consideration of how the natural world is presented in the 'confession' given by Nature in the *Rose* (16699-19375). A speaking figure representing the concept of nature is profoundly un-Aristotelian, but the overarching theme and structure of Nature's speech suggests that both she and Jean de Meun have been reading Aristotle quite closely. Despite the digressions in her speech to talk about predestination (17071-17762), optics (18008-18256), and dreams (18274-18484), the structure is relatively simple. Starting from the top from the

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[15] Thomas Aquinas, *S. Thomae Aquinatis In Octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, ed. by P. M. Maggiòlo (Rome/Turin: Marietti 1954) (henceforth *In Phys.*), II. 1, 142 [2].
[16] *Physics*, III.1, 200b11-12. In the thirteenth century there were, however, those, such as Albert the Great and Roger Bacon, who understood natural to be an actual force ('vis') of movement internal to living things, and not simply a principle of change. Cf. Albert the Great, *Physica*, ed. by Paul Hossfeld, 2 vols., S. Alberti Magni operum omnium, IV:1-2 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1987-1993), II. 1. 7; I. 85; Roger Bacon, *Quaestiones super libros octo Physicorum Aristotelis*, ed. by Ferdinand M. Delorme and Robert Steele, Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi, 8 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1928), pp. 58-59; Weisheipl, pp. 14-17. Aquinas, though, scornfully dismisses their position; cf. *In Phys.*, II. 1. 145 [5].
[17] *Metaphysics*, V. 4, 1014b16-1015a19; *Physics* II. 1, 193a28-193b6.
[18] *Physics*, II. 1, 193b7-8. Cf. Aquinas, *In Phys.*, II. 2. 151 [3]: 'natura rerum naturalium habentium in se principium motus, alio modo etiam forma est'. (the nature of natural things, having in themselves a principle of movement, is also in another way called the form.)
[19] *Metaphysics*, V. 4, 1015a10-11. Cf. Jan Aertsen, *Nature and Creature: Aquinas's Way of Thought*, trans. by Herbert Donald Morton, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 21 (Leiden: Brill, 1988), pp. 347-50.
[20] R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944, repr. 1965), p. 82.

heavens, and working down through animals and plants, Nature presents the whole of creation in a state of movement. All things are impelled forwards according to her rules. She does not complain about the sky 'qui tourjorz tourne san soi feindre' (which always turns without slacking) (16772). She does not complain about the planets, which move themselves correctly:

> Mout font ces planetes bone euvre;
> chascune d'eles si bien euvre
> que toutes .VII. point ne sejournent;
> par leur .XII. mesons s'an tournent
> et par touz leur degrez s'an queurent
> et tant con doivent i demeurent.
> (These planets do very good work. Each works so well that none of the seven ever stays still. They circulate through their twelve houses and they pass through all their degrees staying the correct time at each one.) (*Rose*, 16699-19377).

This ordered circular working stands in stark opposition to the chaotic movement of Fortune's wheel as described in Raison's section (5891-6144).[21] This is no accident, as Nature will go on to discuss the effects on the sublunary sphere of the planets in a section that will lead on to discussion of predestination, destiny, and free will, ideas cognate to that of fortune or luck. Nature stops talking about destiny and says that she would go on to define and explain fortune and chance (which are defined and explained in *Physics*, II.4-6, just after the definition of nature) but that it would take too long, suggesting to those who do not know the concepts that they ask a *clerc* (17697-17706). The mention of a *clerc* as an authority gestures towards the written source of Nature's knowledge of the natural, in this case the *Physics*.[22] *Clercs* are later mentioned by Nature as having superior knowledge due to their access to written texts,

> car li clerc voit en l'escriture,
> avec les sciances prouvees,
> resonables et demontrees,
> touz maus don l'an se doit retrere

[21] In addition, virtuous celestial rotation finds its parody in the figure of Ixion, who rotates in Hell bound to a razor-sharp wheel, as described by Nature at the end of her confession (19248-50).
[22] I discuss this phenomenon of implied written theoretical sources in the *Rose* in Jonathan Morton, 'Where are the bodies? Gender-bending voices in the *Roman de la rose*', *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes: 'Les voix narratives du récit médiéval: Approches inguistiques et littéraires'*, ed. by Sophie Marnette and Helen Swift, 22 (2011), 123-37.

et touz les biens que l'an peut fere.
(for in writing – with proven, rational, and demonstrated forms of knowledge – the *clerc* sees all the evils from which one must abstain and all the good things that one can do.) (*Rose*, 18610-14)[23]

The knowledge of *clercs* – their 'sciance' – is the *scientia* that comes from syllogistic demonstrations and the unambiguous, rational truths of philosophy.[24] It is also a textual knowledge, 'en l'escriture'. When Nature mentions two key terms from Aristotle's discussion of nature – fortune and chance – and then advises Jean's readers to acquire that knowledge from a *clerc* she is signalling the philosophical, textual underpinnings of the *Rose*'s understanding of nature. In the *Physics* that which is natural is understood as distinct from two other principles. It is distinct from that which happens by chance and it is distinct from that which is artificial, what is made by art or human skill. Processes that happen according to an object's nature are necessary. Those that happen by chance – an accidental and not a necessary cause – are not predictable or stable. Thus Nature's praise for the rationally and beautifully ordered natural world accords with Raison's condemnation of those who mistake the goods of fortune (or Fortune) for true goods, even as Nature's regular motion is shown to be superior to Fortune's irrational spinning of her wheel.[25] I, like Nature, will, however, not dwell on discussion of *casus* and *fortuna*, but wish to pursue the course of Nature's confession. After some discussion of destiny, she returns to her description of the natural world to describe how the heavens cause winds to blow and are responsible for storms (17855-74), followed by rainbows (17983-18003). Again we are referred back to Aristotle (this time by name)

qui mieuz mist natures en note
que nus hon puis le tans Caÿn.
(who wrote about things' natures better than any man since the time of Cain.) (18001-02)

[23] Cf. pp. 110-11; 121-22 for discussion of 'demonstratio' in relation to knowledge.
[24] Cf. p. 4, n. 10.
[25] The changeable goods of Fortune are, in fact, mentioned later in Nature's speech, at 18569-76. As Heller-Roazen notes (pp. 94-99), Raison will go so far as to argue that fortune itself does not exist (6261-69).

Nature does not complain of the elements – also in a state of continual change – since all sublunary creatures change through growth and decay and not simply through locomotion, as the planets do, although they are described as 'tournanz', as revolving in an analogous way to heaven bodies.

> Ne me plain des elemanz.
> Bien gardent mes conmandemanz,
> bien font antr'eus leur mixcions,
> tournanz en resolucions;
> car quan que la lune a souz sai
> est corrumable, bien le sai.
> (I do not complain about the elements. They obey my commandments well and they mix well together to form compounds, turning as they dissolve into solutions; for I know well that all that exists beneath the moon is corruptible.) (18937-42)

Having descended down to the microscopic level of creation, Nature starts to work her way back up the golden chain of being. She passes more quickly through plants (18951-59), birds and fish (18960-68), and 'autres bestes' (other beasts (18969)) who have sex correctly, as well as insects and snakes. By the time we have got to animals, the principle of change that is inherent in all natural creatures has shifted slightly. The animals are praised by Nature not simply for moving in the appropriate way, but for reproducing.

> Tuit faonnent a leur usages
> et font honeur a leur lignages.
> (All give birth according to their customs and do honour to their lineages.) (18965-66)

Male and female beasts reproduce regularly and without commerce. It is only man, the most treasured of all Nature's creatures, that fails to obey the rules of nature. The Aristotelian idea of nature as a principle of change or movement innate to a creature, which results in a world of continual flux that nevertheless accords to principles of necessity and follows the rational rules of nature, has become elided in the discussion of animals with the sexual drive and the need to reproduce. Furthermore, the rules of nature, following Aristotle, are not contingent as are the goods of fortune but necessary, yet if humans can live

against the rules of nature, these rules cannot be wholly necessary. This break from an Aristotelian understanding of nature shows that the *Rose* is not simply articulating an Aristotelian natural world, for man living against nature has become an unnatural paradox. This paradoxical nature of humanity, I suggest here and will discuss in more detail below, comes more from an Augustinian tradition than an Aristotelian one.

The tension between competing versions of nature, that of a metaphysical principle – relating to movement and stasis – and that of a moral imperative linked to ethics and sin is signalled very early on in Nature's confession in a passage which anticipates the description of sublunary creatures found near the end.

> Si gart, tant m'a Dex honoree,
> la bele chaene doree
> qui les .IIII. elemanz enlace
> tretouz anclins devant ma face;
> et me bailla toutes les choses
> qui sunt en la chaene ancloses,
> et conmanda que ges gardasse
> et leur fourmes continuasse,
> et voust que toutes m'obeïssent
> et que mes regles apreïssent
> si que ja mes nes obliassent,
> ainz les tenissent et gardassent
> a toujorz pardurablement.
> Si font eus voir conmunement,
> toutes i metent bien leur cure,
> fors une seule creature.
> (And God has bestowed so much honour upon me that I keep the beautiful golden chain that binds together the four elements, which all make obeisance before me. And he gave me all the things enclosed within the chain and ordered me to keep them all and to preserve their forms, and he wants them all to obey me and learn my rules and never forget them, but rather to hold on to them and keep them perpetually and forever. And, in truth, together they all do this and work hard at it except for one creature alone.) (16755-70)

Before we come to the criticism of that creature, however, Nature sketches the outlines of a theory of natural philosophy. In the first part of this mission

statement we see the golden chain of Nature, the natural order which controls the world, an image from Homer's *Iliad* (VIII, 19-26) interpreted allegorically by Macrobius to mean the whole interconnected hierarchy of God's creation.[26] The continuation of the forms of different species (through reproduction) is described rather than commanded; forms continue naturally and, according to natural philosophy, necessarily. Then, however, we see a change of focus. The fact that one creature fails to fulfil its task sees the introduction of choice in the performance of Nature's work. Continuing the species, acting naturally, becomes a choice, an ethical question, given that creatures can either work to fulfil their biological destiny or they can spurn such work. The refusal to take part in such a process is a sin *contra naturam*, against Nature.[27]

Nature's use of the term 'fourme' is not accidental and carries with it Aristotelian meanings. The form is a thing's nature and while natural objects mutate and move, their forms are nevertheless stable and divine in their emanation from God, the source of all being.[28] Creatures follow Nature's rules, that is, they act according to their nature, 'pardurablement'. That a thing's form is particularly its nature has been made clear by Aristotle,[29] and, moreover, the particular association of nature and the form with reproduction and generation is not unique to the *Rose*. The Greek concept φύσις (*phusis*) – possibly relating to φύω

[26] Ambrosius Aurelius Theodosius Macrobius, *Commentaire au Songe de Scipion*, ed. and trans. by Mireille Armisen-Marchetti, 2 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2003) (henceforth *In Somnium*), I. 14. 15; I. 80. With his inclusion of the four elements, Jean is yoking the concept of the chain to Plato's description of the four elements as the fundamental building blocks of the natural world as described in the *Timaeus* (31b-32c) and outlined by Macrobius at I. 6. 24-28; I. 29-30. Jean de Meun seems keen to stress the unity of the world from the whole macrocosm to the smallest microsmic elements in constructing his idea of nature. For an investigation of this issue cf. Faith Lyons, 'some notes on the *Roman de la Rose* – the golden chain and other topics in Jean de Meun', in *Studies in Medieval Literature and Languages: In Memory of Frederick Whitehead*, ed. by W. Rothwell, W. R. J., Barron, *et. al.* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1973), pp. 201-208.
[27] For a study of the evolution and significance of the concept of crimes *contra naturam* in medieval theology and jurisprudence see Jacques Chiffoleau, 'Contra naturam: Pour une approche casuistique et procédurale de la nature médiévale', in *Il Teatro della Natura/The Theater of Nature*, ed. by Véronique Pasche et. al., *Micrologus*, 4 (Tournhout: Brepols, 1996), pp. 265-312. Chiffoleau points out that the formula *contra Naturam* (usually employed in discussion of illict sexual practices) appears usually when the whole order of God's creation is perceived as being threatened, see especially, pp. 269-70. This idea seems to be at play in Jean's combination of Nature's description of the whole of creation with its Golden Chain being undermined by man's sin of abstinence. Cf. Chapters 4 & particularly 5, below.
[28] Thomas Aquinas, *Super libros sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi*, ed. by R. P. Mandonnet and F. M. Moos, 4 vols. (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929-47), II. d. 18, q. 1, a. 2. Cf. Aertsen, p. 163.
[29] Cf. p. 28, n. 18.

(*phuo*), meaning to produce or give birth to – and its Latin equivalent *natura*, relating to *nasci* (to be born), associate the natural with birth and reproduction.[30] In his commentary on the *Physics*, Aquinas implies an etymological and formal connection between 'natura' and birth and generation:

> Natura potest significari ut generatio, puta si natura dicatur *nativitas*. Sic igitur natura dicta *ut generatio*, idest nativitas, est via in naturam.[31]
> (Nature can be understood as generation, when for example nature is called *birth*. Therefore nature understood in this way as meaning *generation*, that is birth, is a way towards nature.)

Earlier on he has stated that

> [q]uia *nasci* dicuntur ea quae generantur coniuncta generanti, ut patet in plantis et animalibus, ideo principium generationis vel motus natura nominatur.
> (since those things are said to be born which are generated from the union of their generator[s], as it is clear in plants and animals, thus the principle of generation or motion is called nature.)[32]

Aquinas follows Aristotle in differentiating between natural and artificial things through their ability to generate and he gives the example that an artificial object such as a bed will not flower and produce little baby beds if it is planted, whereas a natural creature can generate other creatures of the same type, for example humans can generate other humans.[33] The opposition between the natural which can lead to generation and the artificial which is sterile is hugely important in the *Rose*, as we will see throughout the thesis.[34]

This elision between nature as movement or change and nature as generation is not original, then, although in the *Rose* the idea of nature in animals is repeatedly skewed towards thinking of generation, reproduction and the continuation of the

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[30] Cf. Charlton, ed., p. 91.
[31] *In Phys*. 2. 2. 155 [7], p. 80, commenting on *Physics* II.1 193b12-13. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *In Meta.*), 5. 5. 809 [2], p. 266; and *ST*, IIIa, q. 2, a. 1, co.
[32] *In. Phys.*, II. 1. 145 [5], p. 74.
[33] (Commenting on *Physics*, II. 1, 193b8-9), *In Phys.*, II. 2. 154 [6], p. 80: 'dicit quod licet non fiat lectulus ex lectulo, ut Antiphon dicebat, fit tamen homo ex homine.' (Aristotle says that although a bed does not come to be from a bed, as Antiphon said, man does come to be from man.)
[34] Cf. particularly chapters 4 and 5.

form. We are some way, then, to understanding what Huot terms 'the ineffable force of desire', which is a natural process the suppression of which would be against nature and thus immoral. It could be argued that such a claim for the valorisation of heterosexual desire against the Augustinian association of concupiscence with sin should be seen as simply one more joke in a text that takes nothing seriously. One initial *sed contra* to this position (of whom the chief expositor might be Bloch) would be to suggest that it is simply not credible that such a sustained attempt to situate sexual desire in so established a philosophical context would be carried out merely as a joke. It would be naive, in any case, to assume that jokes are without ideological or philosophical content. However, a fuller *respondeo* to the claim that the *Rose* is not serious in its philosophy will be required, and one important criterion of the seriousness of the *Rose*'s project is its consistency. While the many speakers in Jean's continuation of the *Rose* often contradict each other and provide different accounts of the world, none of its discussions of natural philosophy suggests that sexual desire is not natural or that it is a priori sinful. Moreover, in its treatment of ethics, sins and misdeeds are consistently understood as being those in which humans act against nature (and not just against Nature). This is particularly true of sexual sins (including the abstinence from sex), which are unnatural in that they subvert or work against the end (the nature) of sex, which is the continuation of the species. The Aristotelian understanding of nature is essential for understanding the *Rose*'s approach to ethics and to natural philosophy. We will go on to see how, thanks to the Fall, being totally natural is not that easy, and ultimately not even possible, and, just as for Aquinas, for Jean de Meun Aristotelian philosophy is not sufficient on its own for understanding the world. Before doing so, however, let us examine how an Aristotelian account of sexual desire is used to understand human behaviour in the poem.

REPRESSING THE SEXUAL URGE

According to Aristotle, there is no doubting that nature exists. The existence of nature is self-evident, and thus it is wrong to try to prove its existence.[35] As Aquinas states, sense-experience evidently shows the existence of natural things and hence of nature:

> 'Naturam autem esse, est per se notum, inquantum naturalia sunt manifesta sensui. Sed quid sit uniuscuiusque rei natura, vel quod principium motus, hoc non est manifestum.
> Unde patet per hoc quod irrationabiliter Avicenna conatus est improbare Aristotelis dictum, volens quod naturam esse possit demonstrari, sed non a naturali, quia nulla scientia probat sua principia. Sed ignorantia principiorum moventium non impedit quin naturam esse sit per se notum, ut dictum est.
> (The existence of nature is known *per se*, insofar as natural things are manifest to the senses. But what the nature of each thing is, or what the principle of its motion is, is not manifest.
> Hence it is clear from this that Avicenna, who wished that it were possible to prove the existence of nature, unreasonably attempted to disprove what Aristotle had said. However Avicenna did not wish to prove this from natural things, for no science proves its own principles. But ignorance of the principles of movement does not mean that the existence of nature is not known *per se*, as was said.)[36]

La Vieille is a former prostitute who peppers her practical advice to women with philosophical references in her speech to Bel Acueil.[37] As part of her project of education, she discusses the universality of the sexual drive, and explains why vows of chastity are impossible to keep; they will fail to suppress the natural sexual drive:

> Ausinc vos di je qui li hom
> qui s'an entre en religion,
> et vient aprés qu'il se repent,
> par po que de deul ne se pent,
> et se complaint et se demente
> si que touz an soi tourmente,
> tant li sourt grant desir d'ovrer

[35] *Physics*, II. 1, 193a3.
[36] *In Phys.*, II. 1. 148 [8], p. 75.
[37] For example, she cites Plato at *Rose*, 12859-62. For a more sustained discussion of La Vieille's citation of philosophical authorities, see Morton, 'Gender-bending voices', pp. 133-37.

> conment il porra recovrer
> la franchise qu'il a perdu,
> car la volenté ne se mue
> par nul abit qu'il puisse prandre,
> en quelque leu qu'il s'aille randre.
> (Therefore I tell you that the man who enters holy orders and who comes later to repent of it, comes close to hanging himself for grief, and he complains and loses his mind to such an extent that he is wracked by internal torments, so strongly does the desire spring up to work to be able to recover the freedom that he has lost, for the will does not change, regardless of any habit he might put on or of any place to which he might go.) (*Rose*, 13937-48)[38]

This unnatural repression of the sexual drive might lead to insanity and is ultimately impossible. 'Trop est fort chose que Nature' (Nature is too strong a thing) (14007).[39] For La Vieille, nature comes to be the sexual drive whose operation is irresistible. Just as Aquinas, following Aristotle, says that the principle of nature cannot be proven but only observed in things, so La Vieille does not claim knowledge of the technical operation of sexual desire and has no interest in trying to prove how or even if it functions. Rather she treats the natural drive as a first principle and describes that which results from it. It is worth recalling the explanation given by Charlton (cf p. 27 above), in which he states that something is natural when 'we do not feel it necessary to look outside the thing, to account for its behaviour'. La Vieille makes it clear that this irrepressible natural drive is a movement proper to animals. Just before discussing the sexual drive, she discusses a caged bird longing to be free, using it as an analogy for women's natural desire for liberty. This bird serves both as an example of the controlling of the natural through an artificial process (a cage) and as a metonym for a nature itself that is necessarily drawn towards its end, regardless of the accidental conditions imposed by artifice.[40]

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[38] Cf. Raison's earlier discussion of the subject (4414-32).

[39] It is not clear that the 'n' of 'Nature' should be capitalised, as in Lecoy's edition. Quite typically for medieval manuscripts of the *Rose*, proper names do not start with capitalised letters in his base manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds français 1573 (fol. 118r). Modern editing practices can remove ambiguity by capitalising the first letter and making the abstract noun mean the allegorical figure in the *Rose* and not the abstract principle which the allegory ostensibly figures, for example 'raison' and 'Raison'. La Vieille is not discussing Nature the allegorical deity, but rather the Aristotelian concept of Nature as principle (or even a force) of change.

[40] That all artificial forms are accidental rather than necessary is stated on numerous occasions by Aquinas, e.g. *ST* IIIa, q. 66, a. 4, co.: 'natura dat formam substantialem, quod ars facere non

Li oisillons du vert bochage,
quant il est pris et mis en cage,
nourriz mout antantivement
leanz delicieusement,
et chante, tant con sera vis,
de queur gai, ce vos est avis,
si desierre il les bois ramez
qu'il a naturelment amez,
et voudroit seur les arbres estre,
ja si bien nou savra l'an pestre.
Tourjorz i panse et s'estudie
a recouvrer sa franche vie;
sa viande a ses piez demarche
o l'ardeur qui son queur li charche,
et va par sa cage traçant,
a grant angoisse porchaçant
conment fenestre ou pertuis truisse
par quoi voler an bois s'an puisse.
(The little bird from the green wood, when caught and put in a cage where he is cared for most attentively and delicately**,** sings, as long as he lives, joyful at heart, or so it seems to you, while he desires the dense wood that he has loved naturally, and he would like to be in the trees, however well he is fed. He always thinks and does his best to recover his life of freedom; he tramples his food at his feet such is the burning which fills his heart, and he runs around his cage in great anguish straining to find how he might find a window or an opening by which he might be able to fly off to the wood.) (13911-28)

The bird has 'naturelment amez' the wood where he has been and spends his whole time trying to regain his 'franche vie'. The conception of the natural life as 'franche' (free or noble) is a key, recurring principle in the *Rose* that finds its most developed discussion in description of the Golden Age. In Guillaume de Lorris' section, Franchise represents something slightly different. She stands for simplicity and honesty in a courtly setting and, along with Pitié, entreats Dangier to allow Amant to kiss the Rose.[41] In Guillaume's section the predicate 'franc' is

potest, sed omnes formae artificiales sunt accidentales'. (Nature gives the substantial form, which art cannot make, but all artificial forms are accidental.) Cf. *Sent. de anima*, II. 2, and his *Expositio libri Peryermenias*, vol. I*: 1 in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII edita* (Rome/Paris: Commissio Leonina/Vrin, 1989), I. 4.

[41] For discussion of Jean's ironic reworking of Guillaume's concept of 'franchise' cf. Douglas Kelly, *Internal Difference and Meanings in the Roman de la Rose* (Madison WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), pp. 62-64.

combined repeatedly with adjectives indicative of a lyric, courtly love.[42] This sense of 'franchise' as a property of *fin'amor* is modified quite significantly in Jean de Meun's part of the *Rose.* Jean's use of *franchise* links the concept of simplicity to the idea of nature and especially to the Golden Age, the mythological state of pure living before the Fall or, to take a more secular perspective, before 'man [cut] his umbilical cord with nature, with animal homeostasis.'[43] In the scenario of the caged bird, a 'franche vie' is that lived outside of the bounds of artificial restraint, and it is simple in the sense that it requires nothing other than the following of instinct. That the artificial caged state causes inward 'angoisse' to the natural creature – even if we may misinterpret its singing as a sign of happiness – is made quite explicit and this distress stems from the unstoppable natural impulse that always seeks an outlet. The green wood representing the freedom of the natural sphere is a reworking of Guillaume's walled garden in which the birds sing. At the beginning of Guillaume's *Rose*, the dreaming Amant desires to leave the city to go out into the countryside to hear the sound of the birds on the bushes (94-97), yet the birds that he hears are in another enclosed space, the walled garden of Deduit, a mediated space between nature and artifice (699-711). For Jean's La Vieille, there is no intermediary space, but rather a stark split between the purely natural and the compromised artificial spaces, with the artificial understood as an unnatural restraint.

La Vieille is talking to Bel Acueil inside the tower that Jalousie has built to imprison the Rose and it is in this narrative context that she draws a parallel between the caged bird and restricted humans. She first says that, in the same way as the caged bird, women, unmarried or married,

> ont naturele entencion
> qu'el cercheroient volentiers
> par quex chemins, par quex sentiers

[42] It is used in conjunction with 'bien enseignies' [well brought up] (1280); 'cortois' [courteous] (1937); 'gentis' [kind] (1947); 'douz' [sweet] (1220; 1947; 3679); 'bien afaitiez' [well dressed] (2852).

[43] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 2nd edition (London: Verso, 2008), p. xxviii. I will go on to suggest that the Golden Age is a way for Jean de Meun to think about the Fall in secular poetry, but, as will be discussed in chapter 2, this does not necessarily preclude another meaning of the Golden Age whose end is the beginning of what it means to be fully human.

a franchise venir porroient,
car torjorz avoir la vorroient.
(have a natural inclination to seek willingly for ways and paths by which they might be able reach freedom, for they always want to have it.) (13932-36)

How La Vieille understands this 'franchise' is not yet clear, but she will go on to show how it is inexplicably linked with sexual desire, caused by nature.

The young man who enters religious orders and forswears sex is subject to the same force of nature as the caged bird and as women. Likewise, he longs to regain his 'franchise' despite the fact that he is wearing the artificial, external signs of abstinence, the 'abit', which parallels the bird's cage, both being metonyms for the restriction of the natural by means of the artificial or conventional. After adding another example of artificial restraints on the natural, that of a fish caught in a net (13949-76), and, referring to Horace's *Epistles* (13987-94),[44] La Vieille goes on to say,

Tourjorz Nature recourra,
ja por habit ne demourra.
Que vaut ce? Toute creature
veust retourner a sa nature,
ja nou lera por violance
de force ne de couvenance.
(Nature always rushes back; she will never hold back for the sake of clothing. What does this mean? Every creature wants to return to its nature; it will never leave it for violence by force or by agreement.) (13995-14000)

Again Aristotle's understanding of nature underpins la Vieille's discussion of behaviour; '[t]ourjorz' (always) demonstrates that what is natural is necessary. What is more, the un-Aristotelian general figure of Nature is instantly glossed ('Que vaut ce?') to mean the individual nature of a creature ('s*a* nature'), while the term 'violance' has unmistakably Aristotelian underpinnings, taken from

[44] Cf. Horace, *Satires, Epistles and Ars poetica*, ed. and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA/London: Harvard University Press/Heinemann, 1929), Epistles, I. 10. 24: 'Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret'. (You may drive nature back with a pitchfork, but she rushes back). (translation emended).

books V and VIII of the *Physics* where violence is opposed to natural motion.[45] A violent motion is that which is imposed on a natural creature to cause it to act against its nature. Aquinas defines it as follows in his commentary, when discussing the movement of heavy and light natural bodies, such as earth and fire. Earth, for example, can be raised by an external force not of its nature.

> [N]on enim est motus violentus, nisi sit aliquid quod extra naturam moveatur, quod prius quieverit secundum naturam.
> (A motion, therefore, is not violent unless there is something which is moved beyond its nature, when previously it had been at rest according to nature.)[46]

Once the external force is removed, the earth, being heavy, will follow its nature again and will fall. In la Vieille's discussion of natural sexual drive, the external forces acting outside of nature are human conventions and any lapse in the external controls will result in the natural drive reasserting its freedom. La Vieille goes on to describe how a cat is impelled by nature to chase rats even if it is has never before seen a rat or a mouse (14009-22). What then follows is a list of a whole range of different animals drawn to sexual intercourse with the animal of the opposite sex (14023-56). She concludes by again drawing the parallel between animal and human.

> Ausinc est il, biau filz, par m'ame,
> de tout houme et de toute fame
> quant a naturel apetit,
> don lai les retret un petit.
> (It is just the same, my dear boy, by my soul, of every man and every woman in terms of their natural appetite; it is only law which holds them back a little bit.) (14057-60)[47]

Regardless of their upbringing and efforts made to control them, all natural creatures follow the drive of nature, and for animals this drive is avowedly

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[45] *Physics*, V. 6, 229b23-231a17; VIII. 4, 254b12-256a3. Violence in ethical terms is discussed by Aquinas at *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 6, a. 6, ad 1; *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, vols. 47: 1-2 in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII edita* (Rome: ad Sanctae Sabinae, 1969), III. 1. 79-104; I. 119. Cf. also Gérard Paré, *Le roman de la rose et la scolastique courtoise*, p. 49.
[46] *In Phys.*, VIII. 6. 1015 [2], p. 530. Cf. *In Phys.*, V. 10. 740 [4], pp. 365-66.
[47] This passage will also be discussed on p. 93.

sexual. It is striking that humans are just one of a list of different animals.[48] In this vision of humankind, only (artificial) law – the institutions of human society – differentiates us from other species and prevents the uninterrupted pursuit of sexual satisfaction.

There is a difference of emphasis here between la Vieille's teaching and Nature's confession. La Vieille is more determinist in insisting on the necessity of the sexual drive, while Nature repeatedly refers to human choice in whether or not to follow the natural path of heterosexual intercourse. The failure to follow the rules of nature, to follow the biological imperative, becomes a crime *contra Naturam*, as Genius makes clear when he reads his sermon ostensibly dictated to him by Nature. He excommunicates anyone who scorns the works by which the form of the species is continued, that is to say anyone who does not engage in procreative sex:

> qui les euvres ont en despit,
> soit de grant gent soit de menue,
> par cui Nature est soutenue.
> (who, whether of high or low rank, holds in scorn the works by which Nature is sustained.) (*Rose*, 19500-02)

Genius' euphemistic delicacy in not explicitly declaring that he is talking about reproductive sexual intercourse allows him to link sexual intercourse to the larger notions of Nature as both as a physical or physiological principle and as a principle of ethics. Refusing reproductive sex, for him, is rejecting the work of God's vicar as Genius describes her (19477),[49] and involves turning one's back on the whole of creation.[50]

The world-view shared by Nature and Genius should not, however, be read as wholly authoritative, and we should not take them to be mouthpieces for the

[48] The uneasy boundaries between humans and other animals will be discussed more fully in chapter 2.
[49] The concept of Nature as God's vicar comes from Alain de Lille's *De planctu Naturae*, where Natura is repeatedly referred to as God's 'vicaria'. Cf. Alain de Lille, *De planctu Naturae*, ed. by Nikolaus M. Häring, *Studi Medievali*, 19:2 (1978), 797-879 (henceforth *DPN*), VI. 21; VIII. 224; XVI. 6; XVI.; XVIII. 42-48.
[50] Cf. discussions of nature and the natural order at pp. 172-75.

divine. Theology is briefly touched on by Nature in her confession, and she makes it explicit that she does not understand the Incarnation.

> [...] [M]i Sires la mort reçut
> quant il, san moi, prist char humaine
> por le chetif oster de paine.
> San moi, car je ne sai conmant
> fors qu'il peut tout par son conmant.
> Ainz fui trop formant esbahie
> quant il de la Vierge Marie
> fu por le chetif en char nez,
> et puis panduz touz ancharnez;
> car par moi ne peut ce pas estre
> que riens puisse de vierge nestre.
> (My Lord received death when, without me, he took on human flesh in order to remove pain from the weak one [man]. Without me, for I do not know how he did it. Therefore I was totally stunned when he was born in flesh from the Virgin Mary for the weak one, and then, totally corporeally, was hanged; for by me it cannot be that anything can be born of a virgin.) (19122-32)

The hypostatic union between God and Man is explicitly shown to surpass Nature. She can only present a natural world-view which does not take into account the divine revelation of Holy Doctrine.[51] The limits of natural thought without divine revelation are also made clear in Genius' 'intellectually preposterous' sermon.[52] Sent down to Earth by Nature, Amor and his barons dress him in the robes of a bishop and he reads a travesty of a sermon from a text dictated to him by Nature (19369-80).

As well as advising his audience to be virtuous, not to lie, kill, or steal, he somehow manages to conceive of a heaven to which entrance depends on living morally, with a particular emphasis on the obligation to procreate as much as

[51] This position is worth comparing to the position of Boethius of Dacia, the noted and notorious Averroist who found himself condemned and exiled from Paris for his allegedly heterodox opinions. Discussing Boethius' commentary on *Physics*, I.1, Hissette notes that 'le maître danois avait bien précisé que, si la philosophie traite de tout le réel, elle ne le fait que dans la mesure où celui-ci est accessible *per rationem naturalem et humanam*. La précision est capitale, car elle atteste que Boèce n'entendait nullement contester les droits de la théologie, qui tient ses principes de la révélation.' (pp. 24-25) Natural philosophy, as represented by Nature, does not claim to be able to encroach upon the realms of theology. Cf. pp. 11-12.
[52] Sarah Kay, *The Place of Thought: The Complexity of One in Late Medieval French Didactic Poetry* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 181.

possible (19855-60). This paradise, the Parc de l'Agneau, is not found in the skies, but appears to be on the same material (even natural) plane as the rest of creation and is a depiction that is unashamedly corporeal. Those who enter this earthly paradise are figured as sheep, 'bestes deboneres et franches' (gentle and free beasts) (19916) eating as much grass as they like (19945-50) in an account that is awkwardly physical to work as a simple allegory for heaven. Genius may be dressed as a bishop but he is not capable of genuine theological discourse.[53]

However, his sermon provides a code of morality which often appears to be fairly uncontroversial, with the exception of the bizarrely carnal heaven and his insistent, fairly hysterical, preoccupation with the need to procreate. I am thinking now in particular of his unbalanced anathema of those who fail to use or who misuse their genitals and his frenzied calls for the castration of anyone who does not have sex in the approved way.

> Mes cil qui des greffes n'escrivent,
> par cui li mortel tourjorz vivent,
> es beles tables precieuses
> que Nature por estre oiseuses
> ne leur avoit pas aprestees,
> ainz leur avoit por ce prestees
> que tuit i fussent escrivain,
> con tuit et toutes an vivain, [...]
> cil qui tel metresse despisent
> quant a rebours ses regles lisent,
> et qui, por le droit san antandre,
> par le bon chief nes veulent prandre,
> ainz pervertissent l'escriture
> quant il vienent a la lecture:
> o tout l'esconmeniemant
> qui touz les mete a dampnemant,
> puis que la se veulent aherdre,
> ainz qu'il muirent, puissent il perdre
> et l'aumosniere et les estalles
> don il ont signe d'estre malles!
> Perte leur viegne des pandanz
> a quoi l'aumosniere est pandanz!
> Les marteaus dedanz estachiez

[53] Cf. Kay, *Place of Thought*, p. 184: 'Genius exhibits a virtuoso command of didacticism together with the utmost confusion as to its intellectual bases.'

puissent il avoir arrachiez!
(But those who do not write with the styluses by which mortal things live forever on the beautiful precious tablets that Nature did not provide to go unused, and so lent them so that all might be writers, just like all living things male and female, [...] those who scorn such a mistress when they read her rules backwards, who do not want to take them in the right way to understand the meaning correctly, thus pervert the writing when they come to reading it, along with excommunication which damns them all, since they want to stick to their behaviour, let them, before they die, lose the purses and the torches, which are the signs of their masculinity! May they lose the bits by which the purse hangs! May the hammers within be ripped out!) (19599-19606; 19627-42)

Explicitly, Genius anathematises any man who does not use the tools given to him by Nature to procreate and calls for his castration; he makes any refusal of procreative heterosexual intercourse morally equivalent, whether the 'miswriting' of sodomy or the simple shirking of one's duty through sexual abstinence. Venus makes the link between the celibate and the sodomite as inimical to the workings of nature more explicitly when she refers back to Genius' condemnation:

Si rest voirs qu'aucun mauvés home
(Que Dex et seint Pere de Rome
confonde e eus et leur affere!)
leront les roses por pis fere;
et leur donrra chapeaus d'ortie
deables, qui si les ortie.
Car Genyus de par Nature,
por leur vilté, por leur ordure,
les a touz a santance mis
avec noz autres anemis.
(And it remains true that some wicked men (May God and Saint Peter of Rome confound both them and their practice!) will abandon roses in order to do worse things; the devil who stings them in this way will give them hats made of nettles. For on behalf of Nature, Genius has laid down a sentence on them for their villainy and their filth, along with our other enemies.) (20735-44)

If 'pis fere', doing worse things, is read as committing acts of sodomy, then these 'autres anemis' can be no other than those who refuse sexual intercourse or who refuse it to others. This take on sexuality is deliberately outrageous in its insane

theology but is consistent with the Aristotelian view (if not necessarily Aristotle's) of (hetero)sexual desire as natural and its repression as unnatural.[54]

ENEMIES OF NATURE

La Vieille's doctrine on the violence of repressing sexual desire is embodied in the person of Astenance Contrainte (Enforced Abstinence), whose meaning is not wholly clear but whose 'name apparently means that she is not truly chaste, but either withholds from sexual activity because she has to, or else gives a false appearance of doing so.'[55] She appears as the 'amie' of Faux Semblant, who personifies hypocrisy, the disjuncture between artificial appearance and hidden nature. Faux Semblant is impelled by his desires, although they are far from the 'franc' impulses described by La Vieille and relate to the fulfilment of unnatural appetites.[56]

Astenance remains silent throughout the complex and deeply ironic sermon given by Faux Semblant, who is dressed as a friar. She is not discussed in any detail until the pair set off to defeat Male Bouche, when we are told that she wears the robes of a Carmelite nun and dresses like a Beguine, as befits a figure who represents the vow of chastity (12014-18). Just like La Vieille's young man in holy orders, the vow of chastity and its external sign, the religious garb, do not suppress the natural drive. However, this drive and this nature have become corrupted and are not, in any case, fully concealed.

> De bele taille la devis,
> mes un poi fu pale de vis.
> El resembloit, la puste lisse,
> le cheval de l'Apochalipse,
> qui senefie la gent male,
> d'ypocrisie tainte et pale;
> car cil chevaus seur soi ne porte
> nule coleur, fors pale et morte;

[54] At issue may be the strident attacks on procreation expressed by some Franciscans, notably Peter of John Olivi, who in 1276 was uncompromising in his denigration of marriage and the prodution of children. Cf. Peter Biller, *The Measure of Multitude: Population in Medieval Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 114-15.
[55] Sarah Kay, *The Romance of the Rose*, Critical Guides to French Texts, 110 (London: Grant & Cutler, 1995), p. 29.
[56] Cf. chapter 2 below.

d'itel coleur enlangoree
iert Atenance coloree.
(I would describe her as having a fine figure, although her face was a bit pale. She looked, the smooth whore, like the horse of the Apocalypse which signifies evil people, pale and stained by hypocrisy; for this horse carries no colour on it, except a pale and dead hue; Abstinence was coloured of this sickly colour.) (*Rose*, 12035-44)

Faux Semblant manages, precisely through his being a successful hypocrite, not to appear one. Astenance does not manage this but actively resembles a sign of evil. Her very skin is coloured by her sin; everyone can see that she is a hypocrite, and the very embodiment of the vow of chastity is a 'puste lisse' (a smooth whore). Faux Semblant has earlier declared himself 'des vallez Antecrit' (one of the servants of the Antichrist), recalling the antifraternal tradition of Guillaume de Saint-Amour and Rutebeuf that drew heavily on the book of Revelation.[57] The secular Master of the University of Paris, Guillaume de Saint-Amour, is explicitly mentioned in Faux Semblant's discourse, and his *De periculis novissimorum temporum* of 1256 is a gloss of the book of Revelation that covertly attacks the alleged behaviour of the mendicant orders, Dominican and Franciscan, who are portrayed as followers or forerunners of the Antichrist.[58] The theme is recalled by Astenance Contrainte's sickly and hypocritical hue which is compared to that of one of the horses of the Apocalypse. In the description found in Revelation, the rider of the pale horse is named Death (Rev 6:8). Instead of the Eternal Life promised by religion, this allegorical, unnaturally pale figure represents its very opposite.

She carries around with her a rosary given to her by a friar whom she says is her father. This friar visits her in her convent more often than any other figure and tells her many beautiful sermons (12019-28). This close, quite probably sexual, possibly even incestuous, relationship, is immediately followed by the claim that, despite Faux Semblant, Astenance and the friar make a passionate confession of

[57] Cf. pp. 70-72.
[58] Penn Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 32. Cf. Guillaume de Saint-Amour, *De periculis novissimorum temporum*, ed. and trans. by Guy Geltner, Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations, 8 (Paris, Leuven and Dudley MA: Peeters, 2008).

such intimacy that it seemed as if there were two heads under one hood (12029-34). We are later told that Astenance is pregnant by Faux Semblant and ready to give birth to the Antichrist (14713-16).

The decision to include Abstenance dressed as a nun coupled in an unholy embrace with the archetype of hypocrisy, likewise in religious habit, is unquestionably a satirical attack on the perceived sins of the friars and the beguines. I would like to suggest that this association of the two figures is not simply on the moral plane but also makes a theoretical point;[59] it comes from a philosophical position that not only attacks the hypocritical inconsistencies of religious figures but also condemns the very vow of celibacy as unnatural. Astenance Contrainte is mentioned once more in the *Rose*. When Nature sends down her priest Genius to preach her gospel to Amor's barons, Faux Semblant has made himself scarce and Astenance runs off as quickly as she can (19423-32), as she will not be seen near a priest without her lover's protective lies. The corrupt friar and nun are, in a sense, the shadowy doubles of Nature, established pope-like as God's 'vicaire et connestable' (19477), and Genius, dressed up as a bishop by Amor's followers (19447-50). They are directly contrary to the two far more respectable – if not wholly unsatirised – personae that represent 'the natural'. The text's uncompromising attack on the celibacy of the religious will be continued by Genius, as scripted by Nature, when he associates abstinence from procreation with the homosexual scorning of the tools by which Nature's work is sustained towards the end of the *Rose* (19497-19502). La Vieille's and Nature's discussions of natural sexual desire surely inform Astenance's unhealthy, unnatural character, and they provide a theoretical basis for the failure of human institutions to curb the sexual drive. However, the moral corruption, the sin and the spectre of the Antichrist which all taint Astenance and which are the very *raison d'être* of Faux Semblant are not adequately explained by La Vieille or Nature (or by Raison in her discussion of sexual desire); they come from somewhere besides Aristotle.

[59] The interplay between moral criticism or admonition and the discussion of abstract theoretical material will be discussed more fully in chapter 3.

THE GOLDEN AGE: A STATE OF PURE NATURE

All of the moral failings discussed in the *Rose* are linked by their perversion of a natural order that is outlined by Nature and whose founding myth is that of the Golden Age and the Fall that is represented by Jupiter's castration of Saturn. The Golden Age is principally discussed by the figures of Ami and Genius and, as in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, I it is a time of bliss when humans lived in total comfort in a purely natural state without any greed, property or deception. In the past, says Ami, women did not have sex in order to gain money. Instead, he tells us:

> Jadis, au tens des prumiers peres
> et de noz prumereines meres,
> si con la letre le tesmoigne,
> par cui nous savons la besoigne,
> furent amors leaus et fines,
> sanz covoitise et sanz rapines,
> et li siecles mout precieus.
> (Formerly, in the time of our first fathers and our first mothers, as is it is written in the text that tells us of this matter, love affairs were loyal and fine, without envy and without rapes, and the world was worth a great deal.) (8325-31)

These totally natural sexual relationships correspond very closely to those approved by Nature when, as we saw earlier, she describes the perfect, perfectly natural sexual behaviour of non-human animals (18969-90). In that description, the absence of commerce and rape was held up as a criterion of natural sex, here repeated. 'Covoitise', or envy, is only possible in relation to private property. Without property, without possession, there can be no exchange of money or power and no desire for profit that lead to prostitution or to envy. Shortly afterwards, Ami will go on to say that in the Golden Age

> riche estoient tuit egaument
> et s'entramoient loiaument.
> Ausinc pesiblement vivoient,
> car naturelment s'entramoient,
> les simples genz de bone vie.
> (they were all rich equally and loved each other loyally. Thus they lived at peace for they loved each other naturally, these simple people leading a good life.) (9491-96)

In this idealised time before there was a need for social institutions, the natural world gave such abundance that no one had to work the land for food and there was no need for private property or money. We are told that during this lost age the weather was always 'douz et aesiez' (sweet and temperate) (8374), 'si con en printemps pardurable' (just as if in an eternal spring) (8376). This eternal spring is exactly how Genius describes the weather conditions in his natural paradise of the parc de l'Agneau, which seems to reflect and to surpass the promise of the pure naturalness of the Golden Age:

> car li soleuz replandissanz,
> qui tourjorz leur est parissanz,
> fet le jour en un point estable,
> tel c'onc an printans pardurable
> si bel ne vit ne si pur nus,
> neïs quant regnoit Saturnus,
> qui tenoit les dorez aages,
> cui Jupiter fist tant d'outrages,
> ses filz, et tant le tourmenta
> que les coillons li souplanta.
> (for the shining sun, which is always visible to them, fixes the day so that it does not change, in such a way that never was seen so pure and beautiful an eternal spring, even when the Golden Age was held under the reign of Saturn, to whom his son Jupiter committed such atrocities and tormented him so by ripping off his testicles.) (19997-20006)

The Golden Age is the Eden to the Heaven of Genius' Parc de l'Agneau in the hypothetical alternative religion of Nature of which Genius is the priest. In both the Golden Age and the Parc no artificial institutions stand between Nature's creatures and the satisfaction of their natural urges. These are not intended to convince a reader of their truth. Rather, as idealising (if outrageous) speculations about realms of pure, unfettered desire, they serve to illustrate the underlying principle of natural drive that informs the whole of the *Rose*.[60]

The Golden Age ends with an act of castration, the ultimate attempt to suppress the principle of sexual desire, which is held up as the antithesis of what is purely

[60] The Parisian Artists were familiar with the use of hypothetical fictions to arrive at theoretical truths from reading Maimonides who used the hypothetical eternity of the world heuristically to proof the existence, unicity, and incorporeality of God. Cf. de Libera, pp. 122-29.

natural, the attempt to control and repress the sexual urge. Nature herself draws attention to this when she complains about Origen who had himself castrated in order that he could teach women religion without suspicion (17022-28). In addition, for all his hysterical (and quite possibly parodic) screeching about castrating those who refuse procreation, we have Genius's sage advice that 'Granz pechiez est d'ome escoillier (it is a great sin to castrate a man) (20020) when discussing Jupiter's forcible removal of his father Saturn's testicles. Genius discusses the ways in which castration is harmful. Someone who castrates a man 'li tost il l'amour de s'amie' (removes from him his girlfriend's love/the love of his girlfriend) (20014). More than that, castration can start to undermine gender difference on which the whole project of the natural is founded. Castrated men are liable to become

> couart, pervers et chenins
> por ce qu'il ont meurs feminins.
> (cowardly, perverse, and cruel because they behave like women.)
> (20029-30)

The worst part of castration, a crime against Nature, is to remove the possibility of continuing the human form.

> Anseurquetout li escoillierres,
> tout ne soit il murtriers ne lierres
> ne n'ait fet nul mortel pechié,
> au mains a il de tant pechié
> qu'il a fet grant tort a Nature
> de lui tolir s'angendreüre.
> (Above all the castrator, for all that he is not a murderer or a thief
> and has not committed a mortal sin, he has at least sinned in this,
> that he has done a great wrong to Nature by taking from her her
> power to procreate.) (20039-44)

Jupiter's castration of Saturn and the implicit loss of the continuation of his lineage – the eternal preservation of his form – may then figure the loss of eternal life that occurred with the first sin. It certainly marks a rupture, a more permanent repression of the natural drive than the cage restraining the bird in

La Vieille's speech or the vow of chastity and the robe that figures it. It is an artificial intervention to thwart the force of nature that is the sexual drive.[61]

This primal act of castration is central to the *Rose*'s moral project in that it represents the suppression of untrammelled wholly 'natural' desire and it explains the functioning of the principle of natural drive in explaining human behaviour. As with Genius' sermon, in Raison's lecture to Amant, the Golden Age ends with the castration of Saturn by Jupiter, who thus inaugurates an age of laws and society to establish control and to regulate a previously free human existence (5505-20).[62] The system of laws and judges fails, however, and Raison uses this fact to illustrate that pure love is better than pure justice. Immediately after her description of the castration of Saturn and the resulting birth of Venus, we are given a lengthy story from Livy. Appius Claudius, inflamed by lust, abuses his position as judge so as to have possession of the daughter of one Lucius Virginius. The father ends up killing his daughter to protect her honour (5559-5628). Sexual desire, far from being controlled by castration or repression, re-emerges, sinful and destructive. Lust, uncontrolled, uncontrollable sexual desire, emerges from the very act of the repression of desire. From Saturn's testicles Venus is born, unstable and destabilising.

FALLEN DESIRE – SIN AND THE *ROSE*

The pagan myth of the Golden Age, of life lived perfectly in accordance with nature followed by a disaster that led to our current sinful is an alternative version of the Fall and the first parents' expulsion from Eden.[63] Alain de Lille's *De*

[61] Let us note that in the Matthew 19: 12, Jesus when discussing continence and the vow of chastity compares it to making oneself a eunuch for the sake of heaven. Early commentators, including Origen, were at pains to point out that this autocastration was to be understood spiritually and not literally. Cf. Peter Browe, *Zur Geschichte der Entmannung: eine religions- und rechtsgeschichtliche Studie* (Breslau: Müller und Seiffert, 1936), pp. 30-32.
[62] Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. and trans. by Frank Justus Miller, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1977-84), I. 113-50.
[63] The Christian authority Boethius could allude to the Golden Age when discussing money and nature in the *De consolatione Philosophiae* (II, m. 5), in *Theological Tractates and the Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. and trans. H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1973), henceforth *DCP*. Cf. F. W. A. George, 'Jean de Meung and the Myth of the Golden Age', in *The Classical Tradition in French Literature*, ed. by H. T. Barnwell, A. H. Diverres *et al.* (London: Grant and Cutler, 1977), pp. 31-39, p. 33. For an extended discussion of the Fall in relation to the *Rose*, cf. John M. Fyler, *Language and the*

planctu Naturae, which Jean de Meun appropriated, translated and reworked extensively (not least in his use of the allegorical figures of Nature and Genius), shows human nature to be hopelessly corrupt after Venus (or concupiscence) causes a rupture with the originally perfect ordering of human nature and generation.[64] As in the *Roman de la rose*, the earlier, unstated rupture that lies behind the end of the Golden Age was original sin, which led to the human soul's loss of control over the body, and to a decline in its ability to comprehend the world completely rationally. It is striking that none of the speaking figures in the *Rose*, not least Raison, have a complete and wholly rational understanding of the world and human beings' place within it. In the final section of this chapter I would like to consider the importance of the Fall for explaining the role that paradox and uncertainty play in the *Rose* and its discussion of nature. I do not want to suggest that Jean de Meun was reading Augustinian theology as closely as he was Aristotle, but rather that Augustinian thinking on the relationship between the Fall and the attendant corruption of the human soul informs the discussion of unnatural desire in the *Rose*. It, rather than Aristotelian philosophy, lies at the heart of the question of what makes humans act *contra naturam*. Neither Ami nor la Vieille, nor Genius or Raison for that matter, have a total understanding of the prelapsarian state of human existence; they are limited to discussing it through the artificial veil of the allegory of the Golden Age.

In the *De civitate Dei*, Augustine is quite explicit that in man with the Fall,

> natura humana uitiata atque mutata est, ut repugnantem pateretur in membris inoboedientiam concupiscendi et obstringeretur necessitate moriendi.
> (human nature was so vitiated and changed in him, however, that he suffered in his members the conflict of disobedient lust, and became bound to the necessity of dying.)[65]

Declining World in Chaucer, Dante, and Jean de Meun, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 63 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 60-100.

[64] The *De planctu* and its relationship to the *Rose* will be discussed more fully in chapter 5.

[65] Augustine of Hippo, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini episcopi De civitate Dei, libri XXII*, ed. by Bernhard Dombart and Alfons Kalb, 2 vols., 5th edition (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1981) (henceforth *DCD*), XIII. 3; I. 387. Translation from *The City of God against the pagans*, ed. and trans. by D. W. Dyson. Cf. Elaine Hiesey Pagels, 'Augustine on Nature and Human Nature', in *Saint Augustine the Bishop: A Book of Essays*, ed. by Fannie LeMoine and Christopher Kleinhenz, Garland Medieval Casebooks, 9 (New York and London: Garland, 1994), pp. 77-108.

In Eden, the grace of God meant that humans, not subject to uncontrolled desire, were wholly aligned with nature and God.[66] After the Fall, 'caro patitur, quo seruire non sinitur' (the flesh is in such a condition that it simply cannot serve our will).[67] The result is, in Alain de Lille, that Venus turns away from her husband Hymenaeus, and deviates from the correct, ordered reproduction demanded by Nature.[68] In the *Rose*, Raison simply tells us, following the First Vatican Mythographer, that Venus ('dea libidinis' (goddess of lust) in the Latin source)[69] emerged from the sea into which Saturn's genitalia were thrown. The example that follows, of justice perverted by uncontrolled lust in the person of Claudius Appius, is evidence of this disordered desire. The inherent instability of desire has come from the loss of the grace with which 'Deus enim creavit hominem rectum' (God thus created man upright).[70] After the Fall, sexual activity cannot be accomplished purely rationally as it could in Eden but is always tainted by the irrationality of the body in revolt.[71] Peter Lombard, possibly the most influential theologian for thirteenth-century thinkers, notes that 'datur intelligi quid sit originale peccatum, scilicet vitium concupiscentiae, quod in omnes concupiscentialiter natos per Adam intravit, eosque commaculavit.' (It is given to know what original sin is, that is the vice of desire, which through Adam entered into all those born through desire and polluted them.)[72] He says of Eden that '[t]unc sine errore ratio iudicare, et voluntas sine difficultate bonum appetere poterat.' (at that time, reason had been able to judge without error and

(Cambridge: CUP, 1998), p. 544.
[66] Cf. Chenu, pp. 289-308.
[67] *DCD*, XIV. 15; II. 437 (Dyson, p. 613).
[68] As discussed at p. 211.
[69] *Scriptores rerum mythicarum Latini tres Romae nuper reperti. : ad fidem codicum MSS. Guelferbytanorum Gottigensis, Gothani et Parisiensis*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Bode (Cellis: Schultze, 1834), Mythographus primus, 2. 102. 31, p. 33. Cf. *ibid*, Mythographus tertius, 3. 1. 7. 25-39, p. 155, which interprets Venus in this story as representing *libido* (lust). (25).
[70] *DCD*, XIII. 14; I. 395 (Dyson, p. 555). Cf. Eccl. 7: 30.
[71] My discussion of theologians' approaches to original sin owes a lot to J.-B. Kors, *La justice primitive et le péché originel d'après S. Thomas*, Bibliothèque Thomiste, 2 (Le Saulchoir, Kain: Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques, 1922.
[72] Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, 3rd ed. rev., ed. by Ignatius C. Brady, 2 vols., Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 4 (Grottaferrata: Collegi S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1971-81) (henceforth *Sententiae*), II. d. 30, c. 10 (200); I, 501.

the will had been able to desire the good without difficulty).[73] He goes on to note that

> ante peccatum nulla erat hominis difficultas nullumque impedimentum de lege membrorum ad bonum, nulla impulsio vel instigatio ad malum.
> (before sin, man had no difficulty and no impediment to good from the law of the members, nor any impulse or incitement towards evil.)[74]

Original sin, transmitted through the generations by generation (according to Hugh of Saint-Victor, Honorius Augustodunensis, and numerous others),[75] is caused by *concupiscentia*, by desire. Peter Lombard puts it as follows:

> Originale peccatum dicitur fomes peccati, scilicet concupiscentia vel concupiscibilitas, quae dicitur lex membrorum, sive languor naturae, sive tyrannus qui est in membris nostris, sive lex carnis.
> (Original sin is said to be the kindling for sin, that is, desire or desirousness, which is called the law of the members or the sluggishness of nature, or the tyrant which is in our members, or the law of the flesh.)[76]

It is clear throughout the *Rose* that something went wrong with the Fall that led to a fault in the human soul (a process which can only be alluded to through allegory or *integumentum*), and that subsequently human desire no longer follows a purely natural or rational path. It is this corruption of the soul that can lead to the loss of human dignity that, far from separating humans from the other animals, turns humans into monstrous predatory animals in human form, as exemplified by Faux Semblant.[77] While Fleming would like to see in Raison an Augustinian principle of *sapientia*, it is also clear that she, like Nature, does not understand the state of the fallen human soul.[78] Her advice to live a life of pure rationality is not praticable given the fallibility of his body which is impelled by

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[73], *Ibid*., II, d. 25, c. 6 (158); I. 464.
[74] *Ibid*. II, d. 25, c. 14, 10, I, 469.
[75] Hugh of Saint Victor, *In Epistolam ad Romanos*, q. 105, *PL*, 175: 460D; Honorius Augustodunensis, *Elucidarium*, II. 12, *PL*, 172. 1143CD.
[76] *Sententiae*, II, d. 30, c. 8 (198), 2; I. 500.
[77] This will be discussed at more length in chapter 2.
[78] Cf. Thomas D. Hill, 'Narcissus, Pygmalion, and the Castration of Saturn: Two Mythographical Themes in the *Roman de la Rose*', *Studies in Philology*, 71.4 (1974), 404-26, pp. 420-21 and Fleming's haughty critique in *Reason and the Lover*, pp. 17-24.

concupiscence, a concupiscence with which he was born. She fails, then, to prevail over Amant and to persuade him to regulate his disordered desire. Raison, however, does not enjoin Amant to reject the body and desire, but to use them in accordance with nature. This appears to be quite a different view from that of the theologians, again taking Peter Lombard as an authoritative example:

> Caro enim per peccatum corrupta fuit in Adam, adeo ut [...] iam post peccatum non valet fieri carnalis copula absque libidinosa concupiscentia, quae semper vitium est, et etiam culpa nisi excusetur per bona coniugii.
> (Therefore because of sin, the flesh was corrupt in Adam to such a degree that now after the Fall, carnal coupling is not capable of taking place without sexual desire, which is always a vice and also a crime except when it is excused by the goods of marriage.)[79]

Raison may not fully understand Amant's sinful nature, but she nevertheless advances a code of behaviour and does not simply lament for a lost state of goodness. Instead, she offers a moral framework of the natural, as does Ami in his satire of Le Jaloux (the Jealous Man) who unnaturally imprisons his wife in a loveless marriage. La Vieille also offers such a framework in her discussion of the necessity of natural drive, and so do Nature and Genius, who both present an ethics in which procreation is the means by which man can fulfil the natural imperative to continue the species. Accordingly, despite the loss of Eden (or the Golden Age), a time when everything was simple and communal, the natural still stands as an ethical yardstick, and the sexual drive is valorised in a way that it would not be by orthodox theologians. The repression of the sexual drive is shown to be unnatural, and this partially explains why the end of the Fall is framed allegorically as castration by a power-hungry son. Libido is not the worst of all ills in the *Rose*; far worse is the desire for mastery over others, which removes 'franchise', understood as a natural state of freedom. The phrase 'naturel franchise' occurs three times in the *Rose*. Twice it is used in relation to money. The avaricious surrender their 'naturel franchise' when they make themselves slaves to coin (*Rose*, 5129), and lenders remove the 'naturel franchise'

[79] *Sententiae*, II, d. 31, c. 4; I. 506. It is not clear, however, that Raison's advice necessarily contradicts Peter Lombard and it is not made explicit that she would accept sexual relations outside of marriage, as Nature and Genius would. There is, however, a clear shift of emphasis in which marriage does not feature prominently as a remedy to sin in the *Rose*.

from those to whom they lend (8211).[80] The third mention occurs when Nature rejects the idea that some people are nobler than others due to their rank. When discussing aristocrats who do not act in a charitable manner, she offers a different understanding of it that does not derive from rank. Rather, Nature bestows a different kind of nobility

> que je leur doing, qui mout est bele,
> qui a non naturel franchise,
> que j'ai seur touz egaumant mise,
> avec reson, que Diex leur done,
> qui les fet, tant est sage et bone,
> semblables a Dieu et aus anges,
> se mort nes an feïst estranges [...]
> (that I give to them which is most beautiful, and which is called natural freedom, that I have bestowed equally upon all along with reason, which God gives them, which makes them – so great and wise is it – resemble God and the angels, or it would have done had death not estranged them from it.) (18842-48)

This 'naturel franchise', this freedom or nobility with which the first humans are born, has not been completely sullied by the end of the Golden Age and still provides a natural grounding for the consideration of ethics. However, in the postlapsarian world, in which sin and death have estranged humans from their perfect state, a life of pure naturalness is not possible. Nor would an attempt to live it be advisable, since we cannot rely on others to behave in accordance with nature. Fallen humans inhabit a social world in which there can no longer be trust between individuals, a physical world that does not, on its own, provide the wherewithal for humans to survive, and a mental world in which reason no longer gives untrammelled access to truth. Given this context it is necessary to supplement the natural with artifice, that is, with human skill.

THE VALUE OF ARTIFICE

In the *Physics* the concept of the 'natural' is not a moral category, but one of natural philosophy. The natural is placed in opposition to two key principles,

[80] The avaricious person's surrender of freedom will be discussed at greater length at pp. 210-13.

that of 'chance', the accidental confluence of events,[81] and that of the 'artificial', made from natural material by humans. In opposition to the purely natural state of the Golden Age, which figures an Edenic period in which everything was natural, the end of the Golden Age sees the need for artifice, for the making of tools, for human innovation and invention. For all that it may be right to act in accordance with nature, such natural living is no longer possible as we have lost communality of the Golden Age and with it the possibility for simple univocal communication. The concept of the artificial is not used simply to reflect on the use of tools, but is used to think about language, spoken and written, and the *Roman de la rose* itself is a text of artifice. In fact, the concept of 'text' is not possible without artifice (from *tego* meaning 'I weave' or 'I plait', and by extension, 'I compose'). Since wholly natural communication is no longer possible, the use of artificial language is necessary. Therefore, necessarily, truth is never wholly accessible or conveyable in simple, univocal language.

While Raison and Ami frame the end of the Golden Age as a loss, Genius' account is slightly different. Following Virgil's *Georgics*, he tells of how Jupiter, who didn't care about the importance of testicles, but only about power, ruined the natural goodness of the world by establishing his kingdom on earth and laying down laws. Jupiter exemplifies the desire for mastery that led to the control of (and assault on) nature, as figured by the castration of Saturn. Jupiter

> [...] fu rais devenuz
> et sires du monde tenuz,
> si bailla ses conmandemanz,
> ses lais, ses establissemanz,
> et fist tantost tout a delivre,
> por les genz enseignier a vivre,
> son ban crier en audiance,
> don je vos dirai la santance.
> (became king and lord of all the world, and gave his commandments, his laws, and his institutions, and in order to teach the people how to live, he immediately had his proclamations publicly announced, whose content I will tell you.)
> (20057-64)

[81] One example given by Aristotle is that of a man engaged in collecting subscriptions for a feast who goes to a given place with another purpose but who, without having intended it in advance, happens to collect a subscription at that place. Cf. *Physics* II.5, 196b33-197a5.

The establishment of laws is thus followed by Jupiter's declaration which is to make the pursuit of pleasure the cardinal rule. (20065-70) He then partitions the land, puts venom in snakes and teaches wolves how to rampage. However, through his destruction of the natural world's ability to provide the necessaries for life, he also introduced skill and abstract knowledge of the world to humans.

> [C]ist fist le feu par tout estaindre,
> tant semilla por genz destraindre
> et le leur fist querir es pierres,
> tant fu soutils et baretierres;
> cist fist diverses arz nouveles;
> cist fist nons et nombres aus esteles;
> cist laz et raiz et gluz fist tandre
> por les sauvages bestes prandre,
> et leur huia les chien prumiers,
> don nus n'iert avant coustumiers.
> (He extinguished fire everywhere, so much did he strive to torment people, and he made them seek it in the rocks, such was his subtlety and trickery. He invented many different new arts; he named and numbered the stars; he made nets and traps and glue to catch the wild beasts and he was the first to set dogs on them, which before then no one had been accustomed to do.) (20105-14)

The end of the Golden Age sees the institution of overwhelming desire for pleasure, followed by birth of human skill ('ars'), the giving of names and order to the natural world, along with control over animals. We might infer that during this Golden Age there was no artistic creation. Humans simply lived without property, without abstract concepts, without art, without the things that differentiate humans from animals. Being fully human in this narrative involves, to an extent, acting against nature in the postponement or suppression of one's innate drive, a process necessary in order to negotiate a fallen world.
That the *Roman de la rose* itself, is an artificial production is true in the technical Aristotelian sense that a physical book containing the *Rose* is a material object made by shaping natural matter. In addition, the poem does not have within itself a principle of change or movement and cannot reproduce itself, but requires further copying or continuation to preserve it, as Jean continues

Guillaume's text.[82] The book, like any other artificial object, is used to negotiate this fallen world and, despite all its praise for nature, it can never itself be purely natural. Faux Semblant represents artifice and the concealment of a nature that has become corrupt and in a similar way the *Rose* conceals its truths through artificial fictions such as the philosophically impossible speaking figure of Nature, even as it signals its own artificiality. The *Rose* itself cannot offer the pure knowledge available in Eden, which, in any case, is only expressed imperfectly through the fictional covering of the various, contradictory narratives of the Golden Age. When attempting to describe Nature, Jean's narrator provides a list of both philosophers and artists, none of whom have successfully managed to convey her true beauty. Neither philosophy nor art can grasp the true nature of nature (16135-72). The promise of pure knowledge and a wholly natural state is described in the Parc de l'Agneau in Genius' sermon in which the happy, saved sheep gaze into a mystical trinitarian 'carboncles merveillables / seur toutes merveilleuses pierres' (carbuncle to be marvelled at more than all other marvellous stones) (20498-99), both totally round and with three sides, simultaneously both one and three against the rules of nature.

> Si ra si merveilleus poair
> que cil qui la le vont voair,
> si tost con cele part se virent
> et leur faces an l'eve mirent,
> toujorz, de quelque part qu'il soient,
> toutes les choses du parc voient
> et les connoissent proprement,
> et eus meïsmes ansement.
> (And it has such a marvellous power that those who go there to see it, as soon as they see themselves in that part and gaze upon their faces in the water,[83] they always, wherever they are, see everything in the park and they know them as they truly are, just as they know themselves as they truly are.) (20537-44)

Even if the *Rose* does offer paradoxes, parodies, jokes, and impossibilities, and even if Genius' sermon is slightly ridiculous, it nevertheless holds up the ultimate

[82] The relationship between textual generation and sexual generation will be discussed in more depth in chapter 5.
[83] There is a potential double meaning here. 'Leur faces an l'eve mirent' can also mean 'Their faces reflect in the water'. As with Narcissus' fountain, and elsewhere in the *Rose*, there is an ambiguity between the thing and its reflection.

heavenly possibility for total knowledge in accordance with nature, which it seems counterintuitive to read simply as a joke. Genius may get his concept of heaven slightly wrong, but he is a speaker of a postlapsarian nature in a text that openly acknowledges its own imperfections, thanks to which it can only approach the truth in a sideways manner. This does not mean that the whole poem is a joke, or that it valorises indeterminacy above all else. It does not mean that Jean de Meun is parodying the very idea of heaven or showing it to be a myth. It shows our inability truly to understand it without the aid of the divine grace that was lost in Eden. It demonstrates that for fallen humans indeterminacy is inevitable but that, nevertheless, artificial tools and artificial text can be used to approach truth. The artificial *Rose* can, despite itself, signal a framework for understanding the world and for making moral decisions based on nature as an ethical value so that the natural world and one's fellow humans can still be understood, although without the possibility of complete knowledge. Humans can act naturally although not perfectly naturally and the very impossibilities and paradoxes of the *Rose* ultimately contribute to its message about the lack of perfection in anything that is not wholly natural. The artificial, though, is not the same as the unnatural. Rather what is unnatural for humans is the failure to control bestial passions, and the *Rose*'s preoccupation with desire and drive is a factor of its ethical investigation into the unnatural (or the sinful) in humans and its effects. It also suggests ways for fallen humans to recognise and negotiate the unnatural in themselves and others, and this is what we will consider in the following chapter.

2

Monstrous Human Beasts

This thesis opened with a *quaestio* in which Thomas Aquinas considered the role of the passions in humans and animals in an attempt to understand hope and fear, and to use the animal to consider the functioning of human psychology.[1] Humans, like animals, are moved by the irascible passions. Aquinas points out that animals' motivations can be inferred from their observable behaviour. Animals are purely natural and there is no problem deriving the interior truth from the external signs of their movements. As a consequence (and as a mark) of the Fall, humans began to hide their physical bodies and their inner motivations with clothes, artificial signs that offer a much more complicated relationship between appearance and truth. This relationship between concealment and desire is at the heart of understanding the ways in which humans deviate from the natural in the *Roman de la rose*. Guillaume de Lorris employed allegory as gracious civilising clothing in the discussion of sexual desire. Allegory, *integumentum*, in late twelfth- and thirteenth-century poetics, operated by covering over the naked truth '*sub pio figmentorum velamine honestis*' ('beneath a respectful and respectable veil of allegory'),[2] a modesty in language that had an analogous value to literal clothes as signs of civilisation and humanity.[3] Amant's sexual desire is thus hidden, and also controlled, by the civilising conventions of

[1] An earlier version of this chapter appeared as Jonathan Morton, 'Wolves in Human Skin: Questions of Animal Appetite in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose*', *Modern Language Review*, 105:4 (2010), 976-997.

[2] *In Somnium*, I. 2. 11; I, 7. Unless indicated otherwise, all translations are my own. Also cf. Geoffroy de Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*, ed. by Martin Camargo and trans. by Margaret F. Nims, Medieval Sources in Translation, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2010), I, 60-70. For discussion of sexual and textual nakedness in the *Rose* cf. Minnis, pp. 82-118; Brown. *Integumenta* will be discussed more fully in chapter 3, pp. 125-29.

[3] Albert the Great, determining whether or not the pygmy should be counted as animal or human, found that the very nature of its speech indicated its lack of human reason and intellect, 'propter quod etiam rethoricis persuasionibus in loquendo non utitur neque poeticis'. (because it does not use the persuasions of rhetoric when it speaks nor poetic devices.) (Albert the Great, *De animalibus libri XXVI*, ed. by Hermann Stadler, 2 vols., Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosphie des Mittelalters, 15 and 16 (Münster: Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1916-20), XXI. 1. 2. 13; II. 1329. The use of rhetoric and, still more, of theoretical reason, is, for Albert, a defining human characteristic. For more on the question of Albert's treatment of language and animals, see Irven M. Resnick, and Kenneth F. Kitchell, Jr., 'Albert the Great on the "Language" of Animals', *American Catholic Philosophical Journal*, 70: 1 (1996), 41-61, p. 59.

courtly narrative and the use of euphemistic allegory that nevertheless allow an adulterated, socially acceptable evocation of desire. While it is clear that the central figure in Guillaume's text yearns for a woman, this desire is characterised as being for a rose that he wishes to kiss. Sexuality is sublimated in an attempt to prevent it offending the social code of courtly behaviour and the literary demands of courtly poetry. The coverings of civilisation are stripped away by Jean de Meun in his continuation to expose the true animalistic nature of fallen human appetites, prompting a greater consideration of the role that physical urges play in the human psyche. Starting with Jean's use of the wolf as the archetypal symbol of rapacity and unthinking appetite in the person of Faux Semblant, this chapter will consider the theme of humans being transformed into animals throughout Jean de Meun's continuation, and how this theme exposes the porous quality of the coverings with which we mask and control the animal within the human.

Faux Semblant,

> l'ort hypocrite au queur porri,
> qui traït mainte region
> par habit de religon (the filthy hypocrite with a rotten heart who betrays many a region with his religious clothing) (*Rose*, 10442-44),

offers Amor and his barons this self-portrait:

> Je sui des vallez Antecrit,
> des larrons don il est escrit
> qu'il ont habit de saintée
> et vivent en tel faintée.
> Dehors semblons aigneaus pitables
> dedanz sommes lous ravisables.
> (I number amongst the pages of the Antichrist, those thieves of whom it is written that they wear the clothes of holiness and live pretending to deserve them. Outwardly we appear to be pitiable lambs, but within we are ravening wolves.) (11683-88)

Faux Semblant presents both his fictional and Jean de Meun's real audiences with a disconcerting and destabilising uncertainty about our ability to judge

someone's character and personality from the outside. In contrast to Guillaume de Lorris' poem in which there is almost no distinction between the appearance and the real nature of the allegorical speaking figures, this character shatters such a link; his appearance, he tells us is a total (and Satanic) lie.[4] The introduction of the Antichrist into Deduit's garden, like the advent of sin in Eden, marks a shift away from Guillaume's harmonious and civilised world of allegory. Faux Semblant's very nature as the archetypal hypocrite leaves us unable to trust a single word he says, and hypocrisy, an activity proper to no other animal but humans, complicates the understanding of a person's 'real' nature. Faux Semblant's position, at almost the exact mid-point of the *Rose*, emphasises the centrality of doubt in Jean de Meun's work.[5] What is striking is that intertwined with this problematising of human communication is the lurking threat that underneath our refined clothes and our refined speech, we are little more than animals, and not just any animals, but cruel and rapacious wolves, 'leus ravisables'. Not only can humans be evil, but in a sense we can also cease to be fully human. In the context of growing knowledge and discussion of newly received Aristotelian texts concerning zoology and anthropology in the University of Paris,[6] Jean manipulates the poetic tradition of making animals, especially wolves, behave as humans in order to explore the animality lying inside humans that can spring out and unhinge certain notions of humanity's privileged position as the higher species.

WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Faux Semblant dresses himself up in religious garb, ostensibly because appearing pure allows one to carry out crimes more easily. These crimes involve the fulfilling of urges for power, material possessions and sex, and it is this identification with greed and the satisfaction of desires that prompts him to make himself metaphorically into a wolf ('leus'). The significance of the wolf in

[4] This paradox will be discussed on pp. 71; 132-44.
[5] For a detailed examination of the place of Faux Semblant and deceit in the *Rose*, cf. Susan Stakel, *False Roses: Structures of Duality and Deceit in Jean de Meun's Roman de la Rose*, Stanford French and Italian Studies, 60 (Saratoga: Anma Libri, 1991).
[6] Cf. Bernard G. Dod, 'Aristoteles Latinus', in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. by Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny *et al.*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), I. 43-79, p.p. 73-74.

medieval European culture, its associations with cruelty and appetite, and its links with hypocrisy all inform Jean's decision to choose this image for his hypocritical monk, or, more accurately, for his hypocrisy-in-monk's-clothing. In order to examine medieval attitudes to the wolf we turn our attention first to bestiaries, following Aleksander Pluskowski in taking Aberdeen University Library MS 24 as a typical example. The wolf's entry in the bestiary typically starts with the etymology of the animal's name:

> Lupus greca dirivatione in linguam nostram transfertur. Lupos enim dicunt illi licos, licos autem grece, a morsibus apellantur, quod rabie rapacitatis, queque invenerint trucidant.
> (*Lupus* was brought into our language from the Greek, for they called wolves *licos*; they are so called because of their bites by which they massacre whatever they find with rabid rapaciousness.)[7]

The portrayal of wolves as irrationally cruel also drew from the wolf's habit killing every sheep that it could find if it found its way into the sheepfold, and as Pluskowski points out,

> [t]he various written, and undoubtedly, oral tales circulating in medieval Western Europe employed an archetypal wolf, characterised by unbridled cruelty, bestial ferocity as well as literal-mindedness and gullibility, driven by his ravenous hunger.[8]

The wolf, then, is a symbol of a particular kind of voracious and cruel vice, driven by his appetite – the beast *par excellence*. The Bible provides supporting authority for this viewpoint. Jacob blesses Benjamin at Genesis 49:27:

> Beniamin lupus rapax, mane comedet praedam et vespere dividet spolia.
> (Benjamin is a ravening wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the spoils.)

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[7] Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Library, ms. 24, f° 16v; available at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/translat/16v.hti [accessed 14 May 2013]; my translation. Cf. Aleksander Pluskowski, *Wolves and Wilderness in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), p. 129.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

The wolf is the Biblically authorised symbol for rapacity and is always used in this context. Ezekiel (22:27) and Zephaniah (3:3) both use images of wolves to represent ruthless rulers despoiling their subjects. That this tradition was carried through to the middle ages can be seen from Aquinas' quotation of Gregory the Great in his *Summa theologiae*:

> dicit enim Gregorius, in quadam homilia: *Lupus super oves venit, cum quilibet iniustus et raptor fideles quosque atque humiles opprimit*.
> (For Gregory says in one of his homilies, 'the wolf comes upon the sheep, whenever an unjust plunderer oppresses the faithful and the humble.')[9]

Faux Semblant himself recalls it when describing the rich:

> Li menuz pueple les encline
> Et cil comme lou les deveurent.
> (The common people bow down to them and they devour them like wolves.) (11512-13)

Gregory's and Aquinas' use of an opposition between lupine and ovine also draws on the tradition of the New Testament, in which treatment of wolves shifts slightly, following Isaiah's identification of the wolf as the natural enemy of sheep (Is 11: 6 and Is 65: 25).[10] This tradition, combined with the lived experience of wolves preying upon livestock, contributed to the enduring image of the innocent sheep (or lamb) in opposition to the ravenous, often Satanic, wolf. It should be noted, however, that until Genius' sermon at the end of the *Rose*, Jean de Meun does not portray sheep in the Christian sense as followers of Jesus, but rather as the weak animals in a proto-Darwinian struggle. Spiritual worth and salvation are far removed from discussion of humans' bestial activities. Even during Genius' Christological allegory, the idea of human life as an animal struggle still endures; the ewes, guided by the Lamb, are victims pursued and potentially eaten by the Devil who is a 'lous' (wolf) (20230).

[9] ST, IIa IIae q. 40, a. 2, ag 1.
[10] For example, Matt 7: 15; Matt 10: 16; Luke 10: 3; John 10: 11-16; Acts 20: 29.

The religious, the renouncers of carnal desire in favour of a more spiritual existence, are the archetypal Christian sheep, the true followers of the Lamb of God. It was then the natural choice for satirists taking aim at the carnal hypocrisies of monastic or fraternal existence to associate wolves with monks or friars, the immediate Biblical source undoubtedly being Matthew 7: 15:

> Adtendite a falsis prophetis qui veniunt ad vos in vestimentis ovium intrinsecus autem sunt lupi rapaces.
> (Beware false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but who are inwardly ravening wolves.)[11]

In the eleventh-century satirical poem 'The Wolf', a wolf feigns conversion to obtain a tonsure and a monk's habit in order to trick a shepherd out of sheep.[12] This literary *topos* was prevalent throughout Europe and, as Ziolkowski points out,

> [i]f a writer felt that an ecclesiastic leader was failing to execute his responsibilities toward the congregation, he could compare the ecclesiastic – whether or not a monk – with a wolf in sheep's clothing or with a pastor turned wolf.[13]

The wolf-as-monk theme received its most sustained treatment in the anonymous mid-twelfth-century Latin poem, *Ysengrimus*, written in the Low Countries in the *Roman de Renart* tradition, whose principal narrative is the feud between Ysengrin the wolf and Renart the fox. The monks are principally attacked for their greed. For example, they rush like bolts of lightning to gain riches:

> Monachus oblatum cum uiderit affore lucrum,

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[11] All citations from the Latin Vulgate Bible taken from *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. by Robert Weber, Bonifacio Fiscer *et al.*, 2 vols., 2nd edn. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1975).
[12] *De lupo*, ed. by Friedrich Walter Lenz, 'Bemerkungen zudem pseudo-ovidischen Gedicht *De lupo*', *Orpheus*, 10 (1963), 21-32 (pp. 25-28). Cf. Jan M. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals, Medieval Latin Beast Poetry 750-1150* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 202. Ziolkowski provides a useful chronology of medieval sources featuring wolves dressed as monks (pp. 202-10).
[13] *Ibid.*, p205. In the twelfth century, John of Salisbury has Benedict lamenting of the monastic wolves lurking under the skins of lambs in *Metalogicon*, ed. by Clement C. I. Webb (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929), I. 4; p. 13. 7-10.

> Irruit ut pluuio fulgetra mota polo.
> (For when a monk sees any wealth on offer, he falls on it like the flash of lightning produced by a stormy sky.)[14]

A monk's appetite even surpasses that of the wolf, as Ysengrimus recounts:

> Dico satur 'satis est', monachus usque 'parum est'.
> (I say 'that's enough' when I'm full, while a monk still says 'that's not much'.)[15]

The hyperbolic purety to which the monks aspire as Christian sheep is inverted to become instead a hyperbolic bestiality.

Before moving on to see the implications of this satiric union of animal and man, I want to bring up one example which crystallises the disjunction in taking a rapacious beast for a rational human, namely the theme of 'The Wolf in School', a story found widely in art and in animal literature in Latin, German, French, and English.[16] In all of the versions of this story, a monk tries to teach the wolf the alphabet or the creed and the beast cannot restrain himself from thinking about sheep. That the motif of the 'Wolf in School' was widely known in the High Middle Ages and related to excesses of human appetite is attested by a bull issued by Urban II on 14 April 1096 to the monks at the monastery of Montierneuf near Poitiers.

> Nos uero animaduertentes, non eos pro spiritualibus causari, sed pro carnalibus, serio diximus quoddam prouerbium, quod debuerat eis uerecundiam inferre, si aduertere uoluissent, de lupo ad discendas litteras posito, cui cum magister diceret A, ipse agnellum, et cum magister B, ipse dicebat porcellum. Sic et ipsi faciebant, quia, cum nos promitteremus psalmos et orationes, ipsi econtra querebant ea, quae non sunt ad profectum animarum proficua.
> (Indeed, as I realised that they were not pleading for spiritual but for fleshly privileges, I spoke in seriousness a certain proverb that ought to have shamed them, if they wanted to heed it, about the

[14] *Ysengrimus*, ed. and trans. by Jill Mann, Mittellateinische Studien und Texte, 12 (Leiden, New York, Copenhagen and Cologne: Brill, 1987), I. 639-40.
[15] *Ibid.*, I. 644.
[16] Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals*, pp. 206-08. For an extended discussion of this theme, cf. Ayers Bagley, 'A Wolf at School', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching*, 4: 2 (1993), 35-69.

> wolf set to learn the alphabet: when the teacher said A, he would say "lamb", and when the teacher said B, he would say "pig". They did the same, because when we promised psalms and prayers, they in response demanded things which are not beneficial to the profit of souls.)[17]

The monastic wolf, or rather the lupine monk, was a figure well-known in medieval Europe, and appears to be an acknowledgement of the carnal in humans that exists even within those figures who are supposed to be holiest, and part of its appeal lies in the misrecognition on the part of the teacher who fails to notice that it is an animal and not a human being in front of him. Another aspect worth emphasising is the failure of human education and reason in stories of 'The Wolf in School'-type to triumph over the unreasoning bestial appetite.

The monks in *Ysengrimus* are not *like* wolves, but in a sense they *are* wolves; a wolf can pass for a monk without being noticed. Ysengrimus merely needs to shave himself a tonsure, to dress himself in the *vestimentum ovis*, as Tilliette puts it, recalling Matt 7: 15.[18] As if to force the point home there is an episode in *Ysengrimus* in which a wolf's head is served to Ysengrimus on a plate several times, each time being described as the head of a different clergyman (IV. 263-288). The gap between human and animal is, it turns out, very small and the *Rose*'s Faux Semblant likewise does not say he and those like him are like wolves, but that they are wolves: 'dedanz sommes lous ravisables'.

With the entry of Faux Semblant the wolf is brought into Deduit's garden, and the first reference made to wolves in the *Roman de la rose* is in Faux Semblant's justification of his disguise as a monk:

> Qui de la toison dam Belin[19]
> au leu de mantel sebelin
> sire Isengrin affubleroit,
> li lous, qui mouton sembleroit,

[17] Cited in *Kleinere lateinische Denkmäler der Thiersage aus dem zwölften bis vierzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. by Ernst Voigt (Strasburg: Trübner, 1878), p21. The translation is Ziolkowski's: *Talking Animals*, p. 207.
[18] Jean-Yves Tilliette, 'La peau de loup, l'apocalypse: remarques sur le sens et la construction de l'Ysengrimus', *Médiévales*, 38 (2000), 163-76, p. 168.
[19] Belin in the *Roman de Renart* – or Belinus in *Ysengrimus* – is a ram.

por qu'o les berbiz demorast,
cuidiez vos qu'il nes devorast?
(If someone dressed Sir Ysengrin in Lord Belin's fleece instead of a sable coat, so that he could live with the ewes, do you think that the wolf, despite looking like a sheep, would not devour them?)
(11093-98)

Faux Semblant could well be tampering with his sources, however. This episode of the wolf wearing a sheep's clothing does not appear in *Ysengrimus* nor in *Le Roman de Renart*.[20] One possible source could be Eudes de Cheriton's moralising fables in which the fox carries out this ruse,[21] although the use of the names Belin and Isengrin situate the story less in the homiletic morality of the fable and more in the dog-eat-dog world of *Renart* or *Ysengrimus*.

APOCALYPTIC WOLVES IN THE UNIVERSITY

I would like to return to Faux Semblant's claim that he is 'des vallez Antecrit' in order to consider its Biblical source and the implications therein. By quoting Matthew 7:15 referring to wolves in sheep's clothing, Faux Semblant associates those who pretend to be pure with false prophets, the groundwork for this lupine allusion having already been laid by his reference to Ysengrin. Despite the context of conflict between the secular *maitres ès arts* and the friars at the University of Paris during the second half of the thirteenth century, Guy Geltner argues that the figure of Faux Semblant should not be read as an attack on friars, but as a treatment of hypocrisy in general, taking at face value Faux Semblant's claims to be 'a personification of hypocrisy, not a direct depiction or a caricature of a real (or aggregate) friar.'[22] Geltner does, though, acknowledge that Faux Semblant offers Amor and the reader the classic Cretan liar's paradox, and that

[20] See Andrea Valentini, 'Le Remaniement de Gui de Mori et sa tradition manuscrite', in *De la Rose: texte, image, fortune* (Louvain: Peeters, 2006), ed. by Catherine Bel and Herman Braet, pp. 299-320, p307.
[21] *Ibid.*, p307. Valentini notes that one surviving manuscript of Odo's fables, the British Library's Arundel 275) does have a wolf playing this role, although he notes that in Odo's fables there is often confusion between wolf and fox.
[22] Guy Geltner, '*Faux Semblants*: Antifraternalism Reconsidered in Jean de Meun and Chaucer', *Studies in Philology*, 101 (2004), 357-80, p359. Cf. Daniel Poirion, 'Jean de Meun et la querelle de l'Université de Paris: du libelle au livre', in *Traditions Polémiques*, Collection de l'École Normale Supérieure des Jeunes Filles, 27 (Paris: École Normale Supérieure des Jeunes Filles, 1984), pp. 9-19.

consequently we can take nothing he says at face value.[23] He claims that evidence for Faux Semblant as an attack on friars rests solely on Faux Semblant's (Jean's?) praise for Guillaume de Saint-Amour in relation to the secular cleric's antifraternal writings in the 1250s and that the name Faux Semblant is used by Rutebeuf for one of the allegorical characters in Hypocrisie's entourage in *La Complainte Maitre Guillaume de Saint Amour*, a poem defending Guillaume.[24] However, as we have already seen, Jean's use of the metaphor of the wolf stems directly from a tradition of attacking hypocrisy in the clergy employing Matt 7:15. Given the tradition of the wolves-as-clergy and Faux Semblant's self-identification within that tradition, it seems even clearer that whatever the character himself says, in the imagery employed by the author of *Rose* there is an implicit attack on the friars, and perhaps on holy orders in general, an attack, however, that is hidden behind a safety curtain of deniability.[25] Jean, I will argue, follows in the footsteps of Guillaume de Saint-Amour himself, both in his attempt to provide himself with a defence against antifraternalism and in his use of apocalyptic imagery. Penn Szittya points out that in all those of Guillaume's works condemned as antifraternal, most notably the *Tractatus de periculis novissimorum temporum ex Scripturis sumptus*, 'the most startling feature… is the almost total absence of any reference to the friars themselves.'[26] Rather – and this was Guillaume's defence when he was called to answer charges of defamation brought by the friars – his work claimed, more than a little disingenuously, not to be an attack on any of the church's orders but to be an exegesis of Biblical text, an exposition of the 'perils of the last times' predicted in Scripture. This technique of claiming to gloss the Bible as a cover for attacking the friars is continued by Rutebeuf. Szytta describes his 'De Pharisaeo', a poem in defence of Guillaume thus:

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[23] The liar's paradox – can you believe a man who tells you he is lying? – was among the *insolubilia* taught in the schools and universities of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Heller-Roazen, p. 133).
[24] Rutebeuf, *Œuvres complètes de Rutebeuf*, ed. by Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, 2 vols. (Paris: Picard, 1969), I. 258-266.
[25] Jean's concealment of his truth under the artificial cover of his poetry parallels the problem of understanding the truth of other humans which lies concealed beneath artificial covering of their clothes or speech. This will be discussed in more depth in chapter 3.
[26] Szittya, p. 18.

> [t]he Pharisees (viz. friars), says Rutebeuf, are described by Christ in the Gospel; they wear robes of rough wool to appear humble and simple, like the wolves who come in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15).[27]

As Szittya points out, this reference to Matt 7:15 is also made by Guillaume.[28] Jean's Faux Semblant clearly recalls that of Rutebeuf in his reference to the verse but recalls Guillaume's antifraternal warnings of the last times when he says he is 'des vallez Antecrist', a reference not to the Gospels but to 1 John 2: 18:

> filioli novissima hora est et sicut audistis quia antichristus venit nunc antichristi multi facti sunt unde scimus quoniam novissima hora est.
> (Little children, this is the last hour and, just as you have heard that Antichrist coming, so now there are many Antichrists; hence we know that it is the last hour.)

This inclusion of the idea of the Antichrist and, by implication, of the Apocalypse, on top of the reference to wolves in sheep's clothing serves, through a chain of citation, to reinforce Faux Semblant's place within the apocalyptic tradition of the antifraternal writings of Guillaume (and within a larger tradition of satirising hypocritical clergy), even though the character himself stresses that his person should not be seen as an attack on all those who have taken sacred oaths:

> Si ne vueill je mie blamer
> religion ne diffamer
> en quell que habit que l'en la truisse
> (And I do not wish to criticise religion nor to slander it in whatever clothes one may find it in.) (10987-89)

For all that this disclaimer casts the net of Jean's satire wider than the friars, it functions equally well as a tool of deniability. He can claim to be criticising individual sinners, rather than the institutions of religion themselves. Geltner makes a persuasive point by drawing on Meradith T. McMunn's work to show how illuminations of Faux Semblant in manuscripts depict him dressed in the

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 185, n. 5.

robes of a whole variety of different monastic orders and not just those of the Dominicans and Franciscans.[29] However, the variety of different monastic figures demonstrates Jean's success in avoiding outright and blatant condemnation of friars while still preserving the veiled criticism alluded to by references to the figures of Ysengrin and Guillaume de Saint-Amour, lying there to be decoded by some of his audience, especially Parisians associated with University life and familiar with disputes between the religious and the secular masters.[30] In fact, the recurrence of the image of Faux Semblant dressed as a monk or friar of whatever kind in illuminated manuscripts of the *Rose*, especially the representation of him killing Male Bouche, would seem to counter Geltner's idea that Faux Semblant was or should be read as a general symbol of hypocrisy and turns the illuminated texts into more direct attacks on the religious. The image does not allow for the subtleties of Faux Semblant's clause of deniability; what the reader sees is not a representation of general and generalised sin but a friar or a monk, often from a specific, identifiable order murdering a man (or sometimes a woman when Male Bouche is misrepresented as female) during confession (see figure 1).[31]

WOLVES IN HUMAN SKIN

The murder itself is curious. It might at first appear that the killing of Male Bouche is an allegory for the definitive silencing of gossip through the use of hypocrisy, especially given the cutting out of his tongue that follows, but as elsewhere in Jean's *Rose*, the allegory does not hold up particularly easily.[32] For a start, hypocrisy cannot silence gossip any more than provisionally, which sits ill with the permanent termination implied by Male Bouche's death. Moreover, a straightforward allegorical reading of the murder does not explain the eerie presence at Faux Semblant's side of Astenance Contrainte, and also seems unconvincing in explaining the violence portrayed. There is nothing to be gained

[29] Geltner, p. 359, n. 8.
[30] Cf. Geltner's introduction to the *De periculis*, pp. 1-22.
[31] Timothy Stinson's recent article on antifraternal satire in fourteenth-century *Rose* manuscripts is useful here: 'Illumination and Interpretation: The Depiction of Faus Semblant in *Roman de la Rose* Manuscripts', *Speculum*, 87:2 (2012), 469-98.
[32] Cf. Gaunt, p. 69: 'The text, far from inviting us to look *through* the "literal" to the "allegorical" level of meaning, as if the literal were transparent, seems rather to take pleasure in banging our heads against the literal, as if it were a hard and opaque surface.'

within the narrative of conquering Jalousie's castle by killing Male Bouche after the figure has conceded to the authority of the supposed friar and allowed entry to the castle; the murder is gratuitous, committed only for the pleasure that results from it.[33] Aquinas categorises just such an act as follows:

> [P]roprie loquendo, feritas vel saevitia dicitur secundum quam aliquis in poenis inferendis non considerat aliquam culpam eius qui punitur, sed solum hoc quod delectatur in hominum cruciatu. Et sic patet quod continetur sub bestialitate: nam talis delectatio non est humana, sed bestialis, proveniens vel ex mala consuetudine vel ex corruptione naturae, sicut et aliae huiusmodi bestiales affectiones.
> (Properly speaking, brutality or savagery applies to one who in inflicting punishment does not think about the guilt of the person punished, but only the pleasure that can be derived from torturing men. Consequently it is evident that it counts as bestiality: for such pleasure is not human but bestial, resulting either from evil custom, or from a corrupt nature, in the same way as other bestial emotions.) [34]

By killing Male Bouche, Faux Semblant shows himself to be bestial; he is acting the wolf and in the case of the illumination of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS 195 (Figure 1), I would speculate that his grey robe, his posture on all fours, rather than upright, and his use of hands rather than human implements to kill Male Bouche all emphasise the lupine, rapacious quality of his crime.

(Figure 1: Faux Semblant and Astenance Contrainte kill Male Bouche during his confession. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 195, fol. 89r.)

[33] Even reading the incident as a simple allegory for silencing gossip does not explain why Male Bouche should be killed in addition to being de-tongued.
[34] *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 159, a. 2, co.

Faux Semblant has been closely identified with the religious orders, targeted specifically for failing to live up to their rejection of carnality and greed. He provides a specific critique of those in religious orders (as well as a general attack on hypocrisy) who have assumed the clothes and apparent identity of supposed purity. They are the prime example of human beings claiming to suppress their animal appetites yet are shown to be acting just as rapaciously, just as bestially as any other people, if not more so. The bestial monk or friar has become the archetypal symbol of the more general failure of human institutions to curb our animalistic urges for domination and the satisfaction of concupiscence. However, Geltner is right that Faux Semblant does not target only the religious. He makes it clear that the people that he inhabits all act the same

> quelconques robes que il aient,
> de quelconques estat qu'il saient.
> (whatever clothes they wear, and whatever their social class.)
> (11049-50)

The emphasis here is placed on the dress, on the outward appearance that fails to mask a person's natural state. The point is made again shortly afterwards when he says,

> Bon queur fait la pensee bone,
> la robe n'i tost ne ne done.
> (A good heart makes thoughts good; clothes neither take anything
> from nor add anything to this.) (11087-88)

Outward conventions, here clothes, are no indication of one's real character and do not render their thoughts any purer. It is action and not appearance that is the true indicator of a person's nature, as Raison makes clear when she describes how riches and power, when gained, enable a person to act according to their true nature rather than corrupting that person themselves (6248-66).

Wolves are not only used to describe clergy in the *Rose* but go on to become a symbol for categorising action that involves the cruel satisfaction of one's desires. Faux Semblant compares Amant to the wolf lurking outside the sheepfold:

L'en ne voit pas tourjorz le leu,
ainz prent bien ou tait les berbiz,
tout les gart l'en par les herbiz.
(The wolf cannot always be seen and thus he takes the ewes when they are inside under a roof, however well they are guarded when they are outside grazing.) (12468-70)

The wolf or the bestial can remain hidden under the trappings of civilisation or humility – 'l'en ne voit pas tourjorz le leu' – and for all the courtly behaviour of Amant in Guillaume de Lorris' poem, he will be every bit as implicated in bestial and hypocritical rapacity as the most predatory, oath-breaking monk. His courtly speech and behaviour become a false sheepskin and the central figure of the *Rose* has become less an object of pity than a threat to be feared. Amant is identified in a similar fashion to Ysengrin's nephew Renart by Dangier, who says that allowing him into the tower with Bel Acueil

ne seroit autre chose a faire
fors que par amoretes fines
metre Renart o les gelines.
(It would be no different from putting Master Renart in with the hens for the sake of some little courtly love-affairs.) (14982-84)

Placing the fox in with the chickens seems to hold an analogous value to letting the wolf in with the sheep, and in both cases Amant is defined by his bestial appetite and his desire above all things to satisfy it.

It is important to note that throughout the *Rose*, sheep are almost always gendered – they are not 'mouton' but 'berbiz'.[35] The wolf is male, pursuing the female sheep. This gendering is too consistent and pervasive to be accidental and informs the theme of sexual conquest that runs throughout the *Rose*. Sexual appetite falls into the same category as desire for food. The female role in the *Rose*'s gender-matrix is that of a passive object whose destiny is to be devoured

[35] The word 'mouton' is used by Le Jaloux at 8459 when he shouts in exasperation that a sheep's bladder should be thrown at his head. The only other times when the word 'mouton' occurs are when Faux Semblant describes himself as 'Ysengran' disguising himself as a 'mouton' to eat the 'berbiz' (see above) and when la Vieille lists pairs of gendered animals at 14051. All fifteen other ovine references are to the Christ-lamb figure 'aignel' or to 'berbiz' who are either innocent or victims, and usually both.

by the voracious and active male.[36] The unreasoning rapacity of the animal desire in humans is not limited to the monk abusing his position or to the powerful abusing the weak in examples already given, but entails the sexual act as well, which itself becomes a contest between who will become the ravening wolf and who will play the role as female victim. La Vieille seems well aware of this when counselling Bel Acueil.

> Torjorz doit fame metre cure
> qu'el puist la louve resembler
> quant el vet les berbiz enbler;
> car, qu'el ne puist du tout faillir,
> por une en vet .M. assaillir,
> qu'el ne set la quele el prendra
> devant que prise la tendra.
> (A woman must always strive to be like the she-wolf when she goes to steal the ewes, for she cannot fail to get one if she attacks a thousand, not knowing which one she will take before she has it captured in her grasp.) (13552-58)

The woman is a female wolf ('louve'), but the men that she is advised to prey on are nevertheless represented as female, as the passive victims to be fleeced. In la Vieille's advice to aim at a thousand sheep rather than one, we can see reflected the common perception of the wolf as indiscriminately violent in the satisfaction of its appetite. In contrast to Amant, however, la Vieille's exemplary woman desires not sexual gratification, but money. In order to gain mastery over a man and so extract money from him, the woman must suppress her own sexual desire and the expected behaviour pattern of her gender in order to play a game of rapacious deception in which she can prey on men. Destablising desire, especially greed (which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 4), upset both idealised notions of harmonious civilisation (as seen in Ami's depiction of the Golden Age)[37] and the fixity of stable gender roles. As with those in holy orders, however, the association of wolves with women using sex to gain money is not original to the *Rose*. In medieval bestiaries, under the entry for wolf, there

[36] The status of the different genders is far from stable, however; Genius' hysterical advice to men to be silent during sex so as not to allow women to control them betrays a profound sense of the insecurity of the apparently dominant position of the male. For a detailed investigation of this episode cf. Huot, 'Bodily Peril'.
[37] Cf. pp. 49-50.

is often an example of etymology in addition to that cited earlier.[38] The rapacity of the wolf, it says, is why whores are called *lupae* or she-wolves, because they strip their lovers of their wealth.[39] Like Faux Semblant, la Vieille's advice is situated within an established intertextual tradition when revealing the bestial appetites that lie under the surface of conventional human behaviour, in this case courtship, which also hints at prostitution.

There is then a consistent theme in the imagery of the second half of the *Roman de la Rose*, according to which humans are transformed (or transform themselves) metaphorically into wild beasts, usually wolves, when they think only of satisfying their pleasures and desires. Furthermore, the beast's actions, as opposed to those of a domestic animal, are categorised as those that harm other humans in the satisfaction of their desire. Bruno di Segni, a twelfth-century Italian bishop, concluded that as humans had become contemptuous of God and disturbed the hierarchy of existence, they had earned the contempt of animals initially subjected to human dominion; these animals were now beasts, divinely approved outlaws with license to kill.[40] The dangers of literal beasts are emphasised in Venus' warning to Adonis that he should avoid the beasts that kill humans when hunting: 'Ours, lous, lions, sangliers' (Bears, wolves, lions, boars) (15687). Instead he should stick to hunting those animals that he can master easily, such as deer, goats, and rabbits (15683-85). If the terrifying and threatening beasts of the first list were to have reason – if, on top of their existing weapons of tooth and claw, they had the capacity to think, to speak, and to plot against us – what would happen to humans?

RATIONAL ANIMALS?

Nature in her confession to Genius draws on a similar Augustinian line of reasoning to Bruno in complaining that humans have not lived up to their role in

[38] Above at p. 65.
[39] Aberdeen University Library, ms. 24, f° 16v; cf. Pluskowski, p. 129.
[40] Bruno di Segni, *Expositio in Pentateuchum*, 1, *PLD* 164.155D-156A. Cf. Pluskowski, p. 15; Wanda Cizewski, 'Beauty and the Beasts: Allegorical Zoology in Twelfth-Century Hexaemeral Literature', in *From Athens to Chartres: Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought. Studies in Honour of Edouard Jeanneau*, ed. by Haijo Jan Westra, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 289-300, p. 292.

God's plan and she goes on to speculate about what would happen if animals had reason and speech (17763-17840). What then follows is a truly apocalyptic vision of the whole animal kingdom rearing up and attacking humans. Horses would refuse to be ridden (17770-72) and savage animals that had been hunted would turn the tables:

> ours, lous, lion, liespart, sangler,
> tuit voudroient home estrangler.
> (Bears, wolves, lions, leopards, boars would all wish (to strangle man/) to rip out man's throat.) (17785-86)

The verb 'estrangler' is a curious one, which straddles the human/animal divide. For humans it means to strangle, while for animals it is to rip out the throat. The ambiguity of the term is exploited to the fullest when Faux Semblant dives on Male Bouche to kill him:

> a .II. poinz l'estraint, si l'estrangle;'
> (With both fists he squeezes him and strangles him (/rips out his throat).) (12335)

These hypothetical reasoning animals resemble the human wolf we have already seen in action, or, rather, they add a monstrous, bestial sense to the already unsettling murder carried out by Faux Semblant.[41] In the two most shocking images given to us by Nature, the rat would even 'estrangle' man when he is just a baby in the cradle and birds would peck out his eyes while he lies sleeping (17787-92); he becomes the helpless, passive, victim.[42] Moreover, monkeys can make weapons and become clerks writing books. Fleas and earwigs rise up against men (17799-17829), and this vision of predatory insects has echoes of the Apocalypse, recalling the locusts with the faces of men and tails like

[41] Although Faux Semblant is not himself a human character, his status within the elusive allegory of the *Rose* is undeniably that of a being a representation of an archetypal human vice.
[42] Bearing in mind the gendering of savagery and appetite seen in the use of male wolf pursuing female ewe, it is possible to discern here Nature outlining a suppressed male fear of becoming female and thus becoming the party that is helpless while being sexually devoured. This anxiety over the dissolution of gender boundaries especially in relation to sex-acts underlines medieval anxieties over sodomy, as is exposed in Genius' ferocious attack in his sermon on those whose practise it.

scorpions that arise to persecute humans in the book of Revelation.[43] Despite its hypothetical framework, the picture that Nature presents hints at the terrors that will come at the end of time. In an asynchronicity typical of the *Rose*, suggestion of the end-times is followed by the portrayal of events that took place not long after the creation of the world. Immediately after the scenario of animals having reason comes a description of flooding, strongly allusive of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* but inescapably recalling the Flood in the Bible with all marks of human civilisation wiped from the earth and fish taking over the fields and towns (17889-17970).[44] In Genesis, humankind is punished for its sin,[45] as are the unfortunates terrorised in Revelation, and in Nature's horrific scenario of vengeful reasoning beasts. This apocalyptic fear recalls Guillaume de Saint-Amour in his criticisms of the false prophets that herald the coming of the Antichrist, and whose biblical exegesis was used as a polemic tool to attack the 'vallez des Antecrit' already on earth. In a similar way, though possibly with less overt moralising, Jean's rational apocalyptic animals serve as a lens or as an integumental veil through which to view the rational beasts that walk around in human skin in these pre-apocalyptic times. Wild beasts with reason attack humans with a bestial cruelty and a rapacious appetite; the wolf-monks and wolf-hypocrites represented by Faux Semblant do the same, as do male and female wolf-lovers and the rich and powerful. The boundaries between humans and animals have started to become slightly blurred, and so, before proceeding any further, we will turn to thirteenth-century science to see how the difference between species was understood.

Non-human animals cannot have reason. Aquinas makes this quite clear in his *Summa Theologiae* when he quotes Augustine's *Super Genesim ad litteram*:

> Sed hoc excellit in homine, quia deus hominem ad imaginem suam fecit propter hoc, quod debit ei mentem intellectualem, qua praestat pecoribus.
> (But man's excellence consists in the fact that God made man in

[43] Rev 9: 7-11.
[44] Cf, *Metamorphoses*, I. 262-312; Gen 7: 1-24.
[45] Gen 6: 5-7.

> His own image by giving him an intellectual soul, which places him above the level of cattle.)[46]

This need to preserve man's privileged position informs Albert the Great's discussion of the question of the pygmy. Pygmies, though superior to other animals and despite their similar behaviour to us, are not classed as human. The discussion is thus instructive in seeing where the difference lies between human and non-human animals; it 'represents something of a test case' as Irven Resnick, Resnick and Kenneth Kitchell put it.[47] Pygmies and monkeys, for Albert, possess a natural instinct and a prudence very similar to the power of reason. '[P]igmeus, qui non sequitur rationem loquelae, sed naturae instinctum' (the pygmy who does not follow reason in speaking, but rather the instinct of nature)[48] is like a human in many ways, but without the civilised society humans require. Humans growing up outside of civilisation lose part of their humanity and become more pygmyesque.

> Si qui autem homines sunt silvestres sicut pigmeus, non secundum unam et eandem rationem nobiscum sunt dicti homines, sed habent aliquid hominis in quadam deliberatione et loquela.
> (If, therefore, there are humans who are wild as the pygmy is, they are not called humans in one and the same sense that we are, but they have something human about them in a certain deliberation and in their speech.)[49]

Without civilisation and the *ratio* of law and society, humans become almost indistinguishable from animals. Albert's *De animalibus* was certainly not the only work to discuss pygmies in the thirteenth century, although it would have been hugely influential in the sphere of the University of Paris, where he taught, and where Jean de Meun wrote his continuation of the *Rose*. John Block Friedman has shown how Thomas de Cantimpré and Vincent de Beauvais, contemporary to Albert in Paris, struggle to provide a satisfactory taxonomy to define these

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[46] Augustine of Hippo, *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim eiusdem libri capitula,* ed. by Joseph Zycha, *CSEL* 28:1 (Vienna, Prague, and Leipzig: Tempsky, 1894), VI. 12, p. 186. Cf. *ST*, Ia q. 93, a. 2, sc.
[47] Resnick and Kitchell, p. 57.
[48] *De animalibus*, I. 1. 3. 46; I, 18. Aristotle is clear that only humans have the power of speech in *Generation of Animals*, V. 7, 786b18-22.
[49] *De animalibus*, I. 1. 3. 44; I. 17.

manlike creatures, placing them above other species of animal but below humans in the hierarchy of species. They rely heavily on Saint Augustine who, when considering the question whether certain monstrous races of man might be descended from Adam or from Noah's sons concluded 'petetendim cauteque' (cautiously and provisionally) that they might be fictional, or that they might not be human, or that they are human and thus are descended from Adam.[50] The *Summa Theologica* attributed to Alexander of Hales, another thirteenth-century Parisian master, discusses 'monstrous races' suggesting that deformity is a divine punishment for sin, which serves as one possible explanation for such deviations.

> Plures enim sunt rationes quare congruit corpora creaturarum rationalium esse monstruosa, quae non congruunt irrationalibus. Una est deordinatio peccati: solummodo enim inter res corporales homo deordinat se per peccatum, quod non faciunt bruta animalia; propter quod de divina iustitia est quod in poena deordinationis et deformationis culpae deordinationem et deformationem incurrunt in corpore.
> (For there are many reasons to explain how the bodies of rational creatures become monstrous, which cannot be applied to irrational creatures. One of these is the disorder caused by sin; indeed only man among corporeal things can disorder himself through sin, which brute animals cannot do; hence it belongs to divine justice that as a punishment for disorder and deformity caused by guilt they meet with bodily disorder and deformation.)[51]

BESTIAL HUMANS

Albert, mentioning 'Hermes' as his source (although the ultimate origin is most likely Boethius), describes a similar process of degradation when discussing humans in his *De animalibus*, although with a highly significant shift of emphasis:

> si aliquando aliquis hominum per electionem se mundo inferiorem fecerit, iam quasi honore humanitatis exutus, proprietatem accipit

[50] *DCD*, XVI. 8; II. 510. (Dyson, p. 710). Cf. John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 183.
[51] Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, ed. by Fathers of the College of St Bonaventure, 4 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1924-48)., v. 2: Prima pars secundi libri, inq. 4, tr. 2, sect. 2, q. 1, t. 1, c. 3, ad 5, p. 576.

> bestiae, et per concupiscentiam porcus, per iram canis, per rapinam leo, et sic de aliis dicitur fieri.
> (If a man chooses to debase himself below a civilised state, it is as if he has stripped himself of the dignity of his humanity; he takes on the characteristics of a beast and is said to become a pig because of his concupiscence, a dog because of his rage, a lion because of his rapacity, and similarly in the case of other vices.)[52]

The man, this time through free choice rather than lack of civilisation, 'takes on the characteristics of a beast' and inwardly becomes a sort of composite animal that can be compared with the worst aspects of different creatures. Albert goes on to say that the actions of the body can thence corrupt the soul and so

> inemendabiles dicuntur inverecundi, quia in aliquo mutati sunt a rationis honore pecorinae naturae assumentes irrationabilitatem (incorrigible sinners are said to be shameless because they are changed in some way from the dignity of reason taking on the irrational nature of beasts).[53]

In this more sophisticated explanation of the debilitating effects of sin, it is not the external form of a sinner that shifts, but rather his or her internal nature so that, although outwardly the sinner will look the same, corruption and degradation has taken place inwardly. Everything that renders humans superior or different from animals (especially, reason or *ratio*) is vitiated by sinful actions, by breaking moral codes, and hence acting against reason and against human nature. Albert's shrewd innovation in avoiding the concept of 'monster' in relation to the pygmy simplifies the question of its status by denying it any possibility of being human. He thus preserves a categorical difference between humans and animals. Here, however, in relation to degradation through sin, we find an awkward, unnatural, and potentially monstrous combination of human and animal, although it is hidden under the surface. Bestiality can creep into any human who rejects the reasoned path of virtue (or the virtuous path of reason/Raison).[54] None of the Scholastic masters discussing pygmies, monsters,

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[52] *De animalibus*, XXII. I. 5. 9; II, 1353. Albert is almost certainly drawing on Boethius, *DCP*, IV, pr. 3, 55-69, where an analogous list of vices turn sinful humans into a range of animals.
[53] *Ibid.*, XXII. I. 5. 11; II, 1354.
[54] It seems possible that Jean de Meun is reacting to Albert's or Boethius' theories on the internal debasement of the natures of sinners for satirical and moralising effect in the figure of Faux Semblant, who exemplifies an outward form belying desire for the satisfaction of appetite hidden

or zoology in general would argue that humans actually become beasts, but the dividing line between them was somewhat unsettled and unsettling, thus providing the poets of the thirteenth century with fertile ground for satirical explorations of what it means to be human and how humans ought to behave.

The process of reason being corrupted by animal passions is no better illustrated than in the *Lai d'Aristot*e (commonly attributed to Henri d'Andeli and written in the 1230s).[55] Aristote, the greatest of philosophers, has scolded his student Alixandre for spending too much time engaged in love-pursuits. Alixandre's mistress, in order to humiliate the old man, sings and struts outside his window so that 'li maistres se demente' (the master loses his mind), so mad is he driven by desire.[56] He agrees to her request that he wear a saddle and lets her ride him around the orchard. Seeing his teacher transformed into an animal in his behaviour and dress, Alixandre arrives and mocks Aristote, saying:

> Et or vos a mis en tel point
> Qu'il na en vos de raison point,
> Ainz vos metés a la loi de beste!
> (And now she has put you in such a position that there is no reason in you whatsoever, and so you act like a beast!)[57]

In this playful *fabliau* we see a similar process of debasement to that described by Albert. The dividing boundary between human and animal is shown to be porous; man, deprived of reason by his desires, becomes no better than a beast.

The metamorphosis in the *Lai d'Aristote* is temporary; Aristote reverts back to his human self when Alixandre has pointed out his debasement, although he is now forced to acknowledge that irrational desires have always been present, lurking inside even him and that they could spill out again at any minute. For

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within. Faux Semblant's association of himself with appetite, power-lust, hypocrisy and animal imagery suggest this point; acting animal but looking human is exactly what causes false-seeming cruelty in the *Rose*.

[55] Henri d'Andeli, 'Le Lai d'Aristote', in *Les Dits d'Henri d'Andeli*, ed. by Alain Corbellari (Paris: Champion, 2003), pp. 73-90. Cf. pp. 10-11 for Corbellari's brief discussion of the poem's authorship.

[56] 'Lai', 355.

[57] *Ibid.*, 476-78.

Albert, the descent into an animalistic state is a deliberate choice made by a rational man; in the *Lai d'Aristote* (as in the *Rose*) potential animalism is natural, common to all humans and beyond the control of even the most rational.

It is particularly apt that the author of the *Lai* should choose Aristotle as the archetype of rational *homo*, as his works were at the heart of discussion of the relation between humans and animals in the high Middle Ages. The thirteenth century saw a growing trend amongst zoological writers towards an Aristotelian conception of the relation between human and non-human animals. In Books 8 and 9 of the *Historia animalium*, translated into Latin in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century,[58] Aristotle describes animals as having traits similar to gentleness, intelligence, confidence and virtue. De Leemans and Klemm note that for Aristotle

> [t]hese traits should be more developed in humans, but at least in some of his zoological works it is presented as a question of more or less, rather than a radical difference in kind.[59]

Moreover, it is no coincidence that the animal that Aristote is turned into is a horse, an animal often used in medieval literature to represent the human tendency towards unruly behaviour and sexual depravity.[60] This motif is continued in Jean's *Rose*, where equine imagery and indirect references to horsemanship are principally sexual and often entail themes of domination especially in sexual matters.[61] The most sustained treatment of horses is put in the mouth of la Vieille speaking to Bel Acueil (*Rose*, 14023-46) in a section that owes a lot to Aristotle's zoology. As soon as a horse sees a mare, he will start whinnying and bolt in a blind frenzy after the female. La Vieille goes on to list other domestic animals that act in exactly the same manner, but she chooses the horse as the primary *exemplum*. La Vieille points out that females also feel sexual

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[58] Cf. Dod, p. 77.
[59] Pieter de Leemans, and Matthew Klemm, 'Animals and Anthropology in Medieval Philosophy', in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Medieval Age*, ed. by Brigitte Resl, A Cultural History of Animals, 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2007), pp.153-77, p158.
[60] Cf. V. A. Kolve, *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: The First Five Canterbury Tales* (Stanford/London: Stanford University Press/Arnold, 1984), pp. 217-56.
[61] Cf. Meradith, T. McMunn, 'Animal Imagery in the Text and Illustrations of the *Roman de la Rose*', *Reinardus*, 9 (1996), 87-108, p. 91.

desire in the same way, but they are described as welcoming rather than pursuing (14054-56). The dominant animal, like the pursuing wolf, is always male. As we have seen, la Vieille introduces this discussion of animal sexuality as an analogue to human behaviour. Horses, cattle, and sheep all act in this way, as do humans who are only restrained a little bit by human conventions.[62] The similarity in the physiology of desire between the different species, all merely subspecies of the genus 'animal' shows that on the level of sexuality, humans are not privileged, except inasmuch as they have the law to restrain them, hardly the most radical distinction between humans and the animal kingdom.[63]

Ami's discourse, in many respects a counterpoint to la Vieille's, appears to suggest that young men seek coitus at all costs and that they should put all of their equine energies into achieving a successful coupling with their mare. Aside from two lengthy digressions, about jealous husbands and about the history of civilisation, Ami's discourse consists of advice on how to win one's lady, suggesting tactics such as putting onion juice on one's eyes to be able to weep (7433-38), how to negotiate the target's misgivings (7579-7676), and how to get away with being disloyal in love (9745-76). Paradoxically, the desire for sex is so pervasive and so obvious that it is not even stated, but the assumption throughout the speech is that it is the only motivation for possessing a lady. The male human, like the horse, is impelled towards the female in this world-view, yet unlike the dumb beast, the human suitor can use his reason to obtain mastery over the female and to satisfy his rapacity.

All of Ami's reasoning is on the pragmatic level rather than the theoretical; he is not interested in the why but the how. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle distinguishes between the theoretical and the practical intellect (phronesis) in

[62] Cf. pp. 40-42.
[63] This section in the *Rose* probably takes its inspiration from Aristotle's *History of Animals*, VI. 18, 571b8-573b31, although it is also informed by Ovid, *Ars amatoria* in *The Art of Love and Other Poems*, ed. and trans. by J. H. Mozley and G. P. Goold (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1979), 2. 481-88. For discussion of the extended allusions made by Ami and La Vieille to the *Ars amatoria*, cf. Thérèse Bouché, 'Ovide et Jean de Meun', *Le Moyen Âge*, 83 (1977), 73-87.

humans,[64] and the appearance in Western Europe of his *De motu animalium* proved a significant problem for his commentators in the second half of the thirteenth century.[65] While the title suggests that the text treats animals in general, Aristotle seems to have written some sections with solely human physiology in mind. Furthermore, 'animals' and 'intellect' are mentioned a few times in the same phrase. For those of his commentators who did not neglect the discussion of animals, such phrases necessarily prompted the question whether 'animals are moved by the intellect'. There were theological issues at stake in claiming animals to have reason and a solution was generally found in granting them the faculty of *imaginatio*, which corresponds to Aristotle's *phantasia*. Albert, for example, held that the behaviour of ants and bees clearly demonstrated their possession of imaginative power.[66] While humans manage to maintain their monopoly of *ratio*, it is clear that, as with Albert's descriptions of pygmies, animals are capable of some degree of thought, certainly on a practical level, and this question was still discussed in Paris well into the fourteenth century. Let us return to matters lupine and to the *De animalibus*, in which Albert notes:

> Vadens lupus per frondes lambit et lubricos facit pedes ne incessus audiatur.
> (When a wolf walks over foliage, it licks its feet and makes them wet so as not to be heard coming.)[67]

Animals, and especially wolves, can employ stratagems, which although characterised as using *imaginatio* look alarmingly similar to human practical intellect and stratagems put in place in order to satisfy desire.[68] We have seen how Faux Semblant equates Amant with a wolf employing craftiness to get into the sheepfold (12468-70); Ami (and by extension any lover) in his urge to fulfil his carnal desires at all costs, in his lack of theoretical reasoning,[69] and in his use solely of practical intellect starts to look very similar to a wolf pursuing his

[64] *Ethics*, VI. 8. 1143a3-b5. Even lower animals, Aristotle says, are capable of practical wisdom or φρόνησις (phronesis) (*Ethics*, VI. 7, 1141a26-28).
[65] de Leemans and Klemm, p. 169.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 172.
[67] *De animalibus*, XXII. 2. 1. 114; II, 1410.
[68] Aquinas would presumably argue that the hope that leads a wolf to carry out such stratagems comes from God's intellect and not that of the wolf. Cf. pp. 1-3 above.
[69] Not once does Ami question whether what he pursues is worth having, or if it might ever be better not to pursue sex at all costs.

gendered prey. In the same way that Aristote, in thrall to his desire, makes himself, or is made, indistinguishable from a horse in his behaviour, so a scheming lover, following Ami's protocol, becomes lupine. The outward appearance is human; inwardly the person has the characteristics of a beast (*proprietas bestiae*). Faux Semblant is shortly to appear on the scene to introduce the distinction between external appearance and internal reality in conjunction with explicit comparisons of humans with rapacious animals, but Ami has already expounded how the animalistic human works in practice, as la Vieille (the only other of Amant's interlocutors who is nominally human) will go on to do in her counsel to Bel Acueil. Nature will later go on to paint the monstrous picture of animals having reason in an apocalyptic vision. What if, instead of envisioning animals acting as humans, Nature is really holding up a mirror to enable Jean's readers to see that the beasts that stalk humans are actually other humans, stalking each other in the pursuit of their ravenous appetites? Nature concludes her account of rational beasts in revolt by stressing that it is true that their ignorance is part of their proper nature. She goes on to say of a rational creature, whether mortal human or divine angel that

> s'el se mesconnoit conme nice,
> cist defauz li vient de son vice,
> qui le sans li trouble et anivre,
> car il pot bien reson ansivre
> et pot de franc voloir user,
> n'est riens qui l'an puisse escuser.
> (if it is foolishly ignorant of itself, then this defect comes from its vice, which troubles and intoxicates its sense, for he can follow reason and has the capability for free will and there is nothing that can excuse him from that.) (17835-40)[70]

The monstrous fusion of rapacious animal and rational human happens in the debased sinner of Albert' *De animalibus* and in the predatory pursuits of those people who allow the satisfaction of appetite to dominate their life, yet who retain enough of the practical intellect of humans to mask their predatory nature

[70] This passage draws on *DCP*, II, pr. 5, 85-89. Boethius says that if man is ignorant of himself he is, in fact, rendered lower than the brute animals ('tamen infra bestias redigatur, si se nosse desierit.').

with an apparently honest façade. The wolf is not merely in the convent, as Faux Semblant points out; he is found throughout society.

The remedy to a life led as an animal or as a monstrous hybrid is to employ theoretical reason, the one faculty that truly separates human from beast, and this is exactly what Raison advises Amant to do, to consecrate his life to her (5765-5808). She does not seem fully to understand what processes are at work in his mind and time after time fails to find any strategy to convince him to forsake his desire for worldly things to follow a life of pure reason, while he fails to follow her argumentation, possibly deliberately. In the satisfaction of his desire, Amant makes it clear that at the culmination of the poem in his sexual conquest of the rose, there was a total absence of reason:

> Mes de Reson ne me souvint,
> qui tant en moi gasta de peine.
> (But I did not remember Reason, who wasted so much effort on me.) (21730-31)

This accords perfectly with Augustine's description of the effect of lust during intercourse in his *De civitate Dei*:

> momento ipso temporis, quo ad eius pervenitur extremum, paene omnis acies et quasi vigilia cogitationis obruatur.
> (at that moment in time when he achieves his climax, the alertness and, so to speak, vigilance of a man's mind is almost entirely overwhelmed.)[71]

Amant's forgetting of the named allegorical figure of Raison, however, suggests not only the loss of his mental faculties, but also a rejection of theoretical reasoning and of the distinguishing characteristic separating him from an animal. At that moment, almost all boundaries between human and animal have been washed away, albeit temporarily. Like the philosopher regaining his senses in the *Lai d'Aristote*, such a descent into the animal is temporary (in fact the lover is about to wake up), but here at the end of the poem the beast inside has engulfed the human outside.

[71] *DCD*, XIV. 16; II, 439 (Dyson, p. 614).

Jean de Meun's *Rose* seems to show humans carrying an animal nature around inside of us that can spill out and control us, transforming us metaphorically into animals, but also altering our behaviour so that at times it becomes distinguishable from that of beasts only by the use of a superior, human practical intellect. Bynum writing about fabulous narratives of shape-shifting argues that

> [they lodge] at the heart of the world (not just on its margins) events that seem to make all identity labile, threatening, and threatened. [72]

Jean makes shape-shifting a fundamental aspect of our existence, that the laws of human convention '*retret un petit*'. Although the transformations he is dealing with occur internally, they are additionally threatening by their potential undetectability, as exemplified by Faux Semblant. Animal desire is shown in the *Rose* as a human characteristic common to all, and the friars who claim to deny their appetites are portrayed as the archetypes of hypocrisy. It is not metamorphosis itself that is threatening, so much as what kind of animal results from that metamorphosis; not all people become wolves. Genius describes the Lamb leading good people allegorised as ewes, 'berbiz', to a very physical heaven and protecting them from the ravenous wolf (20223-36). When humans stalk, attack and pillage each other, however, they themselves become that tyrannical wolf, cruel, egotistical and ruthless in the satisfaction of its appetite. While Aristotelian *libri naturales* suggested a certain closeness between humans and other animals, human beings' taking on of animalistic characteristics does not make them more natural, but rather unnatural because they do not pursue the goods of true happiness, but rather the mutable goods of fortune that result in the satisfaction of appetite.[73] Acting unnaturally for humans entails the rejection of or loss of total access to the rational. The next chapter will consider how such less-than-fully-rational humans can nevertheless be lead, through appetite, towards the good, and specifically how the *Rose* itself serves as a lure to wisdom.

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[72] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone, 2001), p. 93.
[73] Cf. *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 2, a. 1 and a. 6, in which Aquinas rejects both wealth and pleasure as part of human happiness. Article 1, concerning wealth, will be particularly at stake in chapter 4.

3

Rhetoric and Knowledge

As we have seen, humans are, to a certain extent, in thrall to their desires, which stand in the way of their ability to follow reason and to live a good life. If such flawed humans are to be led towards the good, the philosophy of the University may not be sufficient. Even if, according to their idealised self-image, *clercs* have access to the *scientia* of philosophy through the syllogisms of dialectic, other methods will be needed to entice those lesser people who, while still rational animals, are more influenced by their appetites. *Scientia* and dialectic alone are not enough for this task, and the *Roman de la rose* stages the need for literature and rhetoric in the form of persuasive, eloquent speech. Jean's continuation of the *Rose* consists almost entirely of the reported speeches of its different characters, each of whom attempts to persuade the audience, diegetic or non-diegetic, to adhere to a particular course of action and to a particular moral code. Its sustained, almost all-encompassing engagement with performed speech has been neglected by critics. The performed nature of medieval narratives more generally has certainly been noted,[1] but in the *Rose* there is an exceptional and sustained focus not simply on individual acts of persuasion but on how and why convictions, beliefs, and obedience can be secured through persuasive eloquence. The very natures of eloquence and rhetoric, the art that enables eloquence, are explored in the *Rose* as part of its project to consider ethical questions in relation to what is natural and what is artificial.

Judson Boyce Allen has shown that medieval thinkers repeatedly place literary works under the category of ethics, given their portrayal of human behaviour.[2] In the 1270s, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* appeared which related rhetoric to questions of

[1] Cf., for example, *Performing Medieval Narrative*, ed. by Evelyn Birge Vitz, Nancy Freeman Regalado, and Marilynn Lawrence (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005).
[2] Judson Boyce Allen, *The Ethical Poetic of the Later Middle Ages: A Decorum of Convenient Distinction* (Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press, 1982), especially pp. 1-39. Cf. Rosenfeld, p. 1; Glending Olson, *Literature as Recreation in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982).

ethics.[3] The *Rose*, a work of literature consisting of persuasive speeches, fits into these traditions in its continual, repeated investigation of ethical questions.[4] It performs the three functions of rhetoric: to teach (*docere*), to move (*movere*), and to delight (*delectare*).[5] However, it also considers abstract questions of principle and ontology proper to dialectic or philosophy – what kind of act is X? Is X a good act? – and not just the situated questions or dilemmas of contingent circumstances proper to rhetoric or to ethics – would X be the right course of action in this situation? This practice breaks down the separation of rhetorical and dialectical questions that had become increasingly entrenched in thirteenth-century university education, where dialectic ruled supreme.

The *Rose*, then, is an ethically engaged poem. It engages wholeheartedly with questions of private morality and occasionally with questions of political morality, yet throughout Jean de Meun's continuation such questions are considered in the light of understanding gained from the discussion of theoretical material, and this is as true for speech as it is for, say, ethical questions concerning sex and courtship or the uses of money and property. In order to speak eloquently or to recognise the use and misuse of persuasion we need to understand both how it works and why it works. Such a poetico-theoretical investigation not only negotiates but breaks down the established, disciplinary boundaries of the arts of grammar and rhetoric (and by extension literature) on the one hand and dialectic (and by extension philosophy) on the other. In this, it owes a debt to the appearance of Aristotle's newly translated *Rhetoric* in 1270 which placed rhetoric closer to the theoretical discipline of dialectic than it did to its traditional partner, politics. Rather than being, however hypothetically, simply a discipline aimed at crafting speech to resolve moral questions, for Aristotle rhetoric is a methodology for treating and resolving questions from any discipline, and the scope of speech deemed rhetorical suddenly becomes much larger. The *Rose* appears precisely at a time when the

[3] Cf. pp. 109-14.
[4] For poetry as a rhetorical mode cf. Kelly, p. 13 specifically, and the rest of the work more generally, for an understanding of the *Rose* as a work firmly situated within the field of rhetoric.
[5] Cf. Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400-1500* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 8-9.

philosophers in Paris, among whom we might count Jean de Meun, start to see the possibility of rhetoric encroaching on the terrain of dialectic, and it is in this context that we should understand Jean's ground-breaking experiment in his poetry in the appropriation of questions proper to the dialectical investigations of the philosophers.

As we have seen in the previous two chapters of this thesis, the *Rose* consistently treats moral questions as related to desire and treats moral failings as related to disordered desire, with the significant proviso that all human desire is to some extent disordered. This chapter considers the relationship of speech to desire and the relationship between nature and artifice in human communication in the *Rose*. The use of imperfect, often unreliable rhetorical language in the *Rose* makes possible an investigation both into the ethics of language in a way unavailable to the dialectic of the philosophers and into the very ability of the *Rose* – itself an imperfect, often unreliable, philosophical poem – to convey truth.

SPEECH IN THE *ROSE*

Both parts of the *Roman de la rose* are notable for the extended monologues performed by allegorical figures, who, through their rhetoric, attempt to persuade their listeners, usually Amant, to act in a certain way, or according to a certain moral code. Until the moment that Amant is pierced by Amor's arrows, the latter declaring, 'Vasaus, pris estes' (Vassal, you are captured) (*Rose*, 1882), the oneiric space of Deduit's garden is primarily visual, as exemplified by the paintings on the outer walls of the garden, and the absence of spoken communication in the narrative is striking.[6] As soon as Amor proclaims his triumph we are treated to a sudden outpouring of speech as he holds forth on the laws and practices that govern a lover; Amant then repeats his pledges of allegiance, while encouraging still more expositions of courtly jurisprudence (1882-2748). Raison descends and fails to talk Amant out of his allegiance to love

[6] There are only two brief exchanges between the protagonist and one of the allegorical figures that he encounters. Oiseuse stands by the gate and simply declares herself and describes the garden whose gate she guards along with its inhabitants. Amant's polite response is that he would very much like to go into the garden, if you please (580-628) and shortly afterwards, Cortoisie courteously invites him to join in the carole (782-85).

(2982-3079), before Ami briefly appears in order to suggest how to defeat the menacing Dangier who guards the Rose (3109-29). Dangier, it should be noted in passing,

> [...] se set bien amoloier
> par biau parler et souploier.
> (is very easily softened up by fair speech and supplication) (3119-20)

It is with Jean de Meun's continuation (from 4029), though, that speeches really dominate, often to the point of eclipsing the narrative of the quest for the *Rose*. All of these speeches have the aim of persuasion. Raison returns again to attempt to harangue Amant out of love (4199-7198). As the narrator puts it, '[a]insint Reson me preescheit.' (thus Reason was preaching to me.) (4599) Ami then persuades Amant to employ underhand tactics of flattery and deception to achieve his aims (7207-9972), despite the latter's objections that such tricks belong only to the 'faus ypocrites' (false hypocrites) (7766). During Ami's speech, we have Le Jaloux's misogynist outburst that is such a spectacular failure as a persuasive exercise that it finishes in domestic violence and makes an enemy of his wife who may well go off elsewhere to look for love (8437-9330). Amant tries and fails to persuade Richece to allow him to take the path of Trop Doner (Excessive Giving) in getting the Rose. Richece, in turn, attempts to dissuade him from impoverishing himself in the pursuit of love (10041-10237). Amant persuades Amor that he is still a loyal servant and Amor thus agrees to help him, summoning his army to debate how best to take the Rose (10289-10897). Faux Semblant then sermonises to Amor and his army about hypocrisy and its infiltration of religion (10922-11946),[7] before setting off with Astenance to remove Male Bouche's tongue. La Vieille's attempts to convince Bel Acueil to adopt a cynical approach to love parallel Ami's teaching of Amant (12366-14648), and, like Raison, we are told of La Vieille that she 'li conmence a preeschier' (begins to preach to him) (12709). We see Amant trying his best to

[7] The only significant practical part of rhetorical pedagogy in the Middle Ages were guides to the art of preaching sermons, for example Alain de Lille's *De arte praedicatoria* or Thomas Chobham's *Summa de arte praedicandi* (ca. 1220). In terms of Faux Semblant's sermon, while its diegetic function is simply educational, its persuasion functions particularly on the satirical and polemical level in its appeal to readers of the *Rose*.

persuade Dangier, Poor and Honte to let him into the castle (14926-15037). Genius' 'consolation' of Nature is actually a polemic to convince men not to trust women (16284-16676). Nature's confession to Genius (16699-19375) is less an actual confession than it is a plea for humans to act morally and thus in accordance with nature, as is the text on which it is modelled, Alain de Lille's *De planctu Naturae*. She then sends down Genius to preach a complementary sermon to Amor and his army (19475-20637). Finally, we have Pygmalion's desperate invocation to God and to Venus to bring his sculpture to life (21053-78). These are only the most obvious examples of attempted persuasion in the *Rose*, which is not simply concerned with presenting knowledge to its readers, but with understanding how and why knowledge can be used and misused in the world of human interaction, that is through speech that is to a greater or lesser extent eloquent and persuasive.

For eloquence to work, for it to convince or persuade, there must be an awareness of how any given speech will be received by an audience. It is striking how concerned characters are with the effectiveness and propriety of their speech and their concern for the attention of their listeners. Guillaume's Amor condenses his rules of love into an easily remembered shorter epigrams since

> [...] la parole mains engrieve
> a retenir quant ele est brieve
> (it is easier to remember a message when it is short) (2215-16).[8]

Raison frequently deplores having to keep speaking, for example when after nearly 3000 lines of her discourse she declares that it is against her will that she will continue to speak since '[l]angue doit estre refrenee (one should hold one's

[8] Cf. Horace, *Ars poetica*, 335-36: 'Quidquid praecipies, esto brevis, ut cito dicta / percipiant animi dociles teneantque fideles.' [Whenever you instruct, be brief, so that what is quickly said the mind ma readily grasp and faithfully hold.] This passage of Horace is also picked up by Genius, who also condenses his teachings into an easily remembered form: 'Et por tout mon anseignemeant / retenir plus legieremant / (car leçon a briés moz leüe / plus est de legier retenue), / je vos reveill briefmant retrere / tretout quan que vos devez fere.' [And so that you all of my teaching be remembered more easily (for a lesson read in brief words is easier to remember), I want to summarise briefly everything that you must do.] (20601-06). Raison also summarises her key points in '.III. moz honestes' [three honest words] (6836): 'c'est que tu me veulles amer, / et que le dieu d'Amors despises, / et que Fortune riens ne prises.' [namely, that you desire to love me, that you scorn the god of Love and that you do not value Fortune at all (6842-44).

tongue) (7007), citing Ptolemy and Cato as authorities. She does then justify her continuing speech by citing Plato's *Timaeus* that the purpose of speech is education (7067-75), just before the famous passage concerning the ethics of speaking openly about sexual organs, comparing testicles to relics (7076-7122). This discussion of the propriety of silence is echoed by Astenance Contrainte as she gives a sermon to persuade Male Bouche to change his loquacious ways:

> Sire, la vertu prumereine,
> la plus grant, la plus sovereine
> que nus mortex hom puisse avoir
> par science ne par avoir,
> c'est de sa langue refrener:
> a ce se doit chascuns pener,
> qu'adès vient il mieuz qu'an se tese
> que dire parole mauvese;
> et cil qui volentiers l'escoute
> n'est pas preudon ne Dieu ne doute.
> (My lord, the first, the greatest, the most sovereign virtue that any mortal man can have whether by knowledge or by wealth, is to be able to hold his tongue. Everyone should try to do this, for it is much better to remain silent than to produce bad speech, and whoever listens to that speech willingly is not a noble man nor does he fear God.) (12149-58)

She goes on to condemn his

> [...] fole loquence
> qui bret et crie et noise et tence,
> et les blasmes aus genz eslieve
> et les deshoneure et les grieve
> por chose qui n'a point de preuve,
> fors d'apparence ou de contreuve.
> (foolish eloquence which brays and shouts and causes a racket, and brings accusations against people and dishonours them and harms them for something for which there is no proof beyond appearance or fiction.) (12181-86)

In another oft-cited passage, the narrator justifies himself against accusations of improper speech concerning his attacks on women and the religious (15124-15272), drawing on the rhetorical theory of Sallust (15147-60) and Horace

(15210-12).[9] Nature, like Raison, shows herself to be sporadically conscious of boring her audience. She leaves off her description of optics and lenses

> car trop i ra longue matire,
> et si seroit grief chose a dire
> et mout seroit fort a l'antandre,
> s'il iert qui le seüst aprandre
> a genz lais especiaument,
> qui nou diroit generaument.
> (for it is too long a matter, and so it would be a hard thing to say
> and it would be most hard to understand it if there were anyone
> who might know how to teach it to laypeople especially, and who
> would actually go into specifics.) (18243-48)

Shortly afterwards, she cuts off her discussion of visions and dreams:

> Por ce les veill ci trespasser,
> ne si ne veill or pas lasser
> moi de paler ne vos d'oïr:
> bon fet prolixité foïr.
> (For this reason I want here to pass over them, for I do not wish to
> tire myself from talking nor you from listening. It is right to flee
> wordiness.) (18265-68)

The narrator echoes this desire to abridge his speech so as not to drive away his audience, coming ironically after nearly 19 500 lines of text:

> Je ne vos quier ja fere conte
> de la grant joie qu'il li [Genius] firent
> quant ces noveles antandirent,
> ainz vueill ma parole abregier
> por voz oreilles alegier,
> car maintes foiz cil qui preesche,
> quant briefmant ne se despeesche,
> an fet les auditeurs aler
> par trop prolixemant paler.
> (I do not want now to make a tale of the joyous reception they
> gave to Genius when they heard his news; rather I want to shorten
> my speech so as not to burden your ears, for often, someone
> preaching, when he does not speak briefly and concisely, causes

[9] Cf. Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, ed. by J. T. Ramsey, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3, p. 28; Horace, *Ars poetica*, 333-34. Cf. pp. 114-15.

his audience to abandon him by speaking too wordily.) (19438-46)

This obsession with brevity in speech continues as Genius repeatedly claims to be speaking briefly and summarily in order for his listeners to take in what he has to say (20155, 20271-72, 20341-42, 20561-62, 20601-06).[10] Genius, however, has considerable success as an orator we are told that

> Chascun qui le sarmon amot
> le note an son queur mot a mot,
> car mout leur sambla saluable
> por le bon pardon charitable,
> et mout l'ont volantier oï.
> (Everyone who liked the sermon noted it word for word in his heart, for it seemed to them very useful in obtaining charitable pardon and salvation, and they heard it very willingly.) (20667-71)

There is a tension throughout the *Rose* between speech and silence that reaches its conclusion in the sex-scene at the end of the poem during which, as during the opening 500 lines, there is no speech, following the advice of Genius when he tells men never to speak to women during sex ('tesiez, tesiez, tesiez, tesiez!' (shut up, shut up, shut up, shut up!) (16630)). If there is one thing that we can be sure of in the *Rose,* it is that speech leads ineluctably to conflict. It can annoy, it can be misunderstood, accidentally or deliberately; it can have multiple meanings; speakers can lie or tell half-truths. Yet, if humans are to be more than dumb beasts in a subhuman world of violent repression and anarchy, it is also through speech that conflicts can be resolved. Resolving – or, at the very least, engaging in – conflict through speech and argument is not just fundamental to the *Rose* but goes to the very heart of life in the University of Paris. Not only was argument at the very heart of pedagogy at the university in the form of the *quaestio disputata*,[11] but from the 1250s there were ongoing vociferous polemics in the University, both politically about the role of the religious orders and theoretically

[10] The narrator does the same at 21181-88.
[11] Cf. p. 22, n. 1.

about the unsettling claims of the new Aristotelianisms.[12] Moreover, questions of the different methods of resolving argument and putting forward claims for truth were at the heart of medieval education, the *trivium*, comprising grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic (or logic), which was propaedeutic to all subsequent institutional study. This chapter argues that the composition and meaning of the *Roman de la rose* depends on the use of argument and language following models of rhetorical theory, which contrasts with the syllogistic models found in the dialectic of the philosophers of the thirteenth century even as it trespasses into their theoretical domain. In order to establish and test this claim, we will have to take a detour through medieval theories of argumentation, proof, and the nature of rhetorical language.

RHETORIC AS DIALECTIC'S INFERIOR

Both dialectic and rhetoric are disciplines of language in which a speaker or writer attempts to secure the assent of an interlocutor or audience to a proposition or series of propositions. What, then, are the differences between dialectic and rhetoric and their respective means of securing assent? There are three major texts of rhetorical theory inherited from the classical world to be considered, all of which were read and used in differing ways in Paris in the thirteenth century.

Let us start with Book IV of Boethius' *De topicis differentiis*, which was successful not simply as a work on dialectic, a subject treated by the first three books, but also as a primary textbook on rhetoric.[13] By the thirteenth century it had supplanted the Ciceronian and pseudo-Ciceronian rhetorical handbooks upon which it drew and had become the approved textbook for extra-curricular reading on rhetoric at the University of Paris.[14] It is particularly important here

[12] Cf. especially Michel-Marie Dufeil, *Guillaume de Saint-Amour et la polémique universitaire parisienne, 1250-59* (Paris: Picard, 1972); Gordon Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: An Institutional and Intellectual History*, (New York and London: Wiley, 1968), pp. 34-47; Szittya, pp. 11-17; Mandonnet; Hissette; Bianchi; Thijssen.
[13] *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric*, ed. by Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) (henceforth *MGR*), p. 190; Osmund Lewry, 'Rhetoric at Paris and Oxford in the Mid-Thirteenth Century', *Rhetorica*, 1:1 (1983), 45-63.
[14] *MGR*, p. 191. Cf. Karin Margareta Fredborg, 'Rhetoric and Dialectic', in *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, ed. by Virginia Cox and John O. Ward,

since from the twelfth century it was the key authority cited for understanding the difference between rhetoric and dialectic. Moreover, the gulf between the two was becoming wider with the introduction of Aristotle's full *Organon* into the study of dialectic, whose prestige was far higher than that of rhetoric, and thus establishing the difference between the disciplines was becoming increasingly important.[15] As Palémon Glorieux points out, dialectic became increasingly important as the primary method for exploring philosophical questions, with the influx of Aristotelian texts, and theological questions, as the scholastic method of the universities overtook the Patristic model of theology founded on practical *eloquentia*.[16] Dialectic became the dominant discipline in the University, as witnessed famously by Henri d'Andeli's *Bataille des sept arts* (ca. 1250), a satirical allegory in which the figure of Gramaire (including the study of literary texts and versification) is defeated by Logique (Dialectic) who rules henceforth in Paris.[17]

Dialectic and rhetoric both aim to convince. Book IV of Boethius' *De topicis differentiis* outlines the differences between how they do so and concerning what matters they are used.

> Dialectica facultas igitur thesim tantum considerat. Thesis vero est sine circumstantiis quaestio. Rhetorica vero de hypothesibus, id est de quaestionibus circumstantiarum multitudine inclusis, tractat et disserit. Circumstantiae vero sunt: quis, quid, ubi, quando, cur, quomodo, quibus adminiculis.
> (The dialectical discipline examines the thesis only; a thesis is a question not involved in circumstances. The rhetorical [discipline], on the other hand, investigates and discusses hypotheses, that is, questions hedged in by a multitude of circumstances.

Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 2 (Leiden and Boston MA: Brill, 2006), pp. 165-92, pp. 179-80.

[15] *MGR*, p. 191.

[16] Palémon Glorieux, *La faculté des arts et se maîtres au XIIIe siècle*, Etudes de philosophie médiévale, 59 (Paris: Vrin, 1971), p. 16. Cf. Martin Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der Scholastischen Methode, nach den gedruckten und ungedruckten Quellen*, 2 vols (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche, 1909-11), vol. II; and John O. Ward, *Ciceronian Rhetoric in Treatise, Scholion and Commentary*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental, 58 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), p. 154: '[A] shift towards northern French schools evident in the late eleventh century has become confirmed [in the thirteenth], and with it a preoccupation with grammar, dialectic, theology and logic.' In the 1215 statutes for the University of Paris, the teaching of rhetoric could happen only on feast days; cf. *CUP*, I. 70-71.

[17] Henri d'Andeli, 'La Bataille des Sept Arts', in *Les Dits d'Henri d'Andeli*, pp. 59-72.

> Circumstances are who, what, where, when, why, how, by what means.)[18]

Boethius is drawing on Cicero, who gives a fuller explanation of the difference between thesis and hypothesis in the *Topica*. Cicero does not, however, assign the thesis to dialectic and the hypothesis to rhetoric as Boethius does, a point to which we will return below.

The other significant differences between the methods of rhetoric and dialectic are that rhetoric proceeds in unbroken discourse, while dialectic is restricted to question and answer, and that rhetoric is content to use enthymemes, while the more rigorous dialectic uses full syllogisms. Finally, the end of rhetoric is to persuade a judge, while dialectic aims to extract what it wants from the adversary.[19] Other than this mention of audience, Boethius' account is notable for its total neglect of rhetoric as a practical discipline. He is far more interested in how it constructs argument and how to situate it in relation to dialectic. He finds that dialectic and rhetoric use the same topics, and that dialectic is broader as it treats general questions (theses), whereas rhetoric is narrower, treating specific questions (hypotheses). The result, as Michael C. Leff has shown, is to subordinate rhetoric to dialectic: 'Dialectic governs the genus of argumentation, and rhetoric is the species of the genus.'[20] The narrative of the decline of rhetoric under the dominions of dialecticians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is persuasive, although as John Ward shows convincingly that rhetoric was far from excluded from study in Paris and Oxford.[21] Ciceronian rhetorical guides and their commentaries were read and taught in schools and even in universities, despite

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[18] Boethius, *De topicis differentiis*, IV, *PL*, 64, 1205CD, translation from *MGR*, p. 193.
Cf. Cicero, *Topica*, 79-82, in Cicero, *De inventione, De optimo genere oratorum, Topica*, trans. by H. M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1949, repr. 2006). Cicero, it should be noted, does not assign the thesis to dialectic and the hypothesis to rhetoric, and he seems to suggest rather that rhetoric can treat general 'problems' and not just specific 'cases' (*causae*).
[19] *De topicis diffentiis*, IV; *PL*, 64, 1206C; *MGR*, p. 194.
[20] Michael C. Leff, 'The Logician's Rhetoric: Boethius' *De differentiis topicis, Book IV*', in *Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. by James J. Murphy (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 3-24, p. 15.
[21] John O. Ward, 'Rhetoric in the Faculty of Arts at the Universities of Paris and Oxford in the Middle Ages: A Summary of the Evidence', *Bulletin du Cange: Archivum Latinitas Medii Aevi*, 54 (1996), 159-231.

their lower status,[22] although works of rhetoric were rarely commentated on in the thirteenth century.[23] Nevertheless, there was ample authority from theological sources to show that dialectic treats of knowledge of universal and even divine things, while rhetoric is restricted to the less elevated spheres of practical matters and of reasoning with those incapable of following their reason, the stupid masses. Augustine in Book II of *De doctrina christiana* goes as far as to say of dialectic that 'est in rerum ratione perpetua et divinitus instituta' (it is built into the permanent and divinely instituted system of things).[24] In *De ordine*, he describes dialectic as the root of knowledge:

> Haec docet docere, haec docet discere; in hac se ipsa ratio demonstrat, atque aperit quae sit, quid velit, quid valeat. Scit scire; sola scientes facere non solum vult, sed etiam potest.
> (This discipline teaches how to teach, and how to learn. In it reason itself shows itself for what it is, what it might want, and what it can do. It knows how to know. It alone is both willing and capable of making people learned.)

Rhetoric on the other hand is suited to those lacking in intelligence and led by their emotions:

> Verum quoniam plerumque stulti homines ad ea quae suadentur recte, utiliter et honeste, non ipsam sincerissimam quam rarus animus videt veritatem, sed proprios sensus consuetudinemque sectantur, oportebat eos non doceri solum quantum queunt, sed saepe et maxime commoveri. Hanc suam partem quae id ageret, necessitatis pleniorem quam puritatis, refertissimo gremio deliciarum, quas populo spargat, ut ad utilitatem suam dignetur adduci, vocavit *rhetoricam*.
> (In truth, however, most of the time, to arrive at those things which are rightly, usefully, and honestly to be recommended, stupid men do not follow the purest truth that only the exceptional soul sees, but rather their own senses and experience. It was necessary that such people should be taught not only with regard to their capacity, but also by frequently and vigourously arousing their passions. Reason called this art *rhetoric*, assigning to it the

[22] Lewry, pp. 46-48, describes a commentary of Boethius, *De topicis differentiis*, IV in which its composer attempts to synthesise Boethius' logical definition of rhetoric with Ciceronian ideas of audience and emotion.
[23] Lewry, p. 49.
[24] Augustine of Hippo, *De doctrina christiana*, ed. and trans. by R. P. H. Green, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) (henceforth *De doctrina*), II. 32. 50, pp. 112-13.

> necessary but by no means simple task of scattering charms and delight among the people, with the intent of turning them towards what is good for them.)[25]

This is one part of the story of rhetoric in the twelfth and thirteenth century – the hegemony of dialectic coupled with the evolution of the Schools into the University, leaving no place for rhetoric in philosophy, and relegating it to the task of persuading the slow-witted to do what is correct. However, other traditions of rhetorical theory are at play in the Middle Ages that go against the prevailing wind of logic. Characteristically, the *Roman de la rose* does not just draw on Boethian ideas about rhetoric and dialectic but takes and reworks concepts from the Ciceronian and the Aristotelian traditions. Turning to the speaking, coaxing, preaching, shrieking figures in Jean de Meun's text, we will consider what other ideas of rhetoric are available in the thirteenth century.

CICERO AND RHETORIC AS THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIETY

Cicero is 'the unquestioned *magister eloquentiae* for the middle ages'.[26] The rhetorical tradition of Cicero's *De inventione* and pseudo-Cicero's *Rhetorica ad Herennium* is of key importance for the understanding of medieval ideas of eloquence and rhetoric. Ward has concluded on the basis of manuscript evidence and library records that there was a 'universal distribution' of the two texts in the middle ages and a 'very wide distribution' of the glosses and commentaries on them and the treatises derived from there.[27] He argues convincingly that despite a paucity of references to the texts in university curricula, Cicero's *De inventione* and pseudo-Cicero's *Rhetorica ad Herennium* were still being read and taught in Paris in the thirteenth century.[28] The Ciceronian rhetorical manuals were not simply commentated and taught as foundational texts in the twelfth century,[29] but informed sermon guides, the French *artes poetriae*, in which

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[25] Augustine of Hippo, *De ordine = de l'ordre*, ed. and trans. by Jean Doignon (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997), II.13.38. 10-23; pp 278-80 (my translation).
[26] James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1974), p. 106.
[27] Ward, *Ciceronian Rhetoric*, p. 255.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 259-60. Ward points out (p. 143) that the *Rhetorica ad Herrenium* was privileged over the *De inventione* as the basic school text from the mid-twelfth century onwards.
[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 61; 64-65.

rhetorical models of invention were used to understand and to compose works of literature, as well as the Italian *artes dictaminis*, manuals in the art of prose letter-writing.[30] In Brunetto Latini's mid-thirteenth-century Italian translation and commentary of the first sections of the *De inventione*, known as the *Rettorica*, and his French translation and commentary of the same text in Book III of his *Livres dou Trésor*, both ca. 1260, Cicero's primary text on rhetoric becomes available to a wider audience outisde of the Latinate schools. The *Trésor* groups rhetoric with politics and sees rhetoric as a part of civic matters. This is a solidly Ciceronian understanding of rhetoric; in the *De inventione* Cicero writes,

> Civilis quaedam ratio est, quae multis et magnis ex rebus constat. Eius quaedam magna et ampla pars est artificiosa eloquentia quam rhetoricam vocant.
> (There is a scientific system of politics which includes many important fields. One important and large part is artificial eloquence, which is called rhetoric.)[31]

If the situating of rhetoric under civic affairs contradicts the more academic taxonomy of Boethius, putting the art of eloquence within the larger domain of politics accords with the distinction we have seen so far by which theoretical matters belong to dialectic, whilst practical questions, whether private (judicial cases) or public (affairs of state), are the province of rhetoric. However, Cicero's text (alongside its most influential commentary, by the Neoplatonist Marius Victorinus) is significant as a rhetorical textbook in that, unlike other rhetorical texts, it opens with a discussion of the origins and purpose of rhetoric, and considers the ethics of speech and the relationship between wisdom (*sapientia*) and eloquence (*eloquentia*). It is also, significantly, one of only two works on rhetoric overtly referenced in the *Roman de la rose*.[32]

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[30] Cf. Richard McKeon, 'Rhetoric in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 17:1 (1942), 1-32, p. 27; Margaret Jennings, 'Medieval Thematic Preaching: A Ciceronian Second Coming', in *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, ed. by Virginia Cox and John O. Ward, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 2 (Leiden and Boston MA: Brill, 2006), pp. 313-334; Martin Camargo, *Ars dictaminis, ars dictandi*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental, 60 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), p. 19; Ernest Gallo, *The Poetria Nova and its Sources in Early Rhetorical Doctrine*, De proprietatibus litterarum. Series maior, 10 (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971), pp. 133-223.

[31] *De inventione*, Hubbell, ed. (henceforth, *De inv.*), I. 5. 6. Translations from the *De inventione* are mine.

[32] The other being Sallust's *Catilina*, cf. pp. 96-97.

There are two key points to be made here about the nature of speech and the arts of speech. In the *De inventione*, Cicero shows himself very aware of the difference between the theoretical and the practical levels of discourse. The text opens by asking whether the ability to speak (*copia dicendi*) and the utmost commitment to eloquence (*summum eloquentiae studium*) have been, on balance, a good or a bad thing. This leads to a musing on the relationship between *eloquentia* and *sapientia*.

> Ac me quidem diu cogitantem ratio ipsa in hanc potissimum sententiam ducit, ut existimem sapientiam sine eloquentia parum prodesse civitatibus, eloquentiam vero sine sapientia nimium obesse plerumque, prodesse nunquam. Quare si quis omissis rectissimis atque honestissimis studiis rationis et offici consumit omnem operam in exercitatione dicendi, is inutilis sibi, perniciosus patriae civis alitur.
> (For my own part, after long thought, reason itself has led me to believe that wisdom without eloquence does too little for the good of states, and that, in truth, eloquence without wisdom is very harmful most of the time and helpful none of the time. Therefore if anyone, having neglected the most proper and honourable study of reason and duty, were to expend all his energy in the training to speak well, such a citizen would be brought up to be useless to himself and harmful to his country.)[33]

Sapientia is shown to be acquired from the study of *ratio* (reason) and *officium* (duty) that is to say from the study of theoretical philosphy and of ethics.[34] The relationship between eloquence, which depends on rhetoric, and philosophy, whose method, according to Boethius, is dialectic, is here not one of simple opposition, or of a difference in subject matter and method. Cicero is more interested in morality than in taxonomy. In order for either to be truly useful or moral in the sphere of public affairs, the fields of rhetoric and philosophy must be allied rather than separated. This principle might explain the thinking behind Brunetto Latini's *Livre dou trèsor*, which was intended as a handbook for those

[33] *De inv.*, I. 1. 1.
[34] Victorinus' Neoplatonic commentary, however, has a different understanding of wisdom: 'ars sapientiae tradi non potest: per se autem tota constat ac permanet'. (No art of wisdom can be taught. Wisdom exists completely and permanently all by itself.) Victorinus, *Explanationes in Ciceronis rhetoricam*, ed. by Antonella Ippolito, CCSL, 132 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), I, praef., p. 7 (*MGR*, p. 108).

wanting to participate in the public life of a city state. It describes itself in the prologue as 'cest livre conpilez de sapience' (this book compiled of wisdom),[35] and contains discussion of natural science, history and theology in Book I, and discussion of vices and virtues in Book II, before proceeding to a vernacularisation of Cicero's rhetoric and the discussion of politics in Book III. The dividing line between philosophy and rhetoric is far less solid here than it might have been for the dialecticians in the Arts Faculty of the University, and Jean de Meun, popularising a large amount of scholastic theoretical knowledge in the *Rose*, is very aware of the Ciceronian interplay between knowledge and the arts of persuasion, as we will see below in the figure of Faux Semblant.

Another point to highlight at this stage is what follows this *sapientia/eloquentia* interplay, namely the question of what eloquence is and where it came from.

> Ac si volumus huius rei quae vocatur eloquentia, sive artis sive studii sive exercitationis cuiusdam sive facultatis ab natura profectae considerare principium, reperiemus id ex honestissimis causis natum atque optimis rationibus profectum.
> (Moreover, if we wish to consider this thing called eloquence – whether it be an art, something one studies, something for which one is trained, or a gift of nature – we shall find that it arose from the most honourable causes and continued on its way from the best of reasons.)[36]

As we have seen, Cicero goes on to refer to the teaching and learning of eloquence, rhetoric, as *artificiosa eloquentia*, yet here he raises the question of the relationship between nature and skill – or nature and artifice – in speech. In order to determine the matter, he narrates a foundational legend that makes the birth of human society and civilisation dependent on the discovery of eloquence. There was a time, he tells us, when humans used to live wild and without the use of reason.

> Quo tempore quidam magnus videlicet vir et sapiens [...] dispersos homines in agros et in tectis silvestribus abditos ratione quadam

[35] Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, ed. by Pietro G. Beltrami, Paolo Squillacioti *et al.* (Turin: Einaudi, 2007), I. 1. 1; p. 4.
[36] *De inv.*, I. 1. 2.

> compulit unum in locum et congregavit et eos in unam quamque rem inducens utilem atque honestam primo propter insolentiam reclamantes, deinde propter rationem atque orationem studiosius audientes ex feris et immanibus mites reddidit et mansuetos.
> (At that time a great and wise man [...] had a particular plan [ratio] and he drove the humans – who were scattered in the fields and hidden in dens in the woods – into one place and he gathered them together. He introduced them to every useful and honourable occupation, although initially they protested at such novelty, and then when through reason and speech they listened to him most attentively, he changed them from being wild and savage to being meek and gentle.)[37]

If the Aristotelian distinction between humans and other animals (as received in the Latin Middle Ages) was based primarily on the capacity of reason (*homo est animal rationale*), Cicero's narrative of the emergence of humanity is quite different. The primeval *homines* are not quite animals, but neither are they socialised humans. They wandered here and there in the fields as beasts do and they did nothing guided by reason but relied for the most part on their physical strength.[38]

Reason on its own had not managed to elevate humanity above the level of a beast. The wandering hominoids were still *feri* (wild) and it was only the combination of reason with speech (*oratio*) that produced civilised humanity. The status of this *magnus vir et sapiens*, already endowed with wisdom, who teaches new customs to his bestial fellow humans, is mysterious. It is clear, though, that he is exceptional, and, for the bulk of humanity, eloquence is something learned. It is artificial, and yet it is fundamental for being human. Grillius describes the process as follows in his commentary:

> Hic sane incipit artis rhetoricae defensio ex his, quae per eam facta sunt. Homines ad humanitatem deductos per rhetoricam dicit.
> (Here the defence of the art of rhetoric wisely starts from these things which were brought about by it. It says that humans were led to humanity by rhetoric.)[39]

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[37] *De inv*., I. 2. 2.
[38] *De inv.*, I. 2. 2.
[39] Grillius, *Commentum in Ciceronis Rhetorica*, ed. by Rainer Jakobi, Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Munich and Leipzig: Saur, 2002), I. 2, 38-40; p, 17. Marius Victorinus makes the same point when he interprets Cicero line that the great wise man

There is a tension, then, within eloquence: speaking (or communication) is an art that nevertheless retains something of the natural, and it is an art that is necessary for becoming human.[40] Cicero leaves greater space than Aristotle for ambiguity as to the status both of humans and of human speech. We will return to this founding myth of humanity as it is received in the *Rose*, which itself complicates questions of nature and artifice, but one point we will make here is that for reason to guarantee human superiority over animals, eloquence is absolutely necessary. Wisdom without eloquence is, as Cicero has asserted, almost useless in a social context, and reason and dialectic on their own could not function outside the rarefied air of the schoolroom. It is necessary for the learned to learn the art of speaking well, not just to convince stupid people how to live morally, but in order for human society to function well and to overcome the noxious effects of the alternative, the use of eloquence without wisdom.

'ex feris et immanibus mites reddidit et mansuetos' (transformed them from wild savages into a kind and gentle folk) as follows: 'sublata est hominibus feritas atque immanitas, data humanitas et mansuetudo.' ([T]heir wildness and ferocity are taken away from human beings, and they are given humanity and gentleness.) (*Explicationes*, I. 2. 163-64, p. 19; *MGR*, p. 117). Cf. p. 81 for Albert's discussion of the status of feral, uncivilised humans.

[40] Grillius, in his commentary resolves the problem of rhetoric's status thus: 'Est ergo ars rhetorica an non est? Nam homines, inquit, inter silvestria tecta ferarum more vagabuntur. Quicquid ante non fuit, postea esse coepit, ex arte, non ex natura est; est enim natura, quod cum homine nascitur, artis vero, quod postea sollertia invenit humana. Est ergo ars rhetorica.' (Is rhetoric therefore an art or not? "For men," he [Cicero] says, "wandered about between their woodland dwellings in the manner of wild animals." Anything that was not there in the beginning and only began to exist later comes from art and not from nature; something is natural if it is born with man. It is truly an art if human resourcefunless discovers it later. Rhetoric is therefore an art.), *Commentum*, I. 1-5. 73-78; pp. 3-4. If Cicero does not explicitly rule on whether eloquence is an art, a study, a practice, or a faculty come from nature, Victorinus in the introduction to his commentary on the *De inventione* interprets this to show that eloquence comes not from one of but rather from a combination of such categories: 'Etenim si constat quattuor rebus - natura, usu, exercitatione, arte - necessario et artis praecepta in eloquentiam dantur'. (For since eloquence is based on four things, nature, usage, training, and art, it is necessary that the precepts of the art be imparted so as to attain eloquence), I, praef., 65-67, p. 7; *MGR*, p. 108). Victorinus' influential commentary attempts to resolve the tension between art and nature by drawing on a Neoplatonic doctrine that the eternal and divine soul's keenness 'quodam corporis crasso tegmine inretitur et circumfunditur, et ita fit ut quandam oblivionem sui capiat.' (is entangled and surrounded by a certain thick covering, the body, and thus it becomes forgetful of itself in a certain way.), I, praef., 41-42, p. 6; *MGR*, p. 107. Through study and discipline, that is through the learning of the art, 'in naturae suae modum animi habitus revertitur atque revocatur.' (the state of the soul returns and is called back to the way of its nature..) (I, praef., p. 6, 44-45; *MGR*, p. 107, translation emended.) Art is nature's handmaid here, and rhetoric – the *ars eloquentiae*, the art of eloquence (I, praef., 65, p. 7; *MGR*, p. 108) – serves a spiritual function.

De topicis differentiis, IV is evidence of the exclusion of rhetoric from theoretical questions and Cicero's *De inventione* provides a striking counterpoint in its insistence on theory's reliance on rhetoric to have any benefits for society. The *Rose*, conscious of its own nature as a rhetorical text, draws on the Ciceronian meditation on the relationship between wisdom and eloquence, arguing for the need for theoretical knowledge to be linked with persuasion for the sake of morality and society. Another authoritative text was to appear which would open the scope of rhetoric and make it a discipline studying 'eloquence imbued with an ethical and persuasive purpose',[41] highly appropriate to the consideration of questions of moral philosophy, rather than being an intellectual discipline (Boethius) or an impractical guide for a practice of oratory from a bygone Classical era (Cicero).

ARISTOTLE AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RHETORIC

William of Moerbeke's Latin translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* appeared in 1270, and was in use in the schools almost immediately.[42] It is extant in nearly 100 medieval manuscripts, none of which contains any other treatises on rhetoric or any of the language arts, such as the *De sophisticis elenchis* or the *Topics*. It is, rather, found either on its own or solely with Giles of Rome's commentary (in 23 out of 101 cases) or combined with other Aristotelian or pseudo-Aristotelian texts on politics, ethics, or economics.[43] Accordingly, James J. Murphy has argued convincingly that it was seen more as an adjunct to politics or ethics than as linked to dialectic and theoretical philosophy. This is not, though, the full story. Giles of Rome was a master of theology at Paris until 1277 – the year of Tempier's condemnation – after which he left for Italy, only returning in 1285. He is very much a follower of Aquinas in his attempts to synthesise Aristotle's

[41] *MGR*, p. 794.
[42] Murphy, pp. 91-94. An earlier, fairly flawed translation by Hermannus Alemannus of Al-Farabi's commentary on the *Rhetoric* had appeared a decade earlier. Murphy elsewhere points out that 'there is virtually no record of its use as a rhetorical textbook, and it had virtually no influence on medieval theories of preaching, verse-writing, and letter-writing – the three derivative forms of rhetoric which flourished in the Middle Ages.' Cf. James J. Murphy, 'The Scholastic Condemnation of Rhetoric in the Commentary of Giles of Rome on the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle', in *Arts libéraux et philosophie au Moyen Âge: actes du Quatrième Congrès international de philosophie médiévale, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada, 27 août-septembre 1967* (Montreal/Paris: Institut d'études médiévales/Vrin, 1969), pp. 833-41, pp. 833-34.
[43] Cf. Charles F. Briggs, 'Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the Later Medieval Universities: A Reassessment', *Rhetorica*, 25:3 (2007), 243-68, pp. 254-55. Cf. Murphy, *Rhetoric*, pp. 93-94.

thought with Christianity and wrote several commentaries on Aristotelian works, including one on the *Rhetoric* completed very soon after William of Moerbeke's translation, becaming the standard *accessus* to Aristotle's work. The large numbers of copies made of the *Rhetoric* in Northern France in the late thirteenth century bears witnesses to the interest in the text just at the moment when Jean de Meun is writing the *Roman de la rose*. Accordingly, I want to consider how understanding the place of rhetoric and persuasion in relation to dialectic and to ethics became a significant issue in the 1270s. Rather than analyse Aristotle's work itself, I want discuss Giles' commentary which does not stray far from the Philosopher's text, while adding material from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and which is indicative of the kinds rhetorical theorising that would have been taking place in Paris while the *Rose* was being composed. Aristotle' *Rhetoric*, as expounded by Giles, introduces three important factors that will be useful for thinking about how eloquence and the transmission of knowledge work in the *Rose* and in the University context.

First, absent from either Boethian or Ciceronian discussion of the language arts, with their extensive discussion of the invention of topics and the procedure of argument, is a focus on the psychological operations effected by dialectic and rhetoric respectively. Aristotle has pointed out that rhetoric works by means of persuasion and dialectic by means of deduction, although he does muddy the waters by suggesting that persuasion is a means of deduction.[44] Giles outlines the distinction as follows:

> Sunt autem quantum ad praesens tria genera rationum, quia quaedam sunt rationes probabiles, quaedam persuasiuae, quaedam demonstrativae. Rationes probabiles sunt dialecticae: persuasiu[a]e sunt rhetoricae, demonstratiuae vero sunt aliarum scientiarum.

[44] 'With regard to the persuasion achieved by proof or apparent proof: just as in dialectic there is induction on the one hand and deduction or apparent deduction on the other, so it is in rhetoric. The example is an induction, the enthymeme is a deduction, and the apparent enthymeme is an apparent deduction; for I call a rhetorical deduction an enthymeme, and a rhetorical induction an example. Everyone who effects persuasion through proof does in fact use either enthymemes or examples: there is no other way. And since everyone who proves anything at all is bound to use either deductions or inductions (and this is clear to us from the *Analytics*), it must follow that each of the latter is the same as one of the former.' Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I. 2, 1356a35-b10. Cf. *Posterior Analytics*, I. 1, 71a1-11.

> (For our present purposes there are three kinds of reasoning to consider: probable reasoning, persuasive reasoning, and demonstrative reasoning. Probable reasoning pertains to dialectic, persuasive reasoning pertains to rhetoric, and demonstrative reasoning pertains to the other sciences.)[45]

He discusses the psychology of making choices, which for humans happens through a combination of reason and appetite: the *intellectus appetitivus* or the *appetitus intellectivus*, drawn from Book VI of the *Ethics*.[46] The psychological process at work in rhetoric is contrasted with that of dialectic:

> Nam assensus credulitatis per rationes persuasivas competit intellectui secundum quod est aptus natus moueri ab appetitu. Assensus vero scientificus & opinatiuus: siue assentire per propositiones demonstratiuas & probabiles competit inellectui ut est aptus natus moueri secundum motum proprium.
> (For the assent of belief through persuasive reasonings belongs to the intellect when it is by nature apt to be moved by appetite. An assent of knowledge or opinion, that is, to assent through demonstrative or probable reasonings, belongs to the intellect as it is by nature apt to be moved by its own motion.)[47]

Giles, it should be noted, understands the 'practical intellect' as that which is ordered towards satisfying the appetite, which accords perfectly with our discussion of Amant's use of his practical intellect in chapter 2.[48] We are then given a distinction between *assensus scientificus* (assent of knowledge) which is 'assensus sine formidine alterius partis' (assent given without concern for any other factors) and *assensus opinatiuus* (assent of opinion), which is 'cum formidine' (given with such a concern).[49] Knowledge (*scientia*) is speculative and derives necessarily from first principles while opinion (*opinio*) is dependent on the contingencies of external factors and in relation to things about which one cannot be certain. Both are processes of the intellect alone, as it is apt to be moved by its own motion, and they differ according to kinds of propositions

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[45] Giles of Rome, *Commentaria in Rhetoricam Aristotelis* (henceforth *In Rhet.*), fol. 1r; translation from *MGR*, p. 797.
[46] Aquinas defines the 'appetitus intellectivus' as 'voluntas', the will. Cf. *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 31, a. 4, co. Cf. *Ethics*, VI. 2, 1139b4-5.
[47] *In Rhet.*, fol. 1r; *MRG*, p. 799.
[48] Cf. pp. 86-88.
[49] *In Rhet.*, fol. 1v. My translation. This passage is omitted from *MGR*.

being discussed. Proceeding then from the most purely rational downwards, we come to *credulitas* (belief), which is caused by rhetoric.

> Et quia credulitas, quam intendit aggenerare rhetor, competit intellectui, ut est aptus natus moueri a voluntate, nonquid nunquam fiat talis persuasio, nisi actus intellectus a voluntate sit motus, ut infra patebit.
> (And because belief, which the rhetorician means to produce, belongs to the intellect as it is apt to be moved by the will, persuasion does not happen without an act of the intellect that is moved by the will, as will seen below.)[50]

Aristotle's rhetoric, then, as mediated through Giles, opens with a discussion of *how* persuasion does its work. For Giles, as for Augustine, rhetoric is concerned with the arousal of the passions, as well as the use of the verbal arts. In fact, Giles of Rome goes on to dedicate the second half of his text to a discussion of the passions, very closely following Aquinas' commentary on the *Ethics*.[51] The importance of inspiring the correct mental states in the audience is corroborated by Aristotle's emphasis on the 'personal character of the speaker' and on 'putting the audience into a certain frame of mind' alongside 'the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself.'[52] Rhetoric is not simply a disciplinary category or an abstract area of study, but is allied with the practicalities of human life and of communicating persuasively. It is thus wholly appropriate that rhetoric is associated with ethics. Aristotle states that

> rhetoric is an offshoot of dialectic and also of ethical studies. Ethical studies may fairly be called political; and for this reason rhetoric masquerades as political science, and the professors of it as political experts—sometimes from want of education, sometimes from ostentation, sometimes owing to other human

[50] *In Rhet.*, fol 1v; *MGR*, p, 799 (translation emended). Giles goes on to say that belief differs from opinion in terms of certitude. There is less certitude in belief 'cum sit quaedam suspicatio.' (as there is a certain kind of suspicion in it).
[51] Cf. J. R. O'Donnell, 'The Commentary of Giles of Rome on the Rhetoric of Aristotle' in *Essays in Medieval History presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, ed. by T. A. Sandquist and M. R. Powicke (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 139-56, pp. 151-56. O'Donnell goes so far as to declare, 'Both the doctrine and the terminology are so similar that I am led to believe that Giles had the text of St. Thomas before him.' (p. 156).
[52] *Rhetoric*, I. 2, 1356a2-4.

> failings. As a matter of fact, it is a branch of dialectic and similar to it, as we said at the outset.[53]

Giles interprets this elsewhere to mean that rhetoric is a kind of dialectic that treats morals,[54] and he goes onto associate rhetoric more with dialectic than with politics.[55] If rhetoric is concerned with ethics and has some link to politics, it nevertheless has a certain instability and openness due to the property it shares with dialectic, namely that neither dialectic nor rhetoric are the scientific study of one separate subject but are faculties for providing argument, as Aristotle says at the opening of the *Rhetoric*:

> Rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic. Both alike are concerned with such things as come, more or less, within the general ken of all men and belong to no definite science.[56]

Giles is very clear that rhetoric is subordinate to dialectic and the long-established dominance of dialectic as the basis for theoretical discussion is echoed here. Rhetoric is still allied to the practical and the contingent rather than the theoretical, to the hypothesis of political or ethical questions rather than the thesis of *scientia*. Additionally, Giles maintains the established distinction that the audience of rhetoric is simpler and less sophisticated than that of dialectic. However, rhetoric's scope for treating ethical questions has been authoritatively asserted. Jean de Meun, following in the footsteps of Brunetto Latini in the vernacularisation of much theoretical material and linking it to questions of civic or personal morality, was to take advantage of the idea of rhetoric as an inferior, appetite-driven analogue to dialectic in order to do more than simply synthesise

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[53] *Rhetoric*, I. 2, 1356a25-32.
[54] Aegidius Romanus (Giles of Rome), *De differentia rhetoricae, ethicae et politicae*, ed. by Gerardo Bruni, *The New Scholasticism*, 6:1 (1932), 1-18, p. 5. Cf. Lewry, p. 56; *MGR*, p. 793. The Dominican Robert Kilwardby says that rhetoric is a reasoning science [*scientia rationativa*] for the determining of civil questions. Cf. Gilbert Dahan, 'L'entrée de la *Rhétorique* d'Aristote dans le monde latin entre 1240 et 1270', in *La rhétorique d'Aristote: traditions et commentaires de l'Antiquité au XVIIe siècle*, ed. by Gilbert Dahan and Irène Rosier-Catach (Paris: Vrin, 1998), pp. 65-86, p. 79.
[55] *Ibid*.,, p. 6: '[Q]uia rethorica tradit notitiam quorundam communium, et non directe tradit notitiam moralis negocii, ideo dicitur esse indeterminati generis et esse quedam dyalectica, et non dicitur esse quedam politica.' (Because rhetoric relates knowledge of certain general principles, and does not directly relate knowledge of a specific moral question, it is therefore said to be of an indeterminate genre and to be a kind of dialectic, and it is not said to be a kind of politics.)
[56] *Rhetoric*, I. 1, 1354a1-3.

and translate existing theories, as Brunetto does.[57] The *Rose* is not just a text whose characters perform eloquent or rhetorical speech to decide moral questions, and it does not simply fall under ethics by virtue of being poetry. Rather, it advances a new kind of moral philosophy, in which the persuasive speech of rhetoric does not limit itself to the consideration of the hypothesis, the individual case, but engages with theses, with the general questions that Boethius had restricted to the dialectic of the philosophers. Literature, in its own way, does philosophy. We will now turn to the poem to see how it approaches questions of eloquence, ethics, and theoretical knowledge.

INTEGUMENTUM: PROFIT AND PLEASURE IN THE *ROSE*

The *Rose* certainly signals the possibility that poetry contains philosophical teaching, albeit in a manner that does not always inspire confidence. When Jean's narrator justifies himself against future charges of misogyny, he famously begs of his female audience

> que ne m'an voilliez pas blamer
> ne m'escriture diffamer,
> qui toute est por anseignement.
> (that you not criticise me nor defame my writing, which is all intended to be educational.) (15171-73)

The narrating voice goes on to say of poets that

> [...] si con tesmoigne la letre,
> profiz et delectacion,
> c'est toute leur entencion.
> (just as it has been written, profit and pleasure are their sole intention.) (15210-12)

This latter is a reworking of Horace's *Ars poetica*, vv. 333-34:

> Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae
> aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitae.

[57] Translation is never simply transmission, however, as will be discussed in chapter 5.

(Poets aim either to benefit, or to amuse, or to utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life.)[58]

Such an exalted justification made to the victims of offensive attacks on their sexual mores – that the motive is purely to educate them – is clearly disingenuous, somewhat akin to the moralising conclusions of some *fabliaux*. If the disingenuousness of the *Rose*'s use of Horace were not wholly evident, the reworking of 'being useful' (*prodesse*) as resulting in 'profit' should make us more than a little cautious, given how the word is inescapably inflected with meanings of financial transactions and money, particularly (but not solely) when used by Le Jaloux.[59] Despite the insincerity of the Horatian claim in that context, the statement is not false when applied to the *Rose*. This is one of those moments when the *Rose* hides a genuine position in plain sight. If it is not, perhaps, the case that everything in the *Rose* is aimed at the education of its readers, the placing of benefit, moral and intellectual, alongside – or even before – pleasure in the coupling 'profiz et delectacion' attests to the fundamental place of the acquisition and imparting of knowledge (and investigation into how these two processes work) that runs throughout the poem. The philosophical project of the *Rose* is far more significant than most modern readers currently acknowledge, and at least as important as the ironic poetic games that critics prefer to focus on in their reading of the text, for the *Rose* does not restrict itself to the domain of rhetoric.

The Horatian combination of profit and pleasure that comes from poetry echoes another moment in which the philosophical matter of poetry is discussed. Amant declares himself greatly put out by Raison's having spoken in an uncourtly manner by using the word 'coilles' (testicles) in telling the story of Jupiter's castration of Saturn (*Rose*, 5505-10). Raison argues that the word itself is not scabrous and is simply a conventional sign rather than one inherently connected with what it names, thus taking a nominalist view of language against a realist

[58] For the reception and use made of this couplet from Horace in medieval literary theory, cf. Olson, pp. 22-23.
[59] *Rose*, 8851-54. This destabilising financial undertone echoes in each of the multitude of uses of the word 'profit' in the *Rose*, as will be considered in chapter 4.

one (7051-66).[60] However, she goes even further; for all her discussion of the importance of using the correct word to describe something, the'coilles' are themselves not 'unflinchingly literal',[61] but are part of an *integumentum*, an allegorical fiction. The 'coilles' that Raison mentions when telling the story of Saturn's castration and the birth of Venus after Jupiter's disposal of his father's genitalia in the sea – are not the things themselves but rather they are a poetic covering for a philosophical idea.

> La verité dedenz reposte
> seroit clere, s'el iert esposte;
> bien l'entendras, se bien repetes
> les integumanz aus poetes.
> La verras une grant partie
> des secrez de philosophie
> ou mout te vodras deliter,
> et si porras mout profiter:
> en profitant deliteras,
> en delitant profiteras;
> car en leur geus et en leur fables
> gisent deliz mout profitables
> souz cui leur pensees covrirent,
> quant le voir des fables vestirent.
> (The truth hidden within would be clear were it expounded; you will understand it well if you repeat to yourself the *integumenta* of the poets. There you will see a great part of the secrets of philosophy where you will wish to take much pleasure, and so you will be able to profit greatly; while profiting you will have pleasure, while experiencing pleasure, you will profit; for in their games and in their fables lie most profitable pleasures under which they covered their thoughts when they clothed the truth in fables.)
> (7135-48)

The idea that poetry contains within it not simply moral guidance but also philosophical learning is brought up in the *Rose* following in the Neoplatonic tradition of the twelfth century. William of Conches describes the *integumentum* in his twelfth-century commentary on Macrobius' commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*. Macrobius had argued for a limited use of fabulous narratives

[60] Cf. Daniel Poirion, 'Les mots et les choses selon Jean de Meun', *L'information littérair*e 26:1 (1974), 7-11; David Hult, 'Words and Deeds: Jean de Meun's "Romance of the Rose" and the Hermeneutics of Censorship', *New Literary History*, 28: 2 (1997), 345-66, pp. 352-53; and especially Hult, 'Language and Dismemberment', pp. 109-19.
[61] Minnis, *Magister amoris*, p. 89.

in the treatment of philosophy, and he had claimed that there were two kinds of fables: those that give pleasure and those that encourage an audience to be more moral.[62] William, drawing on Horace's *Ars poetica* 333-34, argues for a third kind of fiction in which the narrative of the fable, however unseemly its subject matter, is also a covering, an *integumentum*, which conceals a noble philosophical truth. William reads a story about Bacchus to find hidden meanings both about the soul's relation to the body and about the Neoplatonic doctrine of the world soul. Another of his examples, following Macrobius, is the story of Jupiter castrating Saturn. This story is also read integumentally in Book I of the *Commentary on First Six Books of the Æneid* attributed to Bernardus Silvestris.[63] The *integumentum* is defined at the beginning of the *Commentary*, similarly drawing on Macrobius, having just cited same lines from Horace's *Ars poetica*:

> Scribit ergo in quantum est philosophus humane vite naturam. Modus agendi talis est: in integumento describit quid agat vel quid paciatur humanus spiritus in humano corpore temporaliter positus. Atque in hoc describendo naturali utitur ordine atque ita utrumque ordinem narrationis observat, artificialem poeta, naturalem philosophus.
> Integumentum est genus demostrationis sub fabulosa narratione veritatis involvens intellectum, unde etiam dicitur involucrum. Utilitatem vero capit homo ex hoc opere, scilicet sui cognitionem; homini enim magna est utilitas, ut ait Macrobius, se ipsum cognoscere. Unde dictum est, "De celo descendit nothis elitos", id est, cognosce te.
> (To the extent that he writes about the nature of human life, Virgil is a philosopher. His procedure is to describe by means of an

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[62] *In Somnium*, I. 2. 7; p. 6.

[63] Bernardus Silvestris, *The Commentary on the First Six Books of the Aeneid of Vergil Commonly Attributed to Bernardus Silvestris*, ed. by Julian Ward Jones and Elizabeth Frances Jones (Lincoln NE & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), p. 10, 18-22. Mann notes that Macrobius' rejection of the base content of fables 'provides a model for the Lover's rejection of the story as "unworthy" in its subject matter' (Jill Mann, 'Jean de Meun and the Castration of Saturn', in *Poetry and Philosophy in the Middle Ages: a Festschrift for Peter Dronke*, ed. by John Marenbon, Mittellateinische Studien und Texte, 29 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 309-326, p. 320), although she goes on to distinguish the fact that the Lover objects on the grounds of the word 'coilles' itself rather than the things described by that word. We should also bear in mind that Macrobius' *In Somnium Scipionis* is used as an authority for the interpretation of dreams by Guillaume de Lorris' narrator seven lines into the whole poem. Cf. also Edmond Faral, *Les arts poétiques du XII^e^ et du XIII^e^ siècle*, Sciences historiques et philologiques, 238 (Paris: Champion, 1924), pp. 40-46; Paré (1941), pp. 26-30; Peter Dronke, *Fabula: Explorations into the Uses of Myth in Medieval Platonism*, Mittellateinische Studien und Texte, 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), pp. 13-67; Brian Stock, *Myth and Science: A Study of Bernard Silvester* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 31-62; and Winthrop Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century: The Literary Influence of the School of Chartres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

> integument what the human spirit does or what it endures while temporarily placed in the human body. Virgil uses natural order when writing about this, and thus he observes the double order of narration – as poet, the artificial order; as philosopher, the natural order. The integumentum is a type of exposition which wraps the apprehension of truth in a fictional narrative, and thus it is also called an *involucrum*, a cover. One grasps the utility of this work, which is self-knowledge; it is very useful for man to know himself, as Macrobius says: "From the sky comes *nothis elitos*," that is, know yourself.)[64]

The twelfth-century tradition of Neoplatonic allegorical interpretation made poetry a vehicle for transmitting both moral philosophy and natural philosophy, such as the physiological processes of sexual desire. Raison appears to be justifying improper stories or pleasing fables by the philosophical work they are doing, although if the story of the castration of Saturn is an integument, as Raison claims, it is not necessarily clear exactly what truth is being hidden.

Raison's aim was to talk Amant out of his foolish love quest and to guide him to a less self-destructive and more rational way of living. How, then, did she end up talking about *integumenta* in the first place? From this question stems another one: what are the implications of the *integumentum* for the nature of poetical or rhetorical language in relation to philosophy? A preliminary point to make is that the mention of the *integumentum* introduces the language and methods of the schools into the poetical performance of eloquence, even if those Neoplatonic methods have fallen out of fashion in the thirteenth-century University of Paris, where the split between dialectic and rhetoric had become much starker.[65] The *Rose* is, officially, a poem about love and thus belongs to the domains of rhetoric and ethics. The *integumentum*, which, through metaphor, unites the pleasing language of rhetoric and the theoretical truths of philosophy, short-circuits the

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[64] Bernardus Silvestris, *Commentary*, p. 3, 9-19. Translation from Bernardus Silvestris, *Commentary on the First Six Books of the Æneid*, trans. by Earl G. Schreiber and Thomas E. Maresca (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press 1979), p. 5 (translation emended); Cf. *In Somnium*, I. 9. 2; p. 54.

[65] Cf. Minnis, *Magister amoris*, pp. 85-86, who both agrees with H. R. Jauss and with Wetherbee, 'The Literal and the Allegorical', p. 286 that the *integementum* is out of fashion and not being used seriously in the *Rose* (*contra* Fleming) and then later suggests that integumental allegoresis *is* in operation in the *Rose*, but that it is not the only hermeneutical process (p. 90).

division of *De topicis differentiis*, IV between questions proper to rhetoric and questions proper to dialectic.

RAISON VS AMANT: BETWEEN RHETORIC AND PHILOSOPHY

The very fact that Raison has ended up having to talk about *integumenta* however, reveals a need within rhetoric to invade the theoretical terrain of dialectic. Raison started off trying to explain to Amant first why he should choose an idealised friendship (closely following Cicero's *De amicitate*) over courtly love. Amant, far from being an ignorant young nobleman, responds by citing Cicero right back at Raison, by alluding to John of Salisbury, and by drawing on Graeco-Roman myth in claiming that the world lost the pure kind of love (along with Law, Chastity, Faith, and finally Justice) when the giants assaulted Olympus.[66] Raison's myth of the end of the Golden Age is, in part, a counter-*exemplum* to Amant's mythography. Raison suggests that he should love humanity generally rather than focussing all his love irrationally in the fruitless project of courtly love, and also needs to respond to Amor's nihilistic theory of the irredeemably and totally fallen nature of the world, which now belongs to Barat (deceit) (5358-74).[67] This prompts the integumental description of the end of the Golden Age with the castration of Saturn that necessitated the institution of justice and laws.[68] From this fable of Saturn we are led both to literary and to linguistic theory. We started with a hypothesis, a case hedged by contingent details, of a specific young man whom Raison is trying to convince to act in a certain way, and we end up with theses about the nature of love, justice, and language. This happens as Amant's disagreements are not simply on the micro-level – what is the right way to act in these circumstances? – but are on the macro-level. He disagrees with the theories that underpin Raison's attempt at persuasion, which forces the discussion from the contingent hypothesis deep into the realm of the thesis. We do not simply have theses about ethics, such as what is the best way to love? We have really quite abstract theoretical material: where did justice come

[66] Cf. Sylvia Huot, *Dreams of Lovers*, pp. 63-66.
[67] Amant's view will find support in the impoverished Ami's discussion of the end of the Golden Age, initiated by Barat, armed with a lance, accompanied by Pechiez [Sin] and Male Aventure [Bad Luck], and a host of other vices all related to money and desire. Cf. *Rose*, 9497-9510.
[68] Cf. pp. 51-52.

from? What is the relationship between words and things? If there is a fundamental disagreement about the values that underpin an attempt at persuasion, rhetoric alone – the authoritative declamatory style of sermons, for example – is shown to be inadequate. Persuasion in the context of theoretical disagreement requires philosophy, and as the love-narrative of the *Rose* becomes forgotten in the discussion of theoretical themes, a new kind of text emerges, one which is at the same time poetic and philosophical, that uses techniques proper to rhetoric to broach questions proper to dialect, and to deal with these questions in a radically different way: rapidly, obliquely, incompletely, through metaphor and example, through performance and persuasion rather than induction, using the less obviously theoretical techniques of literature to produce philosophical arguments. The result is imperfect, sometimes offensive, and often inconsistent discussion of theoretical matter; it is necessarily imperfect because it takes place in the complicated, contested world of human interaction outside the schoolroom with its apparently emotionless, dialectical *scientia*.

The question of the role of emotion and the passions for making a judgement is highly relevant. Giles of Rome, as we have seen, identified it as an important factor in the operation of rhetorical persuasion upon the soul. Rhetoric is a counterpart of dialectic that uses not pure reason, but the will, the appetitive intellect, to achieve assent. Amant is, in fact, a man consumed by his emotion and his sexual desire. It is this that sees him abandon all Amor's noble commandments of propriety to follow Ami's advice to be hypocritical and bestial[69] with barely a murmur of protest. Raison is aware of the appetite-driven nature of her interlocutor. She even has to interrupt her speech about Fortune to dress him down because he keeps bursting into tears (6352-60).

Given the 'homology whereby the feminine is to the body as the masculine to the mind' in medieval thought,[70] the dominance of passions and desire is both feminine and possibly bestial. Not being a 'hom' means being either an

[69] Cf. chapter 2.
[70] Kay, 'Women's Body of Knowledge', p. 213. Cf. Jonathan Morton, 'Where are the bodies?'; Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York/London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 31-55.

incomplete man, that is to say either a child or else a woman (*mas occasionatus*, a failed man, according to Albert the Great)[71] and thus a feeble beast:

> Lesse plorer enfanz et fames,
> bestes foibles et variables;
> et tu saies forz et estables,
> quant Fortune verras venir. (6376-79)
> (Let children cry and women, weak and changeable beasts. You should be strong and stable when you see Fortune coming.)[72]

Amant is not totally stupid at all but he is in thrall to his passions and the reasoning of dialectic alone is not capable of leading him either to greater understanding or to more moral behaviour. If, as Cicero opened his *De inventione*, wisdom without eloquence is of almost no use for political matters, then reasoning without rhetoric is similarly powerless when confronted with human beings in emotional distress, or – to use more medieval terminology –humans in whose souls the intellect is failing to master the passions. The inappropriateness of dialectic for engaging in a convincing explanation of irrational love is staged right at the beginning of Raison's persuasive attempt (and of Jean's continuation of the *Rose*). Raison starts by attempting to use the language and techniques of dialectic to help bring Amant to some kind of self-awareness. She says that she will teach him the true meaning of love. She will demonstrate it 'sanz fable' (without the use of fiction) (4249). As Gérard Paré notes, the term 'demontraison' has a specific meaning in dialectic theory. *Demonstratio* is the Latin term for Aristotle's term ἀπόδειξις (apodeisdis) and is, according to the Philosopher's own definition, a syllogism producing scientific knowledge (συλλογισμόν ἐπιζημονιχόν – sullogismon episdêmonikhon – or 'sillogismum sciencialem, id est facientem scire').[73] Aquinas in his commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* interprets this kind of knowledge as that:

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[71] *De animalibus*, XVI. 1. 14. 72-73; II. 1099-1100. Cf. Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 133.

[72] It is totally not clear here whether 'foibles bestes' is a predicate of children and women, which seems the more plausible reading, and one which gently foreshadows Genius' description of woman as 'ceste beste', or whether the 'bestes' are themselves another category of weak, crying creature.

[73] Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, I.2, 71b18. The Latin source is James of Venice's translation, used by Aquinas. Cf. Jonathan Barnes, 'Aristotle's Theory of Demonstration', *Phronesis*, 14: 2 (1969), 123-52, pp. 123-24.

> cum scire nihil aliud esse videatur quam intelligere veritatem alicujus conclusionis per demonstrationem.
> (where to know seems to be nothing other than to understand the truth of a given conclusion through demonstration.)[74]

Demonstration is that kind of deduction that produces the certain, infallible knowledge known as *scientia*, as opposed to the less certain knowledge that comes from induction known as *opinio*.[75]

Raison appears to promise an infallible demonstration of love, which should, if it is successful dialectic, instantly secure assent from Raison's interlocutor. However, in this instance it is not Amant who fails to be rational, but Raison herself:

> Or te demonstreré sanz fable
> chose qui n'est pas demonstrable,
> si savras tantost sanz sciance
> et connoistras sanz connoissance
> ce qui ne peut estre seü
> ne demonstré ne conneü,
> quant a ce que ja plus en sache
> nus hom qui son queur i atache
> ne que ja pour ce mains s'en doille,
> s'il n'est tex que foïr le voille.
> (Now I will demonstrate to you without fables something which is not demonstrable, and you will know immediately without knowledge, and you will understand without understanding that which cannot be known or demonstrated or understood, in order that every man who yokes his heart to it [love] may have a better understanding of it, although he will not suffer any the less unless he is the kind who resolves to flee it.) (4249-58)

From the outset, this is a hopeless, crashing failure of the logical language of dialectic. Raison has only managed to produce paradox and oxymoron.[76] It is simply not possible logically to demonstrate that which cannot be demonstrated

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[74] Thomas Aquinas, *Exp. post. anal.*, I. 4, p. 20.
[75] Cf. Gérard Paré, *Le roman de la rose et la scolastique courtoise*, pp. 43-44. Also, cf. Charles H. Lohr, 'The New Aristotle and "Science" in the Paris Arts Faculty (1255)', in *L'enseignement des disciplines à la faculté des arts (Paris et Oxford, XIIIe-XIVe siècles)*, ed. by Olga Weijers and Louis Holz (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), Studia artistarum, 4, pp. 251-69; Aertsen, p. 235; Aquinas, *In Post. Anal.* I, 13; I. 49-52.
[76] Raison is also echoing Alain de Lille's Natura who makes a similarly paradoxical claim. Cf. *DPN*, VIII. 269-73.

or to know without knowledge. It is no wonder that she is reduced to drawing on 'fables' later when this is as far as the language of dialectic gets her in the discussion of sexual love. Instead of demonstration, Raison gives 48 verses of paradoxes drawn from and expanding on Natura's Alain de Lille's *De planctu Naturae*:

> Amors, ce est pez haïneuse,
> Amors, c'est haïne amoureuse;
> c'est leautez la desleaus,
> c'est la desleautez leaus;
> c'est poor toute asseüree,
> esperance desesperee;
> c'est reson toute forsenable,
> c'est forcenerie resnable [...]
> (Love is a hateful peace, love is lovestruck hatred; it is disloyal loyalty, it is loyal disloyalty; it is an assured fear and hopeless hope; it is a wholly insane reason, it is a reasonable insanity...)
> (4263-70)[77]

Jean de Meun stages the failure of dialectic to move the will right at the beginning of his continuation of the *Rose*. There is, as Huot has shown, a central kernel of unknowability at the heart of desire in the *Roman de la rose*. In medieval Aristotelian terms, we could say that the human soul became corrupted with the Fall and the intellective part lost its capacity to comprehend and master both itself and the appetitive, desiring part of the soul. It is precisely this appetitive part of the soul (dragging the rational intellective part along with it) that is most moved by sexual desire and to which rhetoric and eloquence make their appeal. Faced with Amant's often intelligent replies, which are nevertheless, motivated by sexual desire (or appetite), Raison is dragged further and further into the world of rhetoric in her attempts to sway him. In the fallen world of humanity corrupted by sin, reason on its own is doomed to failure. We should note, in passing, that, *pace* Fleming, this failure of the intellect is not that of Amant, but belongs to Raison, the incarnation of *ratio*. Informed by Cicero, by Aristotle, and by Giles of Rome, the *Rose* frames the inadequacy of pure dialectic not just for influencing but also for understanding postlapsarian desire and social

[77] The definition continues to verse 4310. Cf. *DPN*, IX. 1-18.

interaction. A different kind of philosophy is required to deal adequately with the subject matter of the *Rose*.

Amant rightly points out that after Raison's 'demonstration' he is no wiser than before, he asks for a definition:

> Mes puis qu'amor m'avez descrite
> et tant loee et tant despite,
> prier vos veill dou defenir,
> si qu'il m'en puist mieuz sovenir,
> quar ne l'oï defenir onques.
> (But since you have described love to me and praised it so much and scorned it so much, I wish to ask you to define it, so that I will better be able to remember it, for I have never heard it defined before.) (4341-45)

We are launching into new territory. With the definition, we are much less surely in the field of dialectic, definition being a topic belonging both to dialectic and to rhetoric.[78] When Raison starts using fables, such as that of Fortune, and examples drawn from history, we can be certain that we are properly in the field of rhetoric, although throughout Raison is using the linguistic tools of rhetoric – the use of unbroken discourse as opposed to question and answer, the use of example and enthymeme, not to mention metaphors and other topics that are firmly rhetorical. She belongs in the allegorical, prosopopoeic tradition of Boethius' Philosophia and Alain de Lille's Natura, rhetorical works of fiction that aim to impart knowledge and wisdom.

Raison's speech, then, right at the beginning of Jean de Meun's *Rose*, starts with dialectic, demonstrates its failure and then instantly switches to rhetoric in order to try to convince Amant to abandon courtly love. Preaching is inescapably rhetorical and the narrator tells us that '[a]insint Reson me preescheit' (4599) to describe what follows the definition of love, which is an allegorical account of

[78] For definitions of definition in both rhetorical and dialectical authorities, cf. Cicero, *De inventione*, II. 17. 53–II. 8. 56; *Topica*, V. 26–VI. 29; Aristotle, *Topics* I. 4; *Posterior Analytics*, II. 3.. Aristotle also points out in the *Categories*, VI that within a genus, things can best be understood from their opposites, a point to which Jean de Meun alludes at 21543-52: 'Ainsinc va des contreres choses, / les unes sont des autres gloses' [So it goes with opposite things, which gloss each other].

what Jonece (Youth) makes young men do, drawing on Cicero's *De senectute*. (Even before this, the listing of paradoxes from the *De planctu Naturae* could easily be categorised as a rhetorical device to demonstrate love's irrationality; it is certainly no kind of dialectical *demonstratio*.) Rhetoric is used to tackle questions of desire, but it is a new, philosophical kind of rhetoric that ignores the disciplinary boundaries of medieval knowledge, that investigates and draws on theses, and that must therefore colonise the domain of dialectic, which dominated the philosophy and theology of the thirteenth century.

Other chapters of this thesis are dedicated to how the *Rose* tackles specific theoretical questions using the rhetorical (and by extension literary) methods unavailable to the dialecticians, and while it is not possible to cover all, or even most, of the *Rose*'s philosophy in one work, it is worth at least mentioning some of the most obvious theoretical questions that the *Rose* treats in its rhetorical fashion. Is language nominalist or realist? Do humans have free will, or does God's omniscience mean that our lives are predestined? What are the nature and purpose of money? How does sexual desire affect decision-making? How do lenses work? What is the truth-value of dreams? Is sex that is primarily for pleasure licit? Are the following natural or unnatural: marriage, clothing, society, sexual abstinence? It is clear even from this selective list that the *Rose* is a poem which treats philosophical questions; more than that, it is a philosophical text in its own right. It is a new kind of rhetorical-philosophical text that, while following medieval traditions of the moral usefulness of poetry going back via twelfth-century allegoresis and the prosimetrum tradition at least as far as Horace, blurs the boundaries between education and entertainment, between dialectic and rhetoric, and that gives conclusions less secure than the *scientia* and *opiniones* of the schools. The *Rose* does not always give definite answers to these questions. Its philosophy is always expressed eloquently by speakers with their own agendas, and who are, despite initial appearances, nearly always highly unreliable. This unreliability prompts a necessary wariness towards speakers' claims of theoretical authority, and this wariness is a product of the fevered contestation of philosophy that was taking place as the *Rose* was being written. Such wariness does not mean, as has often been suggested, that the *Rose* engages

with these philosophical questions in a ludic, wholly unreliable fashion. Rather, it makes interpretative demands of its readers, the same kinds of interpretative demands that are made of us in language-interactions with other humans. We must assess whether or not we can trust the character of the person talking to us. We must judge by the context and manner of their speaking if they are to be trusted. Finally, we must judge the content of what they are saying and whether, despite any shortcomings of the speaker, there is value in what they say. We are not simply dealing with the traditional use of rhetoric. It is not a question of agreeing or disagreeing about the correct way of proceeding in a given hypothetical situation, or about forming a judgement about a specific case, but instead it is about working out what 'profit', what theoretical knowledge can be gained even from profane poetry and even from objectionable or unsympathetic speakers, not least Faux Semblant, whom we will investigate more thoroughly below. Nor, on the other hand, do we have dialectic where the aim is demonstrable, abstract knowledge out of context. Rather, this is an engaged philosophy, which depends on an understanding of the context of its enunciation to be judged. It is also a philosophy that can be used in daily life to persuade others to act as we see fit, a philosophy that can, following Cicero, be used as a way of serving eloquence. Giles of Rome, following Aristotle, situated rhetoric as related to both dialectic and ethics. The kind of persuasion that the *Rose* uses depends on judgements of the intellect and it both approaches philosophical questions in a new way and shows the practical value of philosophy.[79]

SOCIETY AND PRIMEVAL INTERTEXT

One of the most important philosophical questions *in* the *Rose for* the *Rose* encompasses both theory and practice and that question is how to identify, negotiate, and profit from true and false speech. It is, possibly, the central question of the *Rose*. We have seen already how the lies of the poets can be used

[79] In Boethius' prosimetrum *De consolatione Philosophiae*, a text both literary and philosophical, the hem of Philosophia's dress has the letters π for practical philosophy on the lower hem and θ for theoretical philosophy on the upper hem with a ladder allowing one to progress from lower to higher, although the dress has been ripped, which may suggest that the ladder is harder to climb then it once was (*DCP*, I. pr. 1, 18-24). The *Rose* self-consciously draws on the *De consolatione* to think about the relationship between speculative (or theoretical) and practical philosophy.

to convey theoretical knowledge. The ethical and political questions related to hypocrisy and lying take concerns about truth and knowledge into the domain of the practical and we will see how, in the understanding of speech in the *Rose*, the practical and the theoretical inform each other and depend on each other for the *Rose*'s poetico-philosophical project. As has already been shown in this thesis, the philosophical questions of the *Rose* are all rooted in the awkward dichotomy of the natural and the artificial. Questions of what is natural lead back time and again to stories of the origins of humanity as a way of understanding our relationship with the natural. Genius, for example, draws on Virgil's *Georgics* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,[80] when describing how Jupiter brought an end to the Golden Age of purely natural living and gave skill and language to humanity (20085-20189), which cannot help but echo the narrative of the Fall in Genesis and the origin of sin and of work. In Virgil, however, as Patricia Johnston notes, Jupiter is a benefactor and 'by terminating the golden age, [he] forces mankind out of a grossly passive existence,'[81] whereas Genius fuses the tyrannical Jupiter from Ovid, motivated by a desire for power, with the knowledge-bringing Jupiter of Virgil. There is a range of competing accounts of human origins available to medieval thinkers: Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, and Boethius, not to mention the most obvious source, the Bible. By fusing together different (and incompatible) myths in a way that would have been wholly apparent to an educated medieval reader, the *Rose* prompts an intertextual approach to these accounts from antiquity.[82] If we have read our Virgil and Ovid properly – and the *Rose* clearly signals its sources here – we know that Genius is confusing two incompatible myths, and that his account contradicts that of Ami. Being presented with different, conflicting accounts of the origins of society from a state of nature requires readers to read actively, to assess and choose between those different accounts. As we come to look at the relationship between eloquence and social interactions,

[80] Virgil, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid*, ed. and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press/ Heinemann, 1999), *Georgics*, I. 125-46; *Metamorphoses*, I. 113-27.
[81] Patricia A. Johnston, *Vergil's Agricultural Golden Age: A Study of the Georgics* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), p. 71.
[82] Cf. Huot, *Dream of Lovers*, p. 5, where she highlights the ' the often unacknowledged web of allusions to prior texts that so richly informs the poem'.

other competing stories of the origins of society inform the *Rose*'s attitude to eloquence, nature, and society.

The legacy of the Classical period, attested by a wide range of authorities even before the appearance of Aristotle's *Politics* in Latin, was that man is by nature a political and social animal, and that by extension society is natural.[83] In the key works of political ontology for the Middle Ages, society is understood by a narrative of its origins. Aristotle's *Politics* justifies this as follows:

> He who thus considers things in their first growth and origin, whether a state or anything else, will obtain the clearest view of them.[84]

This goes some way towards explaining why, in trying to explain human institutions and society, Raison, Genius, Ami, and La Vieille go back to myths of origin. Aristotle details how humans lived dispersedly at first and then formed villages for the easier satisfaction of their physical needs, particularly clothing and food, and then cities. Cicero's account of the formation of society in *De inventione*, 'among the most widely read and revered texts of the medieval West',[85] differs somewhat, as we have seen, in that, unlike in Aristotle's account, humans unaided did not form society, but depended on an exceptional individual to cause this to happen. This great and wise man, *magnus vir et sapiens*, bears an unmistakeable resemblance to the Jupiter of the Georgics and of Genius in the *Rose*, and Cicero's account of the origins of society is part of the intertext of competing accounts of the birth of human society that inform discussions of nature and society in the *Rose*.

The figure of a superior figure bringing knowledge to remove humans from a purely natural state and to make them fully human through the development of culture is, as we have seen, the originary moment of both eloquence and society

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[83] Cf. Cary J. Nederman, 'Nature, Sin and the Origins of Society: The Ciceronian Tradition in Medieval Political Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 49:1 (1988), 3-26, p. 3. Cf., among others, Augustine *DCD*, XII. 28; (Dyson, p. 539); John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, VI. 21; Aristotle, *Politics*, I. 2, 1253a2-3.
[84] Aristotle, *Politics*, I.2,1252a24-26.
[85] Nederman, p. 6.

in Cicero's *De inventione*, a fundamental text for understanding the significance of speech and its relation to nature, artifice, and human interaction. We will come later to the direct use that Jean de Meun makes of the *De inventione*, but more significant now is Cicero's treatment of real and apparent virtue in public life that follows the institution of cities, a treatment that has important implications for the *Rose*'s engagement with the question of lying, social performance, and real and apparent virtue.

FALSE ELOQUENCE

Let us pick up where we left off in the *De inventione*. Primitive man has been assembled by the *magnus vir et sapiens*, tamed through eloquence and persuaded to live together in a society, and eloquence continued to be key to the good workings of a society.

> [U]rbibus constitutis, ut fidem colere et iustitiam retinere discerent et aliis parere sua voluntate consuescerent ac non modo labores excipiendos communis commodi causa, sed etiam vitam amittendem existimarent, qui tandem fieri potuit, nisi homines ea quae ratione invenissent eloquentia persuadere potuissent? (After cities had been established, who could have made it so that people should learn to keep faith and observe justice and become accustomed to obey others willingly and to think it appropriate not only to work for the common good but even to sacrifice their lives, had men not been able through eloquence to persuade others of the truth of what they had discovered through reason?)[86]

At first, wise leaders used eloquence to govern by reason and secured the consent of the populace 'cum summis hominum utilitatibus esse versata' (as it was moved to serve the highest interests of humankind).[87] However, after this well-ordered, moral, initial use of eloquence, human weakness led to a harmful eloquence not ordered by wisdom:

> postquam vero commoditas quaedam, prava virtutis imitatrix, sine ratione offici, dicendi copiam consecuta est, tum ingenio freta malitia pervertere urbes et vitas hominum labefactare assuevit.

[86] *De inv.*, I. 3. 3.
[87] *De inv.*, I. 2. 3.

> (After this, however, a certain agreeableness of manner – a depraved imitation of virtue – acquired the power of eloquence unaccompanied by any consideration of moral duty. Then low cunning supported by talent started to corrupt cities and to destabilise people's lives.)[88]

Cicero goes on to add some detail to his narrative of the descent into harmful eloquence. Since the great men concerned themselves with matters of state, less virtuous people dealt with the petty disputes of private citizens ('ad parvas controversias privatorum') and grew used both to speaking and to arguing falsely in such disputes.

> Itaque cum in dicendo saepe par, nonnunquam etiam superior, visus esset is qui omisso studio sapientiae nihil sibi praeter eloquentiam comparasset, fiebat ut et multitudinis et suo iudicio dignus qui rem publicam gereret videtur.
> (And so, because someone unlearned in wisdom and having nothing but eloquence appeared to be equal if not better at speaking, that person seemed in his own opinion and in that of the mob to be suitable to govern the state.)[89]

The problem with eloquence is that, to the uneducated, a skilful orator can give the appearance of having the wisdom necessary to be trusted. The question facing someone wanting to judge the value of an eloquent speech is the following: underneath their fine words, is the speaker really wise, and thus giving good advice, or are they giving merely the external impression of wisdom without actually possessing it?[90] Victorinus sharpens the distinction between interior and exterior when discussing the great man who instituted eloquence in the first place:

> Omne perfectum bonum, id est quo natura humanas res nullo adiuncto incommodo munerata est, duobus ad plenum constat, re ipsa et specie atque imagine sui. [...] Ergo ille nescio quis magnus uir ac sapiens et hi qui postea consecuti accepta uitae praecepta tenuerunt, ut perfecti essent, habuerunt rem, id est sapientiam, habuerunt speciem, scilicet eloquentiam. Qui homines quoniam ex

[88] *Ibid.*, I. 3. 4.
[89] *Ibid.*, I. 3. 4.
[90] This is analogous to the question of those who have the external impression of virtue, discussed in chapter 2.

> merito uirtutis dignissima praemia consecuti sunt, id est, magistratus atque alias utilitates, multi, dum praemia sibi paria exoptant, re ignorata speciem solam sequi coeperunt, id est, praeterita sapientia solam dicendi copiam consecuti sunt. (Every perfect good, that is, what nature gives – free from unsuitable alloy – to the human condition, attains its full essence through two things: the thing itself, and its external form and image. [...] Therefore this great and wise man, whoever he was, and the people who followed after him and preserved the lessons for life that they received, in order to be perfect had the thing itself, namely wisdom; and they also had an external form, namely eloquence. As a reward for their virtue, these people received the worthiest prizes, magistracies and other useful things. Therefore many who wanted the same rewards for themselves ignored the thing itself and started to follow the external aspect only, that is, they skipped wisdom and attained only the capacity to speak.)[91]

Eloquence becomes a mendacious shell when, instead of containing wisdom, it conceals the desire for prestige and material gain. Human appetite thus becomes a function of eloquence, although in a different way to that described by Aristotle and Giles of Rome in their works of rhetoric. According to them, eloquent, persuasive speech works through the combination of the intellective and the appetitive parts of the soul on the part of the auditor. Here, though, it is the false orators who are following their appetite, who want the rewards of eloquence – power, money, prestige – for their own sakes and do not seek to use eloquence to further wisdom or for the common good. This discussion of a surface that conceals a different interior is a recurrent and central theme of the *Rose*. We have already seen it in the mention of *integumenta*, where the apparently scurrilous or the pleasurable exterior of the content of literary text conceals within it the hidden kernel of truth for those who would know how to interpret it. The same principle – that the truth is there if we know how to interpret it – informs the *Rose*'s rhetoric. We are presented with speakers that we cannot necessarily trust, even if they present themselves as authoritative and even if they seem authoritative. We know, however, that there are some speakers – especially the central trio of Ami, Faux Semblant and La Vieille – in whose integrity we can have very little trust and yet there are truths in their speech that we can learn, whether they be on the surface, or whether they require a

[91] *Explicationes*, I. 2. 300-02; 311-19, pp. 23-24; *MGR*, pp. 120-21.

sustained hermeneutic effort. To have the ability to assess and interpret the wisdom (or lack thereof) subtending putatively authoritative speech it is necessary to know enough to judge both speakers and their words. Both social and theoretical interpretation are involved. Moral judgement alone is insufficient, hence the *Rose*'s trespass into the field of the theoretical in its poetry.

The interplay between beneficial and harmful eloquence runs throughout the *Rose* and the ability to determine which is which is a key point at which abstract knowledge and social or political reality interact. The introduction of unnatural speech that is mendacious and hypocritical raise the spectre of the unreliability and artificiality of all social speech interactions, an instability which goes to the core of the *Rose*'s presentation of the truth-value of language. Lying, flattery, or disguise appeals to the appetitive intellect without necessarily providing the educational or persuasive benefit of wisely used eloquence. An ability to assess the truth or fiction of such lies and to penetrate the outer layers of speech, clothing, or literary texts is therefore essential, and it is this hermeneutic skill that Jean de Meun would like his readers to gain. Before looking at the most political figure in the poem, Faux Semblant, the embodiment of an eloquence that conceals appetite rather than wisdom,[92] let us see how speaking figures in the *Rose* use eloquence in the harmful, false way described by Cicero and Victorinus.

THE HERMENEUTIC IMPERATIVE: HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PROBLEM LIKE FAUX SEMBLANT?

If Guillaume de Lorris' social satire is less sustained and less cutting than that of Jean de Meun, he nevertheless shows how avarice motivates the praise of the 'losengier'. Richece stands next to Biauté in Deduit's courtly scene, although she has a court of her own, one far less appealing than the noble-seeming collection of allegorical figures who carol in the *Rose*-narrative:

> A sa cort ot maint losengier,
> maint traïtor, maint envieus:
> ce sont cil qui sont curieus
> de desprisier et de blasmer
> toz celz qui mielz font a amer.
> Par devant, por eus losengier,

[92] Cf. pp. 63-64; 179-80.

loent les genz li losengier
et tot le mont par parole oignent;
mes lor losenges les genz poignent
par deriere de si qu'a l'os,
si qu'a mainz font torner les dos
cil losengier par lor losenges,
car i font ceus de cort estranges
qui deüssent estre privé.
Mal puissent il estre arrivé
icil losengier plain d'envie!
car nus preudons n'aime lor vie.
(At her court there are many flatterers, many traitors, many envious people. They seek to do down and to criticise all those whom it is better to cherish. In their presence the flatterers praise them in order to flatter them and they grease everyone up with speech; but as soon as these flatterers have made them turn their backs with their flattery, that flattery stabs people from behind all the way through to their mouth, for they drive people away from court who should be trusted advisors. May evil befall those spiteful flatterers, for no nobleman loves their lives.) (1034-50)

This fierce invective belies the genteel reputation that Guillaume's poem has enjoyed in comparison to Jean's more vicious continuation. It is a moment of satire alluding to John of Salisbury's highly Ciceronian *Policraticus* III. 4, which attacks the plague of flatterers at courts and brings the spectre of harmful speech, implicitly motivated by avarice and the desire for power, into the heart of Deduit's garden before we have heard any significant speeches.[93] It is significant that the very first mention of money leads to the corruption of courtly speech so valorized by Guillaume's representation of Amor. Henceforth, the discomforting possibility of false flattery in the poem threatens the whole enterprise of love; as soon as Amant submits to Amor, Amor's first anxiety is that Amant's speech is nothing but false eloquence, or flattery.

[93] Cf. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus,* ed. by Clement Webb (Oxford: Clarendon, 1909), 2 vols., III. 4, 20-24; p. 177: 'Adulator enim omnis uirtutis inimicus est, et quasi clauum figit in oculo illius cum quo sermonem conserit, eoque magis cauendus est, quo sub amantis specie nocere non desinit donec rationis obtundat acumen et modicum id luminis quod adesse uidebatur extinguat.' (The flatterer is inimical to all virtue, and like a sore upon the eye he fastens himself by his speech to those with whom he bonds. He is to be avoided all the more inasmuch as he does not desist from committing injury under the pretence of friendship, until finally he blunts the sharpness of reason and extinguishes that modicum of light which may seem to be present.) [Transation from John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, ed. and trans. by Cary J. Nederman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 18.

'Amis,' fet il, 'j'ai mainz homages
et d'uns et d'autres receüz
dont j'ai puis esté deceüz.
Li felon plain de fauseté
m'ont par mainte foiz bareté,
d'aus ai oïe mainte noise;
mes il savront come il m'en poise.
Se je les puis a mon droit prendre,
je lor voudrai chierement vendre.
Or voil je, por ce que je t'ains,
de toi estre si bien certains
et te veil si a moi lier
que tu ne me puisses nier
ne promesse ne covenant,
ne fere nul desavenant.
Pechiez seroit se tu trichoies,
qu'il me semble que loiaus soies.' (1958-74)
('My friend,' he said, 'I have received many oaths of fealty from different people which were then used to deceive me. Villains, full of falseness have defrauded me many times, and I have had nothing but trouble from them, but they will know how heavily it weighs on me. If I get them under my power, I will make them pay dearly. Now, because I love you, I want to be totally sure of you and I want to join you to me so that you can never go back on any promise or agreeement made to me, nor do anything unbecoming. It would be a sin were you to cheat, since it seems to me that you are loyal.)[94]

Amant succeeds in persuading Amor of his sincerity rapidly and easily, without necessarily removing this spectre of mendacity. It is easy to see why Amor has been tricked so many times in the past. We know (or we think we know) that Amant's love is genuine at this stage, although this certainty may come from too superficial a reading. We should have learnt, by the end of the text, to be suspicious of persuasive characters such as Amant and not taken in by their protestations of love. This scene of Amant offering a pledge of honesty is a

[94] The same spectre of false love is raised in Jean's Raison's definition of 'amor'. Immediately after categorising it as 'maladie de pensee / antre .II. persones annexe, / franches entr'els, de divers sexe,' (a mental illness between two people joined together, neither subservient to the other, of different sexes) she goes on to say that 'si sunt aucun de tel maniere / que ceste amor n'ont mie chiere; / toutevois fins amanz se faignent, / et se gabent ausinc des dames / et leur prometent cors et ames / et jurent mençonges et fables / a cels qu'i treuvent decevables / tant qu'il ont leur delit eü.' (And there are some who are of the kind that they do not value this love, but nevertheless they pretend to be noble lovers and in this way they mock women and they promise them their bodies and souls and swear lies and fables to those that they can deceive up until they have had their pleasure.) (4348-50; 4359-67) The emphasis is on speech, the outward form that, as in Victorinus' conception of eloquence, promises the inner thing, not *sapientia* here but *fin'amor*.

foreshadowing of the notorious scene in which Jean de Meun's Amor asks Faux Semblant (who will later be joined by Cortoisie amongst other figures when he assaults Jalousie's tower) if he can be trusted to tell the truth.

> 'Faus Semblant,' dist Amors, 'di moi,
> puis que de moi tant t'aprimoi
> qu'en ma court si grant poër as
> que rois des ribauz i seras,
> me tendras tu ma couvenance?'
> 'Oïl, jou vos jur et fiance,
> n'onc n'orent serjanz plus leaus
> vostre pere ne vostre eaus.'
> 'Conment? C'est contre ta nature.'
> 'Metez vos en en aventure,
> car se pleges en requerez,
> ja plus asseür m'en serez,
> non voir, se j'en bailloie ostages
> ou letres ou tesmoignz ou gages.
> ('Faux Semblant,' says Amor, 'tell me, since you have drawn so close to me that you have such power in my court that you will be king of the criminals there, will you agree to serve me?' 'Yes, I swear to you and promise that neither your father nor your ancestors ever had a more loyal servant.' 'How? It's against your nature. ' Take your chances, for even if you demand pledges for it you will never in truth be any surer of me if I were to give you hostages, letters, or witnesses.) (11951-64)

Faux Semblant's promise to tell the truth cannot, by default, be trusted, but neither can anyone else's promises without other evidence, such as their character and the content and persuasiveness of their speech. Because *a priori* we cannot trust Faux Semblant we are reliant on an analysis of his discourse to assess whether or not there is value, apparent or underlying, in what he says. It is not new to suggest that Faux Semblant incarnates a radical uncertainty about language and truth,[95] nor is it new to suggest that he represents a satirical (and thus politically, or at the very least ethically, engaged) attack on hypocrisy, in particular the religious kind.[96] However, what has not been explored is the use of Faux Semblant as a tool for both understanding how deception takes place and

[95] Stakel, pp. 46-82; Heller-Roazen, pp. 132-35.
[96] Poirion, 'Jean de Meun et la querelle de l'université de Paris'.

as a tool for persuading readers of the *Rose* to engage in hermeneutic activity not just towards texts but towards attempts at persuasion in all their social forms.

Faux Semblant is both an embodiment of false eloquence produced by appetite and an orator warning of this false eloquence. Discerning the truth or falsity of his statements thus poses a challenge, or even a training exercise, in how to spot eloquence rooted in truth and wisdom.[97] If Cicero was concerned about the supposed moral and intellectual void amongst the ruling classes of the Roman society in which he was writing, Jean de Meun's society is the fractured University of Paris. The secular *maitres ès arts* had seen their intellectual champion banished in the 1250s and the same process would happen again with the condemnation of many of the doctrines ascribed to the radical Aristotelians, Boethius of Dacia and Siger of Brabant, in the 1270s.[98] Faux Semblant is concerned less with questions of doctrine, although one heretical text (Gerardo di Borgo San Donnino's Joachite *Introductorium in Evangelium Aeternum*) is mentioned and condemned by him (11761-94), than he is with the rise of the mendicant orders. Having condemned the principle of mendicancy, claiming that the friars in effect, sell their words for profit, he recounts the campaign against Guillaume de Saint-Amour

> qui desputer solait et lire
> et preeschier ceste matire
> a Paris avec les devins.
> Ja ne m'eïst ne pains ne vins
> s'il n'avoit en sa verité
> l'acort de l'Université

[97] Faux Semblant appears as an embodiment of hypocrisy. He appears good, while being felonious, although the reader's knowledge of his felonious nature means that his outward appearance is, in the allegorical space of the narrative, wicked rather than good. Despite this, he gives a speech that exposes and denounces such wickedness and the speech is thus at odds with the speaker's immoral, diegetic appearance. As has been established in his exchange with Amor, Faux Semblant's audience has to take a chance whether or not to believe or to believe in anything he says. His slippery sermon puts readers' (or audiences') ability to use their own knowledge and judgment to test the validity of speech is put to the test. The *Rose*'s disavowal of an authoritative voice providing the linguistic or epistemological certainty means we must use our wisdom, if we possess it, to work out whether we can profit from Faux Semblant's instruction and, if so, to work out what that profit is.

[98] It should be noted that some teachings of Aristotelian friars, notably Giles of Rome and Thomas Aquinas, were also among those condemned by Etienne Tempier in 1277.

et du peuple conmunement
qui oait son preeschement.
(who used to dispute and lecture and preach about this matter in Paris with the theologians. Let me never again have bread or wine if the University and the people together who heard his preaching were not in full agreement with him.) (11459-66)

In this narrative, Guillaume de Saint-Amour is the model of correct eloquence; he imparts his wisdom to the educated and uneducated alike before, just as in Cicero's history, false rhetoric appeared to confuse the common people and supplant him 'qu'Ypocrisie / fist essilier par grant envie.' (whom Hypocrisy exiled due to her great envy.) (11477-78)

Ma mere en essill le chaça,
le vaillant home, tant braça,
por verité qu'il soutenoit.
Vers ma mere trop mesprenoit,
por ce qu'il fist un noveau livre
ou sa vie fist toute escrivre,
et voloit que je reniasse
mendicité et laborasse,
se je n'avoie de quoi vivre.
(My mother chased the valiant man into exile so much did she scheme against him for the truth that he affirmed. He took against my mother greatly when he made a new book in which he wrote down her whole life and wanted me to renounce mendicancy and to work if I did not have enough to live on.) (11479-87)

The false eloquence is far more diabolic in Jean's narrative than it is in Cicero's, as befits a political struggle in which opponents are cast as servants of the Antichrist as they were by Guillaume de Saint-Amour, Rutebeuf, and Jean de Meun.[99] In Cicero's text, ignorant politicians convince themselves as well as their audiences that they are indeed wise and just, whereas Faux Semblant conjures up a picture of appetite evilly detached from ethics but cloaking itself in the language of piety.

De laborer n'ai je que fere,
trop a grant paine en laborer.

[99] Cf. pp. 76-79. For more on the Apocalyptic context of Faux Semblant, cf. Richard Kenneth Emmerson and Ronald B. Herzman, 'The Apocalyptic Age of Hypocrisy: Faus Semblant and Amant in the *Roman de la Rose*', *Speculum*, 62:3 (1987), 612-34.

> J'aim mieuz devant les genz orer
> et affubler ma renardie
> du mantel de papelardie.
> (I have nothing to do with work; working is too painful. I much prefer to pray before the people and to disguise my vulpine cunning under a coat of papelardy (religious hypocrisy).) (11490-94)

Faux Semblant's sole purpose in life is to acquire possessions – '[e]n aquerre est toute mon entente' (11535) – and he uses speech in order to do this, particularly in charging rich people for confession. If, however, Faux Semblant shows a fallen, wholly false persuasion that springs only from appetite, the *Rose* is still far from being nihilistically and simplistically cynical about the value of false speech. Not all religious figures are false at all and Faux Semblant and, one suspects, Jean de Meun, prudently make this explicit:

> Si ne veill je mie blamer
> religion ne diffamer.
> (And I do not ever want to criticise religion or to defame it.) (10987-88).

Those people attacked through him are the false religious who

> [n]e sunt religieus ne monde;
> il font un argument au monde
> ou conclusion a honteuse:
> cist a robe religieuse,
> donques est il religieus.
> Cist argumenz est touz fieus,
> il ne vaut pas un coustel troine:
> la robe ne fet pas le moine.
> (are neither religious nor pure; they make an argument to the world, which has a shameful conclusion: this person is wearing religious dress and therefore is religious. This argument is rotten. It is not even worth a knife made of privet-wood. The habit does not make the monk.) (11021-28)[100]

The challenge is knowing how to tell the internal truth about a person. This is, in fact, analogous to the problem of how to interpret poetry, how to penetrate the surface level of fiction to arrive at the truth that it conceals. Faux Semblant

[100] Cf. *Rose*, 8859-8900.

portrays his religious posture as a false *integumentum* as he echoes Alain de Lille's Natura who uses the metaphor of the sweeter kernel of truth ('dulcior nucleum veritatis') hidden inside poetry.[101] Faux Semblant is an *integumentum* without the truth; he says that 'de religion sanz faille / j'en lés le grain et pregn la paille' (from religion I always leave behind the grain and take the husk) (11185-86). Faux Semblant's solution to this, not simply for the religious, but for anyone, is to forget the difficulty of words and to rely on deeds.

> Les euvres regarder devez,
> se vos n'avez les euz crevez,
> car s'i font el que il ne dient.
> (You must watch their actions if you have not had your eyes put out, for they do things that they do not say.) (11045-47)

If speech, crafted and potentially mendacious, is unreliable for conveying a person's true character, false artificial speech is, however, not to be dismissed (indeed, cannot be dismissed) outright, especially since it is often the only means by which to gain knowledge about a person or thing – particularly when reading literary fictions, and the (promise of the) truth conveyed by false speech or fiction is the key factor in the *Rose*'s analysis of philosophical questions. Faux Semblant brings us back again to the importance of being a skilful and knowledgeable listener in order to interpret others' discourse correctly. One of the most obvious sermon-like aspects of his speech is that, alone of all the characters in the *Rose*, he repeatedly and overtly cites and glosses Biblical verses, a practice that befits his outfit of a mendicant preaching friar.[102] Scriptural sources, moreover, enjoy unparalleled authority and thus pose a particular challenge when ascertaining whether a speaker can claim some of the authority of his or her source. Faux Semblant gives an extended citation of Matthew 23: 2-8 in order to teach his audience how to spot well-disguised deceivers.

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[101] *DPN*, VIII. 135.

[102] At 11251-60 he cites Proverbs, 30.8-9; at 11937-38 he alludes to 2 Peter 2.22; at 12038-40 he alludes to Revelation 6:8, not to mention the various moments during which he draws on Guillaume de Saint Amour's *De periculis*, XII, itself a putative gloss on the book of Revelation, as well as Matt 7: 15 and 1 John 2: 18.

Seur la chaiere Moÿsi
(car la glose l'espont isi:
c'est le Testament Ancien)
sidrent scribe et pharisien
(ce sunt les fausses genz maudites
que la letre apele ypocrites).
Fetes ce qu'il sarmoneront,
ne fetes pas ce qu'il feront.
De bien dire n'ierent ja lent,
mes il n'ont du fere talent.
[...]
S'il font euvres qui bones sient,
c'est por ce que les genz les voient.
Leur philateres eslargissent
et leur finbries agrantissent;
et des sieges aiment aus tables
les plus hauz, les plus honorables,
et les prumiers des synagogues,
con fiers et orgueilleus et rogues. (vv. 11576-84; 11593-11600)
(The scribes and the Pharisees (these are the false, cursed people that Scripture calls hypocrites) sit on the chair of Moses (the gloss explains this here as the Old Testament). Do as they say; do not do as they do. They might never be slow to say the right thing, but they have no desire to do it. [...] If they do good works it is so that people see them. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their fringes and they love the seats at the highest, most honourable, and foremost tables of the synagogues, being proud, haughty, and overbearing.)

He is himself one of these Pharisees whose words must be followed rather than his deeds and it is an important point that even hypocrites can teach those who know well how to learn wisely; they can even teach about hypocrisy. The importance of the phylacteries and the fringes as an outward sign of piety has implications far beyond those of Faux Semblant's clothing and religious hypocrisy. Clothing and nakedness are key metaphors in the *Rose* for language, literature, and the acquisition of knowledge, both intellectual knowledge and sexual knowledge. The technique of the *integumentum*, with its implication of dressing truth in the garb of lies in order to protect it, is rooted in the idea both that clothing is necessary, and that clothing – stylised discourse – is also a form of communication without a direct, necessary link to truth. In the same way, Raison is keen to point out that the word 'coilles' is a conventional sign, whose meaning is socially determined rather than being intrinsically connected to the

things it represents. For Victorinus, wisdom and true eloquence have just such an intrinsic connection. Wisdom is the inner substance, the soul, and eloquence is the 'bodying forth' of such wisdom; it is the physical manifestation of the soul.[103] Jean de Meun's metaphor for wisdom and truth is not spiritual but physical; for him, knowledge is not figured by the soul but by the body. If the truth is a body, that truth is accessed through linguistic or semiotic interactions, spoken or written –usually through the presentation of that truth in discourse of a more or less eloquent kind – which is figured as clothing, superposed on a body with which it does not have an unmediated and intrinsic connection (as the soul does to the body). This discourse is often false, but is often usefully false, and like clothing does not spring up unaided from nature but is the product of an artificer, a speaker or a writer, who speaks according to conventions and to learned (i.e. non-natural) skill. The implications of using clothing as a sign for speech as opposed to the body are important.[104] Not only does it prompt the notion of discourse as always already artificial, but it situates discourse as socially constructed. Clothing is a form of communication whose meaning is wholly conventional as opposed to natural and self-evident, and, moreover, it is the sign of the end of the pure naturalness of the Golden Age or of Eden and a sign of post-lapsarian decline and artifice. In the *Rose*, not only is clothing communicative, but verbal communication, speech and writing, are understood through metaphors of clothing. In Guillaume de Lorris' section, Amor gives Amant instructions for the correct behaviour of a courtly lover. Instructions to follow decorousness in speech (2075-2128) are immediately followed by instructions to follow decorousness in dress (2129-2162). The exteriority and artificiality of the clothing thus point towards the exteriority and artificiality of conventional speech. The sustained focus on the use of clothing and cosmetics to present an appealing (and always on some level mendacious) appearance will reappear in the mouths of Le Jaloux (8813-9040) and La Vieille (13252-13310)

[103] Cf. Rita Copeland, 'The Ciceronian Rhetorical Tradition and Medieval Literary Theory', in *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, ed. by Virginia Cox and John O. Ward, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 2 (Leiden and Boston MA: Brill, 2006), pp. 239-65, p. 242.

[104] In framing knowledge as a body and speech as clothing, Jean follows the example of Geoffrey de Vinsauf's *Poetria nova*, I. 60-70, which discusses poetic style as the clothing of the naked body of the idea. Cf. Brown, p. 137. Cf. Chapter 2, p. 67 above.

in Jean's continuation, while in Faux Semblant's teaching clothing becomes analogous to deceptive speech. Outside of the univocal meaning promised by dialectic, in the socially engaged language of rhetoric, language is always a veil, offering a surface meaning which may contrast with the hidden true meaning, even if sometimes it can coincide with it. Such a veil can, however, be penetrated with enough knowledge. Speaking of those wearing false robes, the narrator says:

> Mes ja ne verrez d'apparance
> conclurre bone consequance
> en nul argument que l'en face,
> se deffaut existance efface;
> tourjorz i troverez soffime
> qui la consequance envenime,
> se vos avez soutilité
> d'entendre la duplicité.
> (However, you will never see a good conclusion drawn from appearance, however the argument is made if something is lacking which wipes out the essence. You will always find a sophism there which taints the consequence, if you are subtle enough to spot the duplicity.) (12109-16)

If something is wrong, you can detect it. The *Rose* does not reject dialectic and its use for gaining knowledge, although in this case the logical arts offer the means to detect a sophism, a logical fallacy, and thus to uncover hypocrisy; they reveal falsehood rather than necessarily discovering truth. Faux Semblant has given us an example of this process, as mentioned earlier, when he proves that 'la robe ne fet pas le moine' (11021-28), and Amant will later equate fraudulent seduction with the sophisms of a birdcatcher who imitates the sound of birdsong.[105] Marc-René Jung astutely makes the point that right at the beginning of his section Jean makes Amant justify his attachment to Amor with a sophism at 4157-62 (Amor is a god; God is perfect; therefore Amor is perfect).[106] Amant is in need of greater dialectical subtlety to realise the irrationality of his path, and Raison will appear in a failed attempt to teach him.

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[105] *Rose*, 21461-70.
[106] Cf. Marc-René Jung, 'Jean de Meun et l'allégorie', *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises*, 28 (1976), 21-36, pp. 29-30.

Faux Semblant himself offers (just as he embodies) hermeneutic challenges for his audience and in order to appreciate them better it is necessary to examine the final part of his speech, just before he pledges to be Amor's most faithful servant. Speaking of those like himself, he says

> Nous reignons or en chascun reigne,
> et bien est droiz que noz resnons
> qui tretout le monde fesnons
> et savons si les genz deçoivre
> que nus ne s'en set aperçoivre;
> ou, qui le set apercevoir,
> n'en ose il descovrir le voir;
> mes cist en l'ire Dieu se boute
> quant plus que Dieu mes freres doute.
> [...]
> Tex hom ne veust entendre a voir
> ne Dieu devant ses euz avoir,
> si l'en punira Dex sanz faille.
> (We now reign in every kingdom, and it is absolutely right that we reign, we who trick the world and know how thus to deceive people so that no one can see it, or, if someone does see it, he does not dare to reveal the truth. But he enters into God's anger when he fears my brothers more than he does God. [...] Such a man does not want to hear truly nor does he want to have God before his eyes, and God certainly will punish him for it.) (11872-80; 11885-87)

It is *not* 'absolutely right' that they reign. Faux Semblant is lying to us, or, in another sense, he is revealing his true nature and devilish moral framework before hiding them again under the image of wisdom that is his sermon. We then get a strange and immediate switch into righteous, even zealous moralising, for Faux Semblant is right to condemn those who fear hypocrites more than they fear God, although this does not then serve to justify his previous claim that it is right that hypocrites rule the world. He goes on to laugh at those who value chivalry and who match their words to their deeds:

> S'il ne veulent estre ypocrite,
> tel gent puisse estre la maldite!
> (Let such people be cursed if they do not want to be hypocrites.)
> (11904-06)

Then, only 30 lines after cursing people who refuse to be hypocrites, he condemns the *papelard*, the religious hypocrite, that he also stands for.[107]

> Tex papelarz, quant il se rant,
> puis va mondains deliz querant
> et dit que touz le a lessiez,
> s'il en veust puis estre angressiez,
> c'est li mastins qui glotement
> retorne a son vomissment.
> (Such a papelard, when he enters holy orders, and then, as if secular, goes looking for pleasure and says that he has abandoned it all and yet still wants to grow fat on it, is a mastiff who gluttonously returns to his vomit.) (11933-38)

This conclusion, drawing on the bestiary entry for the dog, and arguing for a person's speech to have a direct and consistent link to the truth of their being, seems to be a genuine moral message and may even be one of the conclusions that Faux Semblant (or even Jean de Meun) wants us to take from the speech. The point, however, is that at every stage of Faux Semblant's speech we must assess and reassess its trustworthiness and value. The same could, of course, be said for the whole of the *Rose* itself, which is, in a sense, a training exercise in hermeneutics.

Such training is necessary as socially constituted language always conceals as it conveys meaning, and multiplicity of meaning is always inherent in such discourse. Pure, untrammelled access to meaning is only accessible in the silent unadulterated contemplation of the mirror in the Parc de l'Agneau.

CONVEYING TRUTH IMPERFECTLY

Unlike the confident claims of Scholastic philosophy, the *Rose* unashamedly shows its language to be incapable of directly accessing the thing it describes. The Rose itself is a signifier that seems to promise a female body but never gives any concrete knowledge of the thing itself.[108] The use of nature as a way of understanding the world is as central to the intellectual process of the text as the

[107] Cf. p. 138.
[108] The indeterminacy around the Rose's body and indeed gender is skilfully discussed by Rollo, pp. 191-213.

Rose is to its narrative. The presentation of the figure of Nature is the occasion for an *exemplum* that shows both the impossibility of accessing simple and total knowledge about nature/Nature and the possibilities for artificial literary or rhetorical speech to convey oblique truths about it nevertheless.

Nature is introduced to us at her forge, minting new coins of different species into existence, in spite of gluttonous Mort who seeks to consume existing copies (15861-16004). Art, however hard it tries, cannot bring such creatures into existence (16005-34), although the distinction between artifice and nature is elided somewhat by the discussion of alchemy (16035-16118).[109] Alchemy is a true art ('alkimie est art veritable' (16054)) and it offers the possibility for an elite few to bring new things into existence. The use of alchemy to produce glass from ferns is compared to hailstones falling from the sky, even though they did not rise as stone.

> Si sunt espieces treschangiees,
> ou leur pieces d'eus estrangiees
> et en sustance et en figure,
> ceus par Art, ceste par Nature.
> (Thus species are transformed, or their individual examples are estranged from them both in matter and in form, the glass by Art and stones by Nature.) (16079-82)

Art has a very limited scope, then, to achieve what nature can, but only in the hands of those with true knowledge of its workings. Those who give the appearance of knowledge alone without actually having it, however, will never succeed.

> Mes ce ne feroient cil mie
> qui euvrent de sophisterie:
> travaillent tant con il vivront,
> ja Nature n'aconsivront.
> (But those who work through sophistry would never achieve this; let them work as long as they shall live, but they will never reach Nature.) (16115-18)

[109] For a discussion of alchemy and the *Rose*, cf. Christine McWebb, 'Le discours de l'alchimie et l'alchimie du discours dans le *Roman de la rose* de Jean de Meun', *Epistémocritique*, ed. by Donald Bruce and Christine McWebb, Texte, 43 & 44 (Toronto: Trintexte, 2008), pp. 79-106.

The pretence of art without knowledge is framed metaphorically as an abuse of logical language, as a sophism, with the implication that even if humans can be fooled by appearances, the natural order still guarantees that artificial appearance alone is always insufficient for accessing real knowledge or for living morally. Genius will go on to make this clear when outlining his natural manifesto of morality and when describing various torments in Hell.

When the narrator attempts (or claims to attempt) to describe Nature he starts off with a prime example of Ernst Robert Curtius' *Unsagbarkeitstopos* (unsayability topos), in which a lauded individual's worth is so great that it cannot adequately be described by the one praising .[110] The passage is worth citing in full in order to examine the relationship between philosophy, art, and nature.

> Bien la [Nature] vos vousisse descrire,
> mes mi sans n'i porroit soffire.
> Mi sans! Qu'ai je dit? C'est du mains!
> Non feroit voir nus sans humains
> ne par voiz vive ne par notes,
> et fust Platon ou Aristotes,
> Algus, Euclidés, Tholomees,
> qui tant ont or granz renomees
> d'avoir esté bon escrivain:
> leur angin seroient si vain,
> s'il osaient la chose anprendre,
> qu'il ne la porroient entendre;
> ne Pigmalion entaillier;
> an vain s'i porroit travaillier
> Parasyus; voir Apellés,
> que je mout bon painte apel, les
> biautez de lui ja mes descrivre
> ne pourroit, tant eüst a vivre;
> ne Myro ne Policletus
> ja mes ne savroient cet us.
> (I would love to describe her to you, but I have not the wit to do so.
> *I* do not? What have I said? That's the least of it! In truth, no
> human mind would be able to, whether through writing or
> through speech, even if it were Plato or Aristotle, Al-Khwarizmi,

[110] Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern: Francke, 1948), pp. 166-69.

> Euclid, or Ptolemy, who today have the reputation for having been such great writers. Their ingenuity would not avail them if they dared to undertake such a task, for they would not be able to understand it. Nor could Pygmalion sculpt it; Parasius would work in vain, and even Apelles, whom I would term a great painter could never describe all her beauties, so long as he lived; no would Myro or Policletus ever have known how to do so.) (16135-54)

Not only is the task beyond the narrator, but it is, he claims, impossible. He lists the greatest philosophers, mathematicians, and astronomers, none of whom would be able to express the truth of nature. The natural language of philosophy is insufficient as is the purely logical language of mathematics. The authorities named are 'escrivains' and not 'poetes' and the narrator does not even suggest the artificial writing of literature – and, by extension, the artificial language of eloquence informed by rhetoric – as a means of describing Nature. We then proceed from science (*scientia*) to art. The first example given of an artist should set warning bells ringing for anyone rereading the *Rose*. Pygmalion is the emblematic figure of the artist or writer so driven by his disordered desire that he creates a sterile, artificial figure of a woman that he proceeds to dress in all manner of clothes (20907-81). Jean de Meun is not suggesting that the creative arts – sculpture or poetry – can convey the straight truth of nature in the way that philosophy fails to. Pygmalion is no more able to represent Nature than is Plato. Art may fail in the representation of the Neoplatonic figure of Nature, closely modelled on Alain de Lille's Natura and the principle she represents, but it is striking that this failure of artifice has been preceded by the failure of philosophy to grasp the principle fully. Total knowledge is not possible for either philosophy or art. Art, however, has other ways of conveying knowledge than through certainty alone. After listing a series of painters who also fail in the task of representing Nature, we come to a final example, taken from Cicero's *De inventione*.

> Zeusys neïs par son biau paindre
> ne porroit a tel fourme ataindre,
> qui, por fere l'ymage ou tample,
> de .v. puceles fist example,
> les plus beles que l'en pot querre
> et trover en toute la terre,

qui devant lui se sunt tenues
tout en estant tretoutes nues,
por soi prendre garde en chascune
s'il trovoit nul defaut en l'une,
ou fust seur cors ou fust seur membre,
si con Tulles le nous remembre
ou livre de sa *Rethorique*,
qui mout est sciance autantique.
Mes ci ne peüst il riens fere,
Zeusys, tant seüst bien portrere
ne coulourer sa portreture,
tant est de grant biauté Nature.
(Even Zeuxis with his beautiful painting could not attain such a form, he who in order to make an image in the temple took the five most beautiful girls he could find in the whole country as examples, who stood totally naked in front of him to see if he could find one with no defects either on the body or on any of the limbs, just as Cicero recalls for us in his *Rhetoric*, which gives very reliable knowledge. But Zeuxis could not do this, however well he know how to paint or how to colour his painting, such is Nature's great beauty.) (16155-72)

The inclusion of this description of Zeuxis, taken from the *De inventione*, II. 1. 1–3, is not strictly necessary for the unsayability topos. It would have sufficed to have named him, as all the other writers and artists were named, and this anecdote does not appear to serve any function beyond a decorative one. However, its very narrative superfluity highlights the passage, and should prompt the question as to why it is included. The moral of the story, less ambiguous in Cicero than in the *Rose*, is that no human individual exists created perfect by nature. In Cicero's telling of the story, Zeuxis asks for the five most beautiful girls in Croton to be sent to him in order to paint a perfect painting of Helen. Cicero uses the example to justify taking rhetorical teachings from a variety of different sources to write a complete guide to rhetoric. This seems analogous to Jean de Meun's compilation of learning from a vast range of authorities to produce a more complete investigation of desire, nature, and language than any hitherto attempted. Such an analogy, though perhaps plausible, seems insufficient as a justification of the inclusion of this passage. There are other lessons to be drawn. Zeuxis seeks to capture the 'fourme' of Helen. Cicero's Latin says,

> ut excellentem muliebris formae pulchritudinem muta in se imago contineret, Helenae pingere simulacrum velle dixit.
> (He said that he wished to paint a likeness of Helen so that the mute image might contain the surpassing beauty of the female form.)[111]

Starting with the individual examples of the natural, physical world he attempts to combine them to form an artificial representation of the Idea of female beauty. The Idea (or fundamental principle) of Nature in all its beauty is, we have been told, beyond any artist or philosopher,[112] and there is no indication that Zeuxis succeeds in fully representing the ideal beauty of woman, whatever that might be. In fact, according to the *Rose* it would be impossible for Zeuxis to equal Nature in creating new life forms, and it is impossible for philosophers to comprehend the true reality of Nature, or, to be more precise, it is impossible for them to express it. The result is that the truth must be approached sideways and expressed implicitly. It would be impossible for Zeuxis to succeed in his ambitious task, but by working with imperfect fallen examples and by using skilful manipulation an artist can present a surface image that can still convey an imperfect approximation of the truth if read correctly. If mathematics and dialectical *scientia* deal only in certainties, rhetoric and the arts can provide approximate knowledge that is less certain but still useful. Things that cannot be fully understood or represented, such as nature, the truth of female beauty, or the reality of sexual desire, can nonetheless be approached by artificial human speech and by fiction. Cicero suggested a parallel between the visual arts and the verbal arts in his exemplum of Zeuxis combining flawed natural things to create a more perfect (though not wholly perfect) composite. Jean de Meun is taking advantage of this to suggest, as he did with Faux Semblant's discussion of clothing and speech, that human communication, just like the visual arts, is both artificial and yet still presents an imperfect means of grasping truth through its artificiality. Zeuxis, like the figure of Pygmalion, whose story will be told just before the end of the *Rose*, is an emblematic figure of the process of literary and rhetorical invention and creation.[113] Pygmalion's story presents a very different

[111] *De inv.*, II. 1. 1.
[112] Cf. Aquinas' criticism of Avicenna's attempt to prove that nature exists discussed at, p. 34.
[113] Cf. pp. 227-30.

account of artistic creation in relation to nature, one not necessarily in contradiction to the story of Zeuxis presented here. This is part of the point of the *Rose*. Natural processes cannot be fully understood and must be approached from a variety of different angles and from different perspectives. (It is no accident that Nature's speech contains a whole section on optics and the use of (artificial) lenses to change the perspective of things and see them in different, often false, lights.)[114] The eloquent speech of different characters is the principal way in which different artificial surfaces are offered, all of which promise underlying truths and have varying relationships to those often-undecidable truths.

POETRY: IMPERFECT PHILOSOPHY FOR FALLEN HUMANS?

Dialectic, the discipline of conveying the truths of philosophy, has its limitations when attempting to pin down uncertainties, such as others' (or even one's own) true intentions or characters, or fundamentally irrational processes such as sexual drives or avarice that plague postlapsarian humans. According to the Boethian understanding of rhetoric and according to the disciplinary restrictions of the University, the discovery of truth happens through dialectic, while rhetoric should be used to persuade and educate those people who lack the intellect to depend purely on reason. However, empirical evidence, not to mention the Aristotelian theories of the appetitive intellect, as mediated by Giles of Rome, bore witness to the fact that no humans are governed purely by reason. The *Rose*, as a text of ethics, is relentless in its investigation of social ills and mores and of the socially situated claims of the dispensation and discovery of knowledge by authoritative speakers, be they Raison, Ami, La Vieille, or more realistic figures in the real world outside the dream-vision of the *Roman de la rose*. Written during a period in which knowledge, authority, and truth were at stake in the University of Paris, the *Rose* insists that its audiences make sustained hermeneutic efforts to establish what lessons there are to draw from those who present themselves as knowledgeable.

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[114] For a detailed discussion of optics and knowledg in the *Rose*, cf. Suzanne Akbari Conklin, *Seeing Through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto and London: Toronto University Press, 2004), especially, pp. 45-113.

It is this concept of presentation that is key for understanding how Jean de Meun sees knowledge as it is performed and conveyed socially. The *Rose* is a fiction; it is an artificial and falsifying text, and it parades that falseness openly, yet it presents truth and knowledge. If the dialectical language of the schoolroom can identify sophisms and can guarantee certain kinds of univocal truth-claims, the *Rose* inhabits a world just outside the schools. In our socially engaged lives, all speech, all eloquence, is artificial on some level, and this artificiality, as suggested by Cicero's narrative of the origins of eloquence, is part of what it means to be a social human. Certainly Genius' account of Jupiter and the end of the Golden Age seems, at least in part, to echo the role of the *magnus vir et sapiens* in the *De inventione*.

If the *Rose*, as poetry, is a text that concerns itself with ethics, with how to live well, and with the discussion of the hypothesis (what is Amant to do about his desire for the *Rose*?), it subsumes the acquisition of theoretical knowledge under ethics. Given the contestation of authority and the fallibility even of a figure that presents herself as the incarnation of reason, the rhetorical model of a superior figure dispensing instruction that must be followed is dangerous and leads to abuse, as Faux Semblant makes only too clear. The *Rose* shows the need to understand enough to argue, and to reject claims that are mendacious or wrong. In this way it echoes Cicero, who said that wisdom must be allied with eloquence to prevail against stupidity and Aristotle, who advises that men learn rhetoric so as to be able to defend themselves in the social world.

> It is absurd to hold that a man ought to be ashamed of being unable to defend himself with his limbs, but not of being unable to defend himself with rational speech, when the use of rational speech is more distinctive of a human being than the use of his limbs.[115]

[115] *Rhetoric*, I. 1, 1355b1-6. A more theological source would be Augustine's *DDC*, IV. 2. 3; pp. 196-97: 'Nam cum per artem rhetoricam et uera suadeantur et falsa, quis audeat dicere, adversus mendacium in defensoribus suis inermem debere consistere veritatem'? (Since rhetoric is used to give conviction to both truth and falsehood, who could dare maintain that truth, which depends on us for its defence, should stand unarmed in the fight against falsehood?)

The world abounds with those who misuse rhetoric, or who mistake eloquence, the surface appearance of wisdom, for the thing itself, as Cicero and Victorinus suggested. Again, Faux Semblant, whose base desires motivate – but do not invalidate – all his fine words, vitiates the enterprise of eloquence and by extension all human communication, not least fictional poetry.

Fallen nature and human (or animal) appetite or desire is precisely that which causes the breakdown of divinely instituted *ratio*. The figure of Appius, the corrupt judge motivated by his sexual desire, discussed by Raison, is the archetype of a figure who might initially appear just yet who cannot be trusted (5559-5628).[116] The corrupt courtroom (which itself cannot help but recall the function of rhetoric as a tool for the resolving legal cases in the writings of Cicero and Aristotle) works as a metonym for the injustices of a world in which wisdom (*sapientia*) does not always, or even regularly, prevail. The hypocrites who appear holy, the Pharisees of Matthew 23:2-8, are those in charge. Rather than simply rail against injustice and hypocrisy, the *Rose*'s daring approach is to embrace artifice and the study of artifice in identifying truth about people and about theoretical knowledge. It aims to educate its readers in how to read and how to learn in a world where one cannot necessarily trust either books or teachers. The *Rose* thus offers another way of knowing, one that offers an imperfect knowledge based on concealment and artifice, and one that makes hermeneutic demands on its readers to educate them in the getting of knowledge from the necessarily flawed and imperfect speakers that exist both in the *Rose* and in the world outside of the page. It is a world in which even the most esteemed teachers, leaders, and thinkers are driven by their appetites and are merely human, all too human.

The Fall and its effects prevent univocal language and the simple acquisition of knowledge and truth through reason, and the *Rose* acknowledges that there is much that is inaccessible to dialectic, not simply the intentions of others, but serious theoretical questions. By using the artificial fictions of necessarily imperfect, rhetorical speech to present and at the same time to conceal truths, it

[116] Cf. p. 52.

also offers a less certain but more flexible method of understanding questions of morality, psychology, and nature, a method to supplement, if not to rival, the rigid certainties of the philosophers' dialectic. Rhetoric is imperfect and aims at moving the appetitive intellect, not the intellect on its own, and the *Rose* attempts to understand the world as filtered through human appetite, not as it appears in its wholly theoretical form. Thus, the imperfection of the *Rose*'s method reflects the imperfection of human understanding and the flawed world inhabited by its readers and by the text itself.

4

Usury, Avarice, and Infinite Desire

Rhetoric serves a different function to dialectic; the *Rose* presents a less scientific philosophy than that of the philosophers and for a different end. In this chapter we will turn to look at one of the most significant ethical questions in the poem to see how it is that the *Rose* uses rhetorical or poetic techniques both to move its audience and to articulate (imperfectly) the kind of imperfect philosophy discussed at the end of the previous chapter. This significant ethical question is that of the nature and function of money in relation to desire. The ubiquity of money and avarice in the *Rose* has not been properly explored, and yet it is central to ideas around nature, justice, and sexual desire throughout the work.

Love of money is a serious sin. It is even the root of all evils (1 Tim 6: 10), the worst sin (Ecclesiasticus 10: 9-10). It is one of those sins that goes particularly against the natural order of things, against the order of nature, in that it is lacking in an end-point, a limit, a *ratio*. Of all the vices, avarice presents a particularly destabilising threat to the proper, divinely ordered working of the world and man's natural place in it. Avarice and usury feature in *Le roman de la rose* as crimes against Raison and against Nature, and the love of money is an undercurrent running throughout the text, in opposition to the Edenic, harmonious communality of the natural and pre-pecuniary Golden Age. This chapter will be dealing with questions of avarice and usury (which are inextricably linked and often overlap), specifically in the way that they relate to infinity. The place of usury and avarice as the most unnatural sins born of desire can thus be used to understand the relationship between sin and nature both in the poem and in the wider world of medieval theory. In order to discuss just how the *Rose* interacts with the Scholastic tradition of economic theory, it is necessary to have a good understanding of that tradition. Accordingly, this chapter will dwell for some time on medieval theories of usury and avarice before turning to the *Rose* to consider the specifics of how the poetry is doing philosophy.

STEALING TIME FROM GOD

References to usurers and usury abound in the *Rose* and their place and their meaning as exemplary sins is central to an understanding of the text as a whole. If we are to understand the repeated mentions of usury, it is necessary to delve into the theoretical discussions of philosophy and theology to understand the meanings and significance of usury, opponent of nature and child of avarice.[1] Aristotle's shadow looms large over all philosophical discussion of the thirteenth century and Book I of his *Politics* is the natural place to investigate the meaning, place and natural or unnatural uses of money at the time of the *Rose*'s composition. I will focus specifically on Aristotle's ideas about ends and limits in order and examine how they came to affect thirteenth-century perspectives on avarice, particularly in the writings of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. This will lead to a consideration of Jean de Meun's poem and its contribution to debates around the meaning of sin, of money, and of the natural. On the one hand, the *Rose* uses the philosophical discussion of money in a rhetorical fashion, to persuade its audience to adopt certain kinds ethical behaviour. On the other, it enters into the world of the thesis, and uses the techniques of rhetoric to offer, implicitly and, at times, explicitly, philosophical approaches that differ radically from those of Aquinas, say, or Albert.

Usury was banned definitively by the Church at the Second Lateran Council of 1139.[2] It is important, however, to know exactly what usury means in order to be able to avoid doing it and to prevent others from sinning. The first Chancellor of the University of Paris, Robert de Courçon, defines it in his *Summa* as the receiving of interest on a loan contract, known as a *mutuum*.

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[1] Cf. Odd Langholm, *Economics in the Medieval Schools: Wealth, Exchange, Value, Money and Usury according to the Paris Theological Tradition, 1200-1350*, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 29 (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1992) (henceforth *EMS*); Odd Langholm, *The Aristotelian Analysis of Usury* (Bergen/New York: Universitetsforlaget/ Columbia University Press, 1984); Diana Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought*, Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), especially, pp. 159-205; John Thomas Noonan, *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957); Wei, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-355.
[2] Noonan, p. 18.

> Nomen usurae dupliciter accipitur quia quandoque significat rem superexcrescentem quae praeter sortem recipitur, quandoque vitium dicitur ejus qui dat mutuum ut aliquid supra sortem recipiat. Et ita potest notificari tale peccatum: *Usura est peccatum in aliquo consideratum ex eo quod aliquid supra sortem recipit intendit*
> (The name of usury is taken in two ways, because at some times it signifies the increment which is received [by the creditor] in excess of the principal [in repayment of a loan], and at others it is said to be the vice of the person who would make a loan in order to receive money in excess of the principal. And so such a sin can be understood as follows: 'Usury is considered a sin in someone either if they receive something in excess of the principal or if they simply intend to receive the excess.')[3]

In Roman and Canon Law a *mutuum* is restricted to fungibles, 'i.e. to things which "exist by weight, number or measure", to quote the law, which lists commodities like wine, oil, grain, as well as money (*pecunia numerata*)'.[4] Treatment of *mutua*, and of usury generally, is almost exclusively concerned with money, as in borne out by Aquinas' definition in the *Summa theologiae* where he says he will discuss 'accipere pecuniam in pretium pro pecunia mutuata, quod est accipere usuram.' ('accepting money as payment for a loan of money, which is accepting usury.')[5] It is important, though, to stress the dual nature of usury mentioned by Robert de Courçon: not only is usury the act of receiving an interest payment for a loan, it is also the *intention* of gaining a profit for a loan. This spiritual sin of intention rather than action will become particularly relevant when looking at the relation between usury and avarice and at the corrupting nature of such sinful desire. It is this intent to gain that is at stake in the definitive Biblical injunction against usury, Luke 6: 35: 'mutuum date, nihil desperantes' (lend hoping for nothing thereby).[6]

Before plunging headlong into Aristotle's *Politics* and commentaries on it that explicitly examine the relationship between money, money-lending, and nature, I want to draw upon one of the most common and popular arguments in the

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[3] Robert de Courçon, *Le traité 'De usura' de Robert de Courçon*, ed. and trans. by Georges Lefèvre, Travaux et mémoires de l'Université de Lille, 10: 30 (Lille: Université, 1902), p. 3.
[4] *EMS*, p. 48.
[5] *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 78, pr. Cf. Noonan, p. 31 for general definitions of usury in the Middle Ages.
[6] Usury is also prohibited in Ex 22: 25; Lev 25: 36; Ps 14: 5; Eze 18: 8; 22: 12.

condemnation of usury, that usury is a sin as it involves stealing time.[7] John Baldwin notes the idea of usury as the theft of time from God in Peter Chanter's commentary on Psalm 71 (72):14 in the late twelfth century,[8] and Odd Langholm asserts that after Thomas of Chobham's discussion of the theme in his *Summa confessorum*, the theme was 'much favoured by popular preachers who painted in glaring colours the fate awaiting those who sold the very dimension of which God permits man briefly to partake.'[9] In his *Summa*, Thomas notes that

> ubi est mutuum, ibi transit dominium, unde mutuum dicitur quasi de meo tuum. Si igitur mutavero tibi denarios vel etiam frumentum vel vinum, statim denarii sunt tui, et frumentum tuum est, et vinum tuum est. Unde si pretium inde reciperem, haberem lucrum de tuo, non de meo. Unde fenerator nihil vendit debitori quod suum est, sed tantum tempus quod dei est. Unde quia vendit rem alienam non debet inde aliquod lucrum habere.
> Preterea, fenerator vult consequi lucrum sine omne labore etiam dormiendo, quod est contra preceptum domini qui ait: *in labore et sudore vultus tui vesceris pane tuo*.'
> (Where there is a mutuum, ownership passes, whence *mutuum* means as it were "yours from mine. Therefore, if I have lent you money or also grain or wine, immediately the money is yours, and the grain is yours and the wine is yours. Therefore, if I receive a fee for this, I profit from what is yours not mine. Therefore the usurer sells the debtor nothing that is his, but only time, which is God's. Therefore, since he sells a thing belonging to another, he ought not to derive any profit from it. Furthermore, the usurer seeks to profit without any labour even while asleep, which is against the precept of the Lord, who says, 'In labour and the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread'. (Gen 3: 19)[10]

NATURAL LAW

The moral imperative of earning money through honest work will be a central aspect in the polemic about the natural way of providing for oneself that runs throughout the *Roman de la rose*, but the most striking aspect in Thomas'

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[7] *EMS*, p. 57.
[8] John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and his Circle*, 2 vols., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), I. 271 and II. 191 n13.
[9] *EMS*, p. 58. The concept of usury as selling time is mentioned once by Thomas Aquinas in his letter *De emptione et venditione ad tempus*, vol. 42 in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII edita* (Rome: San Tommaso, 1979), pp. 379-94; p. 394. It was used throughout the thirteenth century. Cf. Noonan, p. 63; Wei, p. 315.
[10] Thomas of Chobham, *Summa confessorum*, ed. by F. Broomfield, Analecta mediaevalia Namurcensia, 25 (Louvain and Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1968), a. 7, d. 6, q. 11, c. 1; pp. 504-5. Translation from *EMS*, p. 56.

argument is that of stealing time, and stealing it from God. Usury is a sin aganst the divinely instituted order of the world, beyond any harm that it may cause to one's neighbour. While the image of stealing time from God may have passed into less academic discourse such as sermons, thirteenth-century philosophy drew on the concept of natural law inherited from the Stoics and incorporated into canon law. Natural law, as outlined by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae*, is the following:

> Ius naturale est commune omnium nationum, et quod ubique instinctu naturae, non constitutione aliqua habetur, ut viri et feminae conjunctio, liberorum suscessio et educatio, communis omnium possessio, et omnium una libertas, adquisitio eorum quae coelo, terra marique capiuntur.
> (Natural law is shared by all peoples, and is that which is everywhere possessed thanks to natural instinct and not by any decree, for example: the union of man and woman, children's succession [of their parents] and upbringing, the common possession of all things, of single freedom shared by all, and the acquisition of those things which are taken from the sky, the earth, and the sea.)[11]

Of this definition, cited by Gratian near the beginning of his *Decretum*, the seminal text of canon law,[12] three key aspects are particularly pertinent to the natural ethics found in *Le roman de la rose*: that certain moral precepts are innate to all humans prior to and regardless of societal conventions; that natural law is associated with heterosex leading to reproduction and the continuation of the species; and that in a properly natural state of existence there is no such thing as property.[13] Throughout tractate 38 of the third book of his influential *Summa aurea*, William of Auxerre, a theologian at the University of Paris, draws heavily on Luke 6:35 in his discussions of usury, but fuses his citations from

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[11] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. by W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911) (henceforth *Etymologiae*), V. 4. 1.
[12] Gratian, *Decretum*, I. 1. 7, *PL*, 187.31B. Gratian does, open the *Decretum* with the claim that '[j]us naturale est quod in lege et Evangelio continetur' (natural law is that which is contained in [Mosaic] law and the Gospel), *ibid.*, I. 1. 1, *PL*, 187.29A. Natural law cannot be easily separated from Holy Doctrine. In fact, in his *Etymologiae* (V. 2. 1) Isidore also stresses the link between the natural and the divine: 'Omnes autem leges aut divinae sunt, aut humanae. Divinae natura, humanae moribus constant'. (But all laws are either divine or human. Divine laws are established by nature, human laws by customs.).
[13] This purely natural state is figured by the Golden Age, particularly as discussed by Ami at *Rose*, 8325-8424.

Doctrine with reference to natural law. As well as acting against Divine law and again human natural law, the usurer also acts against the very fabric of the created world.

> [F]acit enim contra legem naturalem universalem, quia vendit tempus, quod commune est omnium creaturarum; dicit enim Augustinus quod 'indicium est summe largitatis Dei quod quelibet creatura compellatur dare se ipsam. Sol enim compellitur dare se ipsum ad illuminandum. Similiter terra compellitur dare quicquid potest dare, et similiter aqua'; nichil autem ita generaliter dat se sicut tempus, quia velint nolint reges, tempus habent pauperes; quia ergo usurarius vendit, quod de necessitate est omnium creaturarum, creaturis omnibus iniuriatur, et lapidibus; unde si homines tacerent contra usurarios, lapides clamerent, si possent [Luke 19:40], et hoc est una causa, quare Ecclesia ita persequitur usurarios; unde maxime contra illos dicit Deus: *Cum accepero tempus* [Ps 74:3] , id est cum tempus ita erit in manu mea, quod usurarii non possunt ipsum vendere, tunc iusticias iudicabo.
> (He acts against universal natural law, because he sells time, which belongs to all creatures communally; for Augustine says that, 'it is evidence of the God's superlative generosity that any and every creature be compelled to give of itself. For the sun is compelled to give of itself for the purpose of illumination. In the same way the earth is compelled to give whatever it can give, and also the water', but nothing gives of itself as much as time, because kings cannot prevent paupers from having time. Because, therefore, the usurer sells that which of necessity belongs to all creatures, he does harm to all creatures, including stones, and thus if men were to remain silent in the face of usurers, the stones would cry out if they could [Luke 19:40], and this is one reason why the Church so attacks usurers; and thus mostly against them God says: 'When I shall take the time' [Ps 74:3], this means 'when time will be in my hand, in such a way that usurers cannot sell it, I will then dispense justice.')[14]

Sun, earth, sea and in fact the whole of creation in all of its parts is ordered against usury as is God himself, to whom time ultimately belongs. It is a crime that goes against the whole natural order of being, then, and by the second half of the thirteenth century, it became standard for writers, following William of Auxerre, to argue that usury was a sin *secundum se* (in and of itself), as opposed to, say, killing, which could in some circumstances be acceptable. Albert the Great

[14] Guillaume d'Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, ed. by Jean Ribaillier, 5 vols., Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 16-20 (Paris: Editions du CNRS; Rome: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1980-87), III. 48. 3. w; IV, 931-32.

characterises usury as a sin *secundum se* in his commentary on the third book of the *Sentences*, for example,[15] as Aquinas would later do in his *De Malo*, when he says that usury is 'secundum se peccatum: est enim contra iustitiam naturalem' (a sin in and of itself; for it is against natural justice),[16] and although his reasoning is different, it is clear that usury is in total opposition to nature.

ARISTOTELIAN MONEY: NATURE AND TELEOLOGY

It is against this backdrop that the reception of Aristotle's writings about money should be considered, and it is in the treatment of money and nature by Aristotle and by thirteenth century Aristotelians (chiefly Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and, I will argue, Jean de Meun) that the relationship between usury, nature and ethics sees a move towards the analysis of money and greed in relation to Aristotelian concepts of nature. The analytical framework is what makes usury susceptible to the comparison seen in the *Rose* with other unnatural practices, most notably the definitive sin *contra naturam*, sodomy. Aristotle's idea of nature is key to understanding the conceptual shift in the analysis of the unnatural aspect of sins. In the *Physics*, II. 2, he says of any thing that

> the nature is the end or that for the sake of which. For if a thing undergoes a continuous change toward some end, that last stage is actually that for the sake of which.[17]

The significance of this dictum to thirteenth-century discussion of nature can be seen in Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*, I. 1. Justifying Aristotle's account of the evolution of human society from the small community into its end as a city as a natural process for human society, Aquinas notes that '[f]inis rerum naturalium est natura ipsarum.' (The end of natural things is their nature.)[18] Deviation from a thing's appointed end is, therefore, a deviation from its nature. To use a thing wrongly is to use it unnaturally. Furthermore, when a person sins, they are acting towards an end that is other than humankind's natural end, that

[15] Albert the Great, *Commentarii in III Sententiarum*, vol. 28 in *Opera omnia*, ed. by Auguste Borgnet, 38 vols. (Paris: Vivès, 1890-99), d. 37, a. 13, q. 1, ad 2; p. 707.
[16] Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones diputatae de malo*, vol. 23 in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII edita* (Rome/Paris: Commissio Leonina/Vrin, 1982), q. 13, a. 4, co; p. 255.
[17] *Physics*, II. 2, 194a28-194a30.
[18] Thomas Aquinas, *In libros Politicorum Aristotelis expositio*, ed. by Raimundo Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1951) (Henceforth *In Pol.*), I. 1. 32, p. 10. Cf. p. 28 above.

is virtue and ultimately heaven. All sin, then, can be said to be unnatural in an Aristotelian sense, in that it is an action or a desire whose end is disordered. The status of usury, and of avarice, with which it is so associated, does not change; it is still one of the most unnatural sins, although the reasoning for this status rests less on the poetic but woolly notion of stealing time and is placed on a more systematic footing. As mentioned above, in Thomas' *De Malo*, usury is defined a *peccatum secundum se* as it allows money to be consumed, used up in its lending it, and still to be possessed. Thomas' argument rests on the principle that money is consumed in its natural usage, in exchange for goods, following Aristotle's *Ethics*, V. 5 and *Politics* I. 10,[19] and thus to claim interest is to charge twice, both for the use of the money and for the substance of the money, which Aquinas says is the same thing.[20] If sin is the result of deviation from a thing's nature, this chapter is particularly concerned with the more radical disjunction from natural ends caused by the unnatural use of money associated with avarice and with usury. The cause of usury is avarice and avarice has no end and no limit. It is not simply that the end is unnatural, but that the end disappears from view and it is this infinity found in the multiplication of money that makes usury and avarice so unnatural. Not only is the act of usury unnatural and sinful, but, as mentioned earlier, so is the *desire* to profit from money-lending, that comes from avarice. Desire, natural and unnatural, is one of the *Rose*'s main concerns, and, for all its supposed indecidability, the poem is informed by a coherent, Aristotelian, ethical understanding of desire, which makes it possible to consider usury as a sin comparable in its unnaturalness both to sodomy and to the artificial and stylised suppression of the sexual urge that is courtly love.

Politics, I: Means and Ends

In order to situate our investigation into the meaning of money, usury and avarice, we should turn first to Book I of Aristotle's *Politics*, where, in chapters 8, 9 and 10, he discusses the origin and the end (or nature) of money and

[19] *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 78, a. 1, co.; cf. *EMS*, p. 241.
[20] *De malo*, q. 13, a. 4, co; p. 255.

exchange.[21] Having established man as a political animal and the city as the natural extension of earlier smaller communities, and having touched on the management of slaves and households, subsidiary components of the state, Aristotle turns to 'property generally and the art of getting wealth'.[22] Property originates in nature:

> Property, in the sense of a bare livelihood, seems to be given by nature herself to all, both when they are first born, and when they are grown up. For some animals bring forth, together with their offspring, so much food as will last until they are able to supply themselves; of this the vermiparous or oviparous animals are an instance; and the viviparous animals have up to a certain time a supply of food for their young in themselves, which is called milk. In like manner we may infer that, after the birth of animals, plants exist for their sake, and that the other animals exist for the sake of man, the tame for use and food, the wild, if not all, at least the greater part of them, for food, and for the provision of clothing and various instruments. Now if nature makes nothing incomplete, and nothing in vain, the inference must be that she has made all animals for the sake of man.[23]

It is important to note the context of this statement in Book I of *Politics*, which has already seen a discussion of the evolution of families into villages and then villages into cities (I. 2). It is followed soon after (I. 9) by a history of the evolution of property from its natural origins to trade and money. If Jean de Meun wanted to find justification in Aristotle for the prelapsarian, natural Golden Age of the Classical poets in which nature provided everything for all humans before the invention of money, itself an echo of the Eden of sacred doctrine, he did not have to look hard. The concept of property as a finite thing rooted in Nature, whose natural purpose is to be consumed to preserve individuals and thus households, prompts the argument that the natural purpose or end of wealth-getting is to provide enough food for oneself and one's household to survive. The motif of eating, of consumption, goes to the heart of thirteenth-century discussions of money in relation to nature, not least Aquinas'

[21] The other main text in Aristotle's corpus dealing with economic thought is Book V of the *Ethics*, which deals more with how money works in exchange and what it represents, rather than the ethical issues which are at stake in this discussion.
[22] *Politics*, I. 8, 1256a1-2.
[23] *Politics*, I. 8, 1256b7-22.

argument about usury mentioned above that money is naturally consumed in its use. Aristotle continues:

> Of the art of acquisition (κτητική – *ktêtikê*) then there is one kind which by nature is a part of the management of a household (οἰκονομική – *oikonomikê*), in so far as the art of household management must either find ready to hand, or itself provide, such things necessary to life, and useful for the community of the family or state, as can be stored. They are the elements of true riches; for the amount of property which is needed for a good life is not unlimited.[24]

This natural end of wealth-acquisition (χρηματιστική – *chrêmatistikê*) , known as *oikonomikê*, is contrasted with another kind of acquisition which is especially called chrêmatistikê (the acquistion of money as an end in itself).

> There is another variety of the art of acquisition which is commonly and rightly called an art of wealth-getting (*chrêmatistikê*), and has in fact suggested the notion that riches and property have no limit. Being nearly connected with the preceding, it is often identified with it. But though they are not very different, neither are they the same. The kind already described is given by nature, the other is gained by experience and art.[25]

This remark is then justified in relation to the evolution of trade and money. All property was originally held in common in the simplest form of social organisation. When the family grew too large and divided, bartering evolved so that different groups could exchange goods in order that they might be able to provide for themselves. The primitive nature of this exchange is emphasised by Aristotle when he notes that barbarous nations still practise such exchange through barter without the use of money. It is made quite explicit that 'this sort of barter is not part of the wealth-getting art (*chrêmatistikê*) and is not contrary to nature, but is needed for the satisfaction of men's natural wants.'[26] It was with

[24] *Politics*, I.8, 1256b26-30.
[25] *Politics*, I. 9, 1256b40-1257a6.
[26] *Politics*, I. 9, 1257a28-30.

the invention of money that an unnatural form of wealth-getting, retail trade [*kapêlikê*], emerged.[27] Retail trade

> was at first probably a simple matter, but became more complicated as soon as men learned by experience whence and by what exchanges the greatest profit might be made.[28]

This aim of increasing profit, says Aristotle, is an unnatural, and thus wrong, form of wealth-getting.

> For natural riches and the natural art of wealth-getting are a different thing; in their true form they are part of the management of a household; whereas retail trade is the art of producing wealth, not in every way, but by exchange. And it is thought to be concerned with coin; for coin is the unit of exchange and the limit of it. And there is no bound to the riches which spring from this art of wealth-getting.[29]

Scott Meikle's remark on the implications of this is significant.

> Using money in this way [for the accumulation of wealth and not simply in order to have enough to support oneself] is not to use it as a means subordinate to a natural end, but to make money itself the end, and to make natural ends a means of making money. As an end, it is without a limit and so it is irrational.[30]

The lack of *ratio*, of reason, but also of moderation, poses a significant threat to the natural, rational balance of the world and this association will be particularly highlighted in the speech given by Raison in the *Rose*, when she discusses the place of money, natural limits, and balance. Aristotle's history of the evolution of human society continues with his discussion of two different kinds of trade, which are differentiated by their ends.

> [O]ne is a part of household management, the other is retail trade [*kapêlikê*]: the former is necessary and honourable, while that

[27] *Politics*, I. 9, 1256a41-b2.
[28] *Politics*, I. 9, 1257b2-5.
[29] *Politics*, I. 9, 1257b19-24.
[30] Scott Meikle, *Aristotle's Economic Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), p. 88.

> which consists in exchange is justly censured; for it is unnatural, and a mode by which men gain from one another.

He then proceeds from here to the even more unnatural practice of usury.

> The most hated sort, and with the greatest reason, is usury, which makes a gain out of money itself, and not from the natural object of it. For money was intended to be used in exchange, but not to increase at interest. And this term 'interest', which means the birth of money from money, is applied to the breeding of money because the offspring resembles the parent. That is why of all modes of getting wealth this is the most unnatural.[31]

It is also worth noting at this point that Aristotle hints at a problem that he does not actually confront, which is the shift from a natural state of trade to an irrational, unnatural one and the place of buying and selling.[32] While trade for profit is clearly unnatural, trade for the sake of purchasing the goods necessary for sustaining oneself is less clear and seems to be closer to barter, the most natural kind of exchange. This is especially true when we consider his justification of the evolution of the natural, complex city from the originary, simple and natural, small community, in which he claims that a thing's nature can be seen in its end. Might this not mean that money, trade for profit and even usury are the natural end of simpler, natural barter? He cautiously repeats the views of others that money is not natural but conventional,[33] but does not go so far himself, and seems to sidestep the issue. Such a problem can be partially resolved by the idea of a Fall from a natural state to an unnatural, sinful one, a line of argument available to Christian Aristotelians if not to the Philosopher himself. It remains the case that trade for profit is unnatural for Aristotle and usury is the most unnatural kind of trade, the 'most hated sort, and with the greatest reason'. It is furthest from barter, the natural form of exchange; the object used to provide sustenance for oneself or one's household – whose acquisiton is the whole purpose of exchange – is now absent, with the only purpose in the exchange being the acquisition of money, that is the unnatural

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[31] *Politics*, I. 10, 1258b2-8.
[32] Cf. Meikle, pp. 54-55 and p. 60.
[33] *Politics*, I. 9, 1257b10-14. At *Ethics*, V. 5, however, he says that money has become a representative of demand by convention.

form of *chrêmatistikê*, and the only thing exchanged is the abstract, artificial measurement of coin. Aristotle says that usury is making money, a barren object, breed,[34] which is unnatural in that reproduction which is properly the activity of natural objects. The image of reproduction also recalls I. 2 of the *Politics*, in which the very first basis for the formation of natural communities leading to natural cities is the

> union of those who cannot exist without each other; namely of male and female, that the race may continue (and this is a union which is formed, not of choice, but because, in common with other animals and with plants, mankind have a natural desire to leave behind them an image of themselves).[35]

If, as Aristotle says, '[h]e who thus considers things in their first growth and origin, whether a state or anything else, will obtain the clearest view of them,'[36] the primary placement of gender difference and reproduction in Aristotle's account of the evolution of the state shows the centrality of reproductive sex to any natural account of human civilisation. Langholm points out that neither Albert the Great nor Thomas Aquinas pay that much attention to the image of breeding in their commentaries on the *Politics*, keeping their focus rather on its relation to avarice (Albert) and the fact that it is a wrong use of money in relation to its natural end (Thomas).[37] It is in the *Roman de la rose*, a poem in which philosophy is expressed through allegory and in which metaphors take on philosophical importance, that the association between sexual reproduction, nature, and usury is made clearer, and the connection hinted at by Aristotle's imagery takes on greater significance. The *Rose* is a text that can take advantage of the techniques of rhetoric (such as metaphors of reproduction to think about the nature of money) to form associations and philosophical arguments in ways not possible in dialectical discourse.[38]

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[34] The concept of the sterility of money was accessible to medieval thinkers even without Aristotle. As Wood notes (p. 84), it was discussed by Basil, Ambrose, and Justinian.
[35] *Politics*, I.2, 1252a26-30.
[36] *Politics*, I.2, 1252a24-26.
[37] *ENS*, pp. 194-95 and p. 237.
[38] Discussed in chapter 3. Chapter 5 will further investigate the epistemic possibilities of figurative language.

ALBERT THE GREAT, THOMAS AQUINAS, AND INFINITY

More than any other thirteenth-century theorists about money, Albert and Thomas drew and expanded on Aristotle's economic writings, Book I of the *Politics* and Book V of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Of particular relevance are their commentaries on the *Politics*, which deal with the relationship between money and nature and which return again and again to the troubling concept of infinity.

Before going further, it is important to mention a deviation in meaning in the translation of Aristotle into Latin in the thirteenth century. The first translation of the *Politics* into Greek was carried out around 1260 by William of Moerbeke,[39] and William's choice in translating some key concepts had a significant impact on the consideration of money and the place of usury in relation to avarice and nature. Aristotle, as we have seen, was fairly hostile to the practice of trade and especially trade for the sake of profit, an attitude difficult to square with the importance of trade in the high Middle Ages. Deliberately or not, William rendered Aristotle's scorned category of *kapêlikê* (retail trade for the sake of profit) into the Latin *campsoria* (money-changing). Moreover, he translates Aristitotle's *chrêmatistikê* (wealth-getting) as *pecuniativa*, a term with specific associations with money.[40] The result is that trade as an activity against nature is largely absent in thirteenth-century Aristotelian texts, even if it is a somewhat suspect activity for many theologians.[41] The focus of unnatural exchange is placed squarely on money and on coin itself, on *pecunia*, rather than the more general acquisition of goods. Money used to acquire more money, the infinite breeding of artificial coin without any natural object, is wholly against nature. It is the infinity associated with *pecuniativa* that is picked up so strongly by Albert and Thomas and that prompts them to take Aristotle's philosophical definition of usury as unnatural and to use it in turn to feed into theological discussion of the sin most associated with infinity, namely avarice. The institution of private

[39] Dod, p. 78.
[40] Cf. *EMS*, p. 177.
[41] Thomas of Chobham, for example, cites 'Gregorius' (in fact Leo I), saying that 'inter vendentis et ementis commercium difficile est non intervenire peccatum' (It is difficult for sin not to enter into buying and selling (*Summa confessorum*, a. 6, d. 4, q. 9; 301. My translation. Cf. Leo I, *Epistolae*, L. XI, inq. 11, *PL*, 54.1206B). Wei, however, has emphasised Parisian theologians' accommodation towards trade, while encouraging fear of the spiritual consequences of usury, as discussed at p. 178 below.

property, of which money is emblematic, is, like clothing, a product and a sign of the originary Fall of humans in Genesis which put an end to the balance, harmony, and communality of a wholly natural state of living.

For Albert, the end of acquiring possessions, of *ktêtikê*, to use Aristotle's term (*possessiva* in the Latin version), is 'vivere et bene vivere' (to live and to live well); it is to have a sufficiency beyond which any excess is harmful, and this is the benchmark of the life lived both according to nature and morally, which are interchangeable concepts. Commenting on *Politics*, I. 9, Albert notes that 'finis enim possessivæ est sufficientia ad vivere et bene vivere, et ideo habet acquisitionem finitam' (Thus the end of possessions is sufficiency to live and to live well, and therefore their acquisition is finite). *Pecuniativa*, on the other hand, is irrationally paradoxical since 'pecuniativæ finis, est acquisitio quæ infinita est: et ideo finem non habet.' (the end of *pecuniativa* is acquisition, which is infinite and therefore it does not have an end).[42] For something to have no end is for it to be unnatural, since, as we saw earlier, a thing's end is its nature, and the lack of reason, of *ratio*, in a description that is wholly illogical (its end is not an end; A≠A) is analogous to the lack of *ratio* – reason, balance, proportionality – in an unnatural desire for money. This paradox goes against the very order of the divinely and rationally created world. Albert goes on to say:

> Et subjungit causam hujus desiderii, dicens: *Causa autem hujus dispositionis*, id est, talis desiderii secundum avaritiam, est *studere circa vivere*, et *non circa bene vivere*. Pauca enim sunt, quæ sufficiunt ad bene vivere: infinita autem exiguntur ad vivere secundum concupiscentiam. Et hoc est quod subdit: *In infinitu, igitur illa concupiscentia existente*, quæ scilicet est ad concupiscentiam vivere.
> (And Aristotle adds the cause of this desire, saying, 'Moreover, the cause of this disposition', that is of such a desire according to avarice, is 'desiring to live' but 'not to live well'. For a small number of things are sufficient to live well, but an infinite number of things are needed to live according to concupiscence. And this is what he says below: 'Infinitely, therefore with that desire being

[42] Albert the Great, *Comentarii in octo libros Politicorum*, vol. 8 in *Opera omnia*, ed. by Auguste Borgnet, 38 vols. (Paris: Vivès, 1890-99), I. 7, o; p 58.

present' which specifically means to live according to concupiscence.)[43]

He is commenting on Aristotle's claim that those who seek only to live and not to live well put no limit on acquisition and 'as their desires are unlimited, they also desire that the means of gratifying them should be without limit'.[44] Albert brings in *avaritia* as a concept to explain this disordered and limitless desire and cements its association with the idea of infinity, through his citation of Ecclesiastes 5:9, 'avarus non implebitur pecunia' (The avaricious man is not satisfied by money).[45] He has earlier already made the association between the unnatural and the infinite in describing exchange using money. This kind of exchange is 'innaturalis et infinita : innaturalis, quia est in iis quæ ad naturæ sustentationem non sunt ordinata: infinita, quia est ad concupiscentiæ satietatem, quæ infinita est' (unnatural and infinite: unnatural because it consists of things which are not ordered towards the continuation of nature, and infinite, because it aims at the satisfaction of desire, which is infinite).[46] Aristotle draws on the story of Midas, whose touch turned everything to gold, leading him to die of hunger, as an illustration of the fact that money does not equate to true riches. Albert makes it quite clear that in this story, Midas' insatiable desire is avarice.[47] Before we turn to a more extended consideration of avarice, it is important to stress the importance of infinity in relation to the accumulation of money in the most influential commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*, that of Thomas Aquinas.

For Aquinas as for Albert, 'concupiscentia hominum tendit in infinitum' (human desire extends infinitely),[48] although in his *Summa theologiae*, it is clear that he distinguishes between natural finite desire and unnatural infinite desire.[49] He is as eager as Albert to draw out the infinite nature of unnatural riches in his commentary. Discussing *Politics*, I. 8, 1256b26-1256b39, he says of the riches that come from nature, that is food and clothing, that Aristotle

[43] *Politicorum*, I. 7. p; p. 58.
[44] Aristotle, *Politics*, I. 9, 1258a1-2.
[45] *Politicorum*, I. 7. p; p. 58.
[46] *Politicorum*, I. 7. g; p. 56.
[47] *Ibid.*, I. 8. k; p. 57.
[48] *In Pol.*, I. 8. 126, p. 39.
[49] *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 30, a. 4 co.

> [o]stendit quod praedicta possessiva non est infinita. Et dicit quod verae divitiae sunt ex huiusmodi rebus quibus subvenitur necessitati naturae. Ideo autem istae sunt verae divitiae, quia possunt tollere indigentiam et facere sufficientiam habenti eas, ut scilicet homo sit sibi sufficiens ad bene vivendum. Sunt autem quaedam aliae divitiae, quarum possessio est infinita, ut infra dicetur; de quibus Solon qui fuit unus de septem sapientibus dixit in suo poemate, quod nullus terminus divitiarum potest praefiniri hominibus: unde tales non sunt verae divitiae, quia non replent hominis appetitum.
> (shows that the aforementioned kind of acquisition is not infinite. And he says that true riches come from those things by which the needs of nature are met.[50] Therefore, these are true riches, because they can remove need and, being possessed they result in sufficiency, which is when a person has all the sufficient means to live well. There are, though certain other riches, whose possession is infinite, as it is to be discussed below. Of these Solon, one of the Seven Sages, said in his poem, that no end to these riches can be fixed by humans. Thus they are not true riches, because they do not satisfy human appetite.)[51]

True riches are natural riches which are finite and have a clear end, which is to remove human need and to provide enough to live. In *Ethics*, V, Aristotle, when trying to define the nature of money, settles on its status as an indication of need. Thus the price of anything is a measure of how much it is needed by the person buying it. So a natural use of money, Thomas seems to be saying, is in accordance with human need, which, unlike desire, is finite. The fake riches of unnatural wealth are, however, infinite. Like Albert, when commenting on Aristotle's assertion of the lack of limits associated with the wrong kind of *chrêmatistikê* or *pecuniativa*:

> Sed pecuniae se habent ad pecuniativam campsoriam, sicut finis: haec enim intendit acquirere pecunias. Ad oeconomicam autem non se habent sicut finis, sed sicut ordinatum ad finem qui est gubernatio domus; ergo pecuniativa quaerit pecunias absque termino, oeconomica autem cum aliquo termino.
> (But money is the end of pecuniative coin-changing, which thus has the aim of acquiring coins. It is not the end of *oikonomikê* except inasmuch as it is ordered to its end which is the

[50] Cf. *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 2, a. 1,co.
[51] *In Pol.*, I. 6. 108, p. 33.

> management of the household. Therefore *pecuniativa* seeks money without end, *oikonomikê* with a particular end.)[52]

There is a kind of metaphysical short-circuit going on here. The coins used in the exchange of money have as their end the increase of coins. The sole end of money, then, becomes the incessant, tumourous generation of more money. Where Albert used the paradox of an end without an end to show the unnaturalness of money, Thomas shows the unnaturalness inherent in having a thing become its own end, a formal ouroboros. To Aristotle's idea of infinite desire for money, Thomas adds the idea of an infinite and irrational practice of gaining money, a sterile, pointless, and monstrously expanding act of repetition. This is the unnatural cloning by money of itself; money being a fungible means that its individual parts – coins – are identical and interchangeable. Thus the new coins artificially generated are indistinguishable from what has caused them as opposed to natural birth in which new distinct individuals emerge as offspring from their parents. Money is made to be its own end, and its own cause, in defiance of the laws of reason or nature.

THE SPIRITAL ASPECT OF USURY: IDOLATROUS AVARICE

The connection between usury and avarice needs closer examination, however, and the two are more closely connected than has been shown so far. It is in this connection, through the concept of idol-worship, that the relationship between the artificial and the unnatural that features so prominently in the *Rose*, takes on a theological dimension. Robert de Courçon highlighted the *intention* to make a profit from a loan as being usury, regardless of the actual profit. To give a loan with the intention of making profit is usury, but to do so because of charity is to merit eternal life.[53] This spiritual aspect of usury brings it so close to avarice as to become a part of it. Albert associates avarice with *campsoria*, money-changing, of which the most hated form is usury; for him avarice is the cause of exchange with money being turned into usury, although he does not go so far as to say that avarice and usury are identical.[54] Aquinas, in his commentary on the *Politics*,

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[52] *Ibid.*, I. 8. 123, p. 39.
[53] *De usura*, p. 75.
[54] Albert, *Politicorum*, I. 7. t, p. 60.

does not equate usury explicity with avarice,[55] and it only receives a brief mention in the *Summa theologiae* when Thomas draws again on Aristotle when discussing the nature of usury.[56] In his consideration of the vices in *De malo*, however, a striking connection is made. Quaestio 13 of *De malo* deals with avarice. The first three articles treat whether avarice is a special sin, whether it is a mortal sin, and whether it is a cardinal vice. Then, with no explanation, the fourth question is 'utrum mutuare ad usuram sit peccatum mortale' (whether lending money usuriously is a mortal sin).[57] The only explanation for this apparent non sequitur is that it is simply not a non sequitur; the association between usury and avarice is so obvious that it does not need to be stated or acknowledged. Thomas' commentary on 1 Tim 6:10 shows the clear association of avarice and usury, the latter being the exemplary activity of the former. Paul writes that 'radix omnium malorum est cupiditas quam quidam appetentes erraverunt a fide et inseruerunt se doloribus multis.' (Greed is the root of all evil, which some coveting have erred from the faith and have entangled themselves in many sorrows). Thomas cites Eccl 5:9 that the avaricious man is never satisfied by money, just as Albert did in his commentary on the *Politics*. He continues, commenting:

> Et incidunt primo in damnum spirituale. Unde dicit *erraverunt a fide*. Cuius ratio est, quia per sanam doctrinam fidei prohibentur multa illicita lucra, a quibus desistere nolunt, et inveniunt sibi aliam doctrinam, ubi eis sit spes salutis. Et hoc specialiter faciunt usurarii.
> (And they fall first into spiritual loss. Hence he says, 'they have strayed from the faith'. The reason for this is that because the healthy doctrine of the faith prohibits great and illicit profits, which they [the avaricious] do not want to abandon, they find for

[55] Langholm translates Aquinas' use of *concupiscentia* as 'avarice' both in his commentary on the *Politics*, I. 8 and in *ST* Ia IIae q. 30 a. 4, in which he distinguishes between natural and unnatural desire, but this seems to be a misreading. Aquinas keeps discussions of avarice separate from these two broader Aristotelian discussions of desire, although *concupiscentia divitiarum* (desire for wealth) does fall under the genus *concupiscentia*. Avarice is discussed more specifically in *De malo*, q. 13 and in commentaries on the relevant passages from Scripture, as discussed on pp. 188-90. Cf. *EMS*, p. 209.
[56] *Summa theologiae*, IIa IIae q. 78 a. 1 ad 2.
[57] *De malo*, q. 13, a. 4, a. 1; p. 253.

> themselves another doctrine where they might hope to for salvation. And usurers do this especially.)[58]

The desire for money as the end of life instead of divinely-ordained virtue leads to a kind of heresy; it leads to avaricious people inventing *alia doctrina* (another doctrine). Not wishing to abide by anything that stands in the way of the (always impossible) attempts to satisfy one's material desires, this disordered and thus unnatural desire leads to the rejection of the limits of religious teaching, the dismissal of *ratio* and balance, and a reshaping of the *logos* to suit one's own ends. The lure of sin, the power of human appetite and the urge to fulfil it lead to the invention of new heretical value systems to accommodate such desire, and thus to damnation. The lack of limits and the lack of balance is as inimical to health, physical or spiritual, as it is to nature and to ethics, all of which are intertwined and unified under the concept of *ratio*. Without any real explanation – again – we are told that usurers are particularly guilty of this perversion of the word of God through desire. Usury is the exemplary act of avarice. What is it about usury, beyond Aristotle's comment in the *Politics*, that makes usury so identifiable with avarice? And why, here, are usurers particularly likely to pervert the word of God?

One significant factor is St Paul's repeated assertion that avarice is equivalent to idolatry, to the worship of idols, which are the artificial, unnatural simulacra of divinity.[59] Comparisons between avarice and idolatory, in which the gold and silver sought by the avaricious man was equivalent to the graven images of the pagans, became a stock theme in patristic and medieval writing.[60] Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio give Innocent III as a typical example from the late twelfth century. In his *De miseria condicionis humanae*, Innocent writes:

> Recte diffinit Apostolus: 'Avaricia est idolorum servitus.' Sicut enim ydololatria servit symulachro, sic avarus servit thesauro. Nam ille cultum ydololatriae diligenter amplificat, et iste cumulum

[58] Thomas Aquinas, *Super I Tim*., in *Super Epistolas S. Pauli lectura*, ed. by Raffaele Cai, 2 vols. (Turin & Rome: Marietti, 1953), c. 6, l. 2; II. 259.
[59] Eph 5:5 and Col 3:5.
[60] Cf. Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali*, Saggi, 832 (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), p. 104.

> pecunie libenter augmentat. Ille cum omni diligencia colit symulachrum, et iste cum omni cura custodit thesaurum. Ille spem ponit in ydololatria, et iste spem constituit in pecunia. Ille timet mutilare symulachrum, et iste timet minuere thesaurum.
> (The Apostle correctly defines avarice as 'enslavement to idols' [Cf. Eph 5.5]. Just as the idol-worshipper serves a statue, so the avaricious man serves treasure. For the former diligently increases his idolatrous devotions and the latter freely increases his mound of money. The former tends to his statue with every diligence and the latter guards his treasure with every care. The former places his hope in idolatry and the latter places his hope in money. The former fears the mutilation of his statue and the latter fears the diminution of his treasure.)[61]

Aquinas' commentary on Ephesians 5:5 – *avarus quod est idolorum servitus* (an avaricious person, which is a serving of idols) – differs in that, in accordance with his systematic appropriation of Aristotle, he conducts his analysis of avarice and idolatry in terms of ends.

> Nota quod vocat hic avaritiam idololatriam, quoniam idololatria est, quando honor soli Deo debitus, impenditur creaturae. Nunc autem Deo dupliciter honor debetur, scilicet ut in eo finem nostrum constituamus, et ut in eo fiduciam nostram finaliter ponamus; ergo qui hoc in creaturis ponit, reus est idololatriae. Hoc autem facit avarus, qui finem suum in re creata ponit, et etiam totam suam fiduciam.
> (Note that here he calls avarice idolatry, since it is idolatory when honour due to God alone is devoted to a creature. Now, however, honour should be due to God twice over, that is in order that we should place our end in Him, and in order that we put our trust purposefully in Him. Therefore whoever puts it in creatures is guilty of idolatry. This is what the avaricious person does; he puts his end and also all his hope in a created thing.)[62]

While *pecuniativa* is using money for the wrong end, for the acquisition of money as opposed to the provision of sufficient goods for survival, avarice is the sin of a person whose own end itself is misplaced, since the nature of humans is our end, which should be orientated towards God. Thus avarice and idolatry are

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[61] Innocent III (Lotario dei Segni), *De miseria condicionis humanae*, ed. by Robert E. Lewis, The Chaucer Library (Athens GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1978), II. 15; p. 163.
[62] Thomas Aquinas, *In Eph.*, in *Super Epistolas*, c. 5, l. 3; II. 67. Elsewhere, in the *Summa theologiae*, when justifying his claim that avarice is not the worst sin, Thomas is keen to stress that avarice is not identical to idolatry as it involves desire of objects to use them rather than to worship them. He claims, rather, that it is comparable (cf. *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 118, a.5 ad 4).

unnatural in the same way that usury is. All sin, though, is unnatural and this does not quite explain the connection between usury and avarice, a connection that lies in idolatry. While Thomas does not spell out the case explicitly, the connection can more clearly be seen in Giles of Rome's sermon on avarice, in which Aquinas' influence can be seen. Avarice is like idolatry in the following ways:

> Nam ipse [avarus] plus diligit pecuniam quam dei bonitatem, plus confidit de numma quam de dei potestate, plus honorat numismata quam divinam paternitatem, magis obedit denario et plus timet perdere denarium quam divinam dominationem, potius vult servire pecunie quam deo. Propter quod sicut gulosorum venter est eorum deus, de quibus ait Apostolus: quorum deus venter est, sic avarorum deus est nummus. Unde super illo verbo *Ad Ephesios* 5: aut avarus, quod est ydolorum servitus, ait glossa quod deus avari est nummus.
> (For the avaritious man esteems money more than God's goodness, trusts more in coin than in the power of God, honours cash more than the divine fatherhood**.** He obeys currency more and fears losing it more than he does divine mastery; he wants to serve money rather than God. Because of this, just as the stomach of gluttons is their god – about whom the Apostle says that their god is their stomach – so the god of the avaricious is coin. Hence, concerning that sentence from Ephesians 5, 'the avaricious person, which is a serving of idols', the gloss says that the god of the avaricious person is coin.)[63]

According to the soundest theological authorities, then, the god of the avaricious man is coin. The end of avarice is placed in an external artificial thing, as opposed to gluttony or lust, whose end is internal and physiological and whose desire can be sated, at least temporarily. It is the focus on the physical, created aspect of avaricious desire, coin itself, through the association of avarice with idolatry that allows us to gain an understanding of how the special property of usury operates.

> [Y]dolatria non solum est valde detestabile peccatum in se considerata, quia per eam quis contempnit maximum, scilicet deum, sed etiam est valde detestabile peccatum, quia per eam quis

[63] Giles of Rome, 'sermones de tribus vitiis mundi', in *Omnia opera: I. 6; Repertorio dei sermoni*, ed. by Concetta Luna, Testi e studi per il 'Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevii, 11 (Florence: Olschki, 1990), pp. 339-87, p. 366; 291-98.

> se supponit minimo bono, ut ydolo, quod est bonum corporale, inanimatum et insensibile. Et quia avaritia est quedam ydolatria, iuxta illud *Ad Ephesios 5*, avarus, quod est ydolorum servitus, non habet hereditatem in regno Christi. Si bene consideramus modum ydolatrie et modum avaritie, dicemus quod sicut ydolatra graviter peccat, quia se supponit ydolo, quod est bonum minimum, quia est bonum corporale, inanimatum et insensibile, sic et avarus graviter peccat, quia se supponit nummo, qui est bonum minimum, cum sit quid corporale, inanimatum et insensibile.[64]
> (Idolatry is not only considered to be an intensely detestable sin in itself, because through it a person scorns what is the greatest, namely God, but it is also an intensely detestable sin because through it a person places him- or herself under a minimal good, an idol, which is a corporeal, inanimate, and insensible good. And because avarice is a kind of idolatry, just as it says in Ephesians 5, 'the avaricious person, which is a serving of idols, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ'. If we consider well the workings of idolaty and avarice, we might say that just as the idolator sins grievously because he places himself beneath an idol, which is a minimal good, because it is a corporeal, inanimate, and insensible good, so the avaricious person sins grievously, because he places him- or herself under coin, which is a minimal good, being corporal, inanimate, and insensible.

Idols do not respond to prayers and are never satisfied, being inanimate and insensible, and the same is true of coin. It is in the transference of the faith and honour due to God to the artificial insensible thing that is so wholly unnatural and which is also infinite in a way that, for example, gluttony is not. Giles goes on to use Thomas' analysis of avarice in relation to ends, drawn from Aristotle's philosophy, to justify his analysis:

> Primo ergo avarus plus diligit nummum quam deum. Nam ille plus diligitur in quo finalis intentio ponitur. Et in illo finalis intentio <ponitur> quod in infinitum amatur. Nam secundum Philosophum, in primo *Politicorum*, hec est differentia inter finem et ea que sunt ad finem, quia finis est quod diligitur in infinitum, sed ea que sunt ad finem non diliguntur in infinitum, sed amantur secundum regulam et mensuram ipsius finis. Avarus ergo, qui non satiatur pecunia, diligit pecuniam in infinitum; ergo in pecunia ponit finalem intentionem, quia nullus potest sibi constituere duos ultimos fines. Si avarus suam finalem intentionem ponit in bono pecunie, oportet quod eius finalis intentio recedat et se avertat a bono divino. Quare plus diligit pecuniam quam deum, quia ponit

[64] 'De tribus vitiis', p. 360. 86-97.

> suam finalem intentionem in pecunia et non in deo. Bene ergo dictum est quod appetentes cupiditatem et desiderantes pecuniam errant a fide, quia sunt similes infidelibus, cum diligant plus creaturam, id est pecuniam, quam deum.
> (First, then, the avaricious person esteems coin more than God. For that thing is most valued in which the final intention is placed. And the final intention is placed in that thing which is loved to infinity. For according to Aristotle, in *Politics*, I, this is the difference between the end and those things which are used toward an end, because the end is that thing which is esteemed to infinity, but those things which are used toward an end are not esteemed to infinity, but are loved according to the rule and measure of their end. The avaricious person, therefore, who is not sated by money, esteems money to infinity; therefore he places his final intention in money because no one can align themself to two final ends. If the avaricious person places his final intention in monetary good it is necessary that his final intention withdraws and turns away from the divine good. Hence, he esteems money above God, because he places his final intention in money and not in God. It is rightly said therefore that those going after greed and desiring money stray from the faith, because they are similar to the unfaithful, because they esteem a creature, money, more than God.)[65]

This analysis of avarice reflects the analyses seen in Albert and Aquinas about the use of money and wealth-getting, although it should be read in the context of the extended treatment of the relationship between idolatry and avarice that took place earlier in the sermon. Avarice, for Giles, is an obsessive fetishisation of the physical aspect of coin itself, of the artificial creation, outside the boundaries of nature. This is true both of human nature, which should have God as its end and not money, which thus becomes a false god or idol, and of the nature of money, which should have the provision of goods for survival as its end. Aristotle noted how usury is the most hated form of wealth-getting, being concerned only with money itself. In his writings on money, Bonaventura, the Franciscan theologian, places particular emphasis on the physical nature of money and its seductive power, noting how even a child if offered a choice between money and bread will go for the money.[66] Someone engaged in the totally unnatural practice of usury, handling money for its own sake and for no other end than its

[65] 'De tribus vitiis', p. 367. 299-311.
[66] Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*, V. 3; p. 354, in Vol. 5 of *Opera Omnia*, ed. by Fathers of the College of St Bonaventure (Quaracchi: Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1882-1902), 10 vols. Cf. *EMS*, pp. 162-63.

reproduction, will be particularly led astray from God. As both Aquinas and Giles put it, the usurer puts his faith in that seductive idol, that is coin, *nummus*, both literally and metonymically for money generally, *pecunia*. Aquinas is not simply prompted by casual hatred of usurers in his comment on 1 Tim 6:10, that usury in particular draws one away from the faith. Rather, his comment is informed by the repeated motif in medieval theology of the idolatry of avarice, and the unnatural placing of one's end in an artificial creature.[67]

USURY IN THE *ROSE*

I have been limiting discussion of money, usury and avarice to those aspects which touch on the concepts of nature and of infinity, following the main preoccupation of commentaries on Aristotle in the 1260s and 1270s in their discussion of the ethics of money. The *Roman de la rose* concerns itself with Aristotle's discussions of money and engages with contemporary academic debates about ethics and money in a serious and sustained way, albeit in a way that differs from the thinkers we have so far considered.

Ian Wei has highlighted how, despite some expressions of hostility towards trade and profit-making, Parisian 'theologians did much to justify trade and the work of the merchant,'[68] and has shown how for Aquinas in particular trade was 'morally neutral' and profit when used correctly could be justified.[69] Significantly, he shows how thinkers in Paris allowed for a certain accommodation with usury, and how the restitution of profits made from usurious money was not deemed necessary (as had been the case for writers such as Thomas of Chobham and William of Auxerre).[70] No such accommodation is found in the *Rose*, whose frequent references to usury and usurers has gone

[67] There is another, more formal way in which usury links to idolatry. As seen in Thomas' analysis of *campsoria* (money-changing), in which money used to generate more money becomes its own end, and thus its own cause. This makes money into an infinite, self-causing being, uncannily similar to God. Money starts looking both blasphemous and idolatrous in this context, being given properties that no creature can have, that are the exclusive preserve of God.
[68] Wei, p. 298.
[69] *Ibid*., p. 300; cf. *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 77, a. 4; *De malo*, q. 13, a. 4, ad 6.
[70] Wei, pp. 345-53.

largely unnoticed by critics.[71] Money and possessions, arising after humankind's fall from the Golden Age, are frowned upon, and greed and especially usury are depicted with a consistency and ferocity that goes beyond the portrayal of any other crime. The treatment of usurers as the worst sinners and the implicit use of the usurer as a synecdoche for sinners in general makes sense only in relation to the ethical framework of the *Rose* in which nature is used as the guiding principle for the judging of actions and in which, in accordance with the thirteenth-century intellectual context, usury is an act wholly against nature. Before a closer examination of the section in the *Rose* that deals with money, greed, and usury in a more systematic way, I would like to draw attention to the primacy of usury as a sin in the *Rose*'s moral framework, particularly in the mouths of Faux Semblant, Nature, and Genius. On three occasions, Faux Semblant describes how he neglects the comfort of the poor in order to visit the ailing rich usurer, from whom he hopes to extract money.

> Et s'aucuns vient qui me repreigne
> por quoi dou povre me refreigne,
> savez vos conment j'en eschape?
> Je faz entendant par ma chape
> que li riches est entechiez
> plus que li povres de pechiez,
> s'a greigneur mestier de conseill,
> por ce i vois, por ce le conseill.
> (And if someone comes to reproach me because I shun the poor man, do you know how I get out of it? I suggest by the cloak I wear that the rich man is more stained with sin that the poor man and has greater need of advice, and for this reason, I go to see him, and for this reason I advise him.) (11231-38)

The usurer here represents any rich person, or perhaps more accurately, the most hated kind of rich person, just as for Aristotle usury is the most hated form of retail trade (*kapêlikê*), or for Aquinas and Albert the most hated form of money-changing (*campsoria*). The rich man is a greater sinner than the poor man, Faux Semblant suggests, although his justification is hardly reliable given its end which is to excuse his attempt to accumulate wealth (*chrêmatistikê*).

[71] One exception is Scott Joseph Hiley, 'Usury and Economies of Literature in Medieval France' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Yale University, 2007).

However, given the Aristotelian framework which suggests that the accumulation of surplus money goes against the nature of money, Faux Semblant's comment seems slightly more credible. That the rich are greater sinners than the poor is possibly suggested by the fact that Faux Semblant like the usurer, or the rich man more generally, is motivated by avarice– '[e]n aquerre est toute mon entente' (11535) – which causes him to sin in avoiding the comfort of the poor for the sake of extracting money from another wealthy sinner.[72] Predatory and avaricious hypocrites do not simply extract money from the rich, however. They prey on the poor, as well, and in making that point, Faux Semblant again takes the usurer as the first and exemplary form of sinner.

> Mes esgardez que de deniers
> ont usurier en leur greniers,
> faussonier et termaieür,
> baillif, bedel, prevost, maieur:
> tuit vivent pres que de rapine.
> Li menuz pueple les encline,
> et cil conme lou les deveurent;
> trestuit sus les povres genz queurent,
> n'est nus qui despoillier nes voille,
> tuit s'affublent de leur despoille,
> trestuit de leur sustance hument,
> sanz eschauder touz vis les plument;
> li plus fors le plus foible robe.
> (But look how many coins usurers have in their storehouses, as do forgers and moneylenders, bailifs, beadles, provosts, mayors: all live more or less from plunder. The little people bow down before them, and they devour them like wolves; all of them rush towards the poor people, and every single one wants to skin them, and they all dress themselves in their skins; they all suck up their life-blood. Without heating them they pluck them alive; the strongest robs the weakest.) (11507-19)[73]

The association of usury with robbery is not original to the *Rose*,[74] and nor is the image of powerful sinners devouring the poor like wolves, which is alluding to

[72] The parallels between usury and the hypocrisy of Faux Semblant are examined by Hiley, pp. 239-54.
[73] Cf. pp. 64-66 for discussion of the implications of the image of rapacious wolves.
[74] Peter Lombard judges usury to be a subcategory of robbery (*rapina*) at *Sententiae*, III, d. 37, c. 5 (142), 3; II. 211. Cf. *EMS*, p. 68, and also *ibid.* pp. 112 and 123 for discussion of the same position as taken by Raymond de Peñafort and Alexander of Hales, respectively.

Ezekiel 22:27, in which the prophet says of Jerusalem,

> principes eius in medio illius quasi lupi rapientes praedam ad effundendum sanguinem et perdendas animas et avare sectanda lucra.
> (Her princes in the midst of her, are like wolves ravening the prey to shed blood, and to destroy souls, and to run after gains through covetousness.)[75]

It is avarice that causes the powerful to devour other humans in their attempt to satisfy their desire. The motif of eating, especially given Ezekiel's focus on blood, seems to suggest more than simply theft, but seems to encompass violence as well.[76] In the *Rose* usury is the sin most associated with avarice, as in Thomas Aquinas' theology. Faux Semblant also mentions usurers just after heretics amongst the sinners that he blackmails for food (11693-11730), but it is not simply Faux Semblant who, informed by his avaricious ruses, sees usurers as exemplary sinners. Nature discusses the need for free will if God is to act justly by rewarding virtue and punishing vice (17125-56). The first sinners mentioned are the usurers (17146), and usurers are the only group of sinners to be mentioned explicitly in Nature's discussion of the theme of judgement, justice and the punishments in Hell (19289). In both cases (as at 5035-36),[77] 'usurier' (usurer) is rhymed with 'droiturier' (just). In Nature's speech, it is to demonstrate the paradox of punishment without free will, and in the second instance, Nature uses it to show how God, if he were simply merciful and not just, would not punish usurers. In both cases, usury is the exemplary crime to be rhymed in opposition to justice. Usury is certainly not the only crime attacked in the *Rose*, and not the most prominent (that honour would go to sodomy condemned at such length by Genius). It does, though, appear to occupy a special place as a metonym for sin – deviation from nature – in the *Rose*. In the Golden Age – the era of a totally natural being – neither money exists nor private property whose organisation depends on it, as is mentioned by Ami (9463-9508)

[75] For more on this theme, cf. chapter 2. This passage in the *Rose* may well be alluding to Boethius, *DCP*, IV, pr. 3: Avaritia fervet alienarum opum violentus ereptor? Lupi similem dixeris. [The violent plunderer of others' wealth burns with avarice: you would say he was like a wolf.]
[76] Let us note that Aquinas cites this passage while discussing the nature of avarice in *ST*, IIa IIae q. 118 a. 3 co.
[77] Cf. p. 187.

and Genius (20095-96), the two characters who discuss it in any detail.[78] This fits in both with the representation of the first humans in the garden of Eden in Genesis as well as with the concept of natural law, according to which all property is held in common. While the vast majority of theologians and canon lawyers made it quite clear that the communality of goods in natural law was not applicable in these post-lapsarian times, the *Rose* is insistent, if not always totally consistent, in its referral back to Nature and the natural as a source of ethics. Ownership of property may be permitted by the theologians, but for Jean de Meun it is still a morally treacherous concept. His repeated use of the Edenic Golden Age as a guide for human morals may not be wholly sincere, but it recurs too many times to be dismissed simply as a joke.[79]

Usury and money are particularly important for thinking about the framework of the natural within which the *Rose* can treat questions of ethics. Avarice is not simply the root of all evil but it entails the unnatural pursuit of the artificial. In this sense it is against nature both in terms of ethics and in terms of metaphysics, just as it is for Albert and Thomas. In the following analysis I hope to show just how Aristotelian the *Rose* is in its consideration of ethical questions (even if it is not exclusively Aristotelian).

RAISON TEACHES *POLITICS*, I TO AMANT

Right at the beginning of his continuation of the *Rose*, Jean re-introduces Raison, who, after some 600 lines outlining the irrationality of love and the folly of trusting in the goods brought by Fortune, comes to discuss the nature of wealth and property. What follows is a 300-line discussion of the use and and nature of money, which entails a close and sensitive reading of Book I of Aristotle's *Politics*. If the use of the Edenic Golden Age provides a space for thinking about moral values outside the sphere of Sacred Doctrine, Raison here supplies a philosophical underpinning that provides the ethics of the natural with a systematic Aristotelian framework. One of the most radical aspects of the *Roman de la rose*'s project of using allegorical poetry to discuss philosophy is that it

[78] Ami does so at 8325-8425 and 9463-9500 and Genius at 20065-96. Raison, the only other character to touch on the Golden Age, alludes to it only briefly at 5505-07.
[79] Cf. chapter 1, p. 35.

enables Jean to outline a value-system on the foundation of the Philosopher's writings. Aquinas rose to the challenge posed by newly-translated Aristotelian texts in the thirteenth century by incorporating Aristotle into his thought and by using the systematic rigour of Aristotelianism as a handmaid in the service of theology. Jean uses Aristotle as a handmaid in the service of an ethics of the natural. This value-system enables the *Rose* to investigate problems not mentioned in Aristotle through a coherent Aristotelian system that provides the basis for both theorising and satirising. This was not possible in the highly regulated sphere of Latin philosophy, not only because of the rigorous surveillance of potentially heterodox teachings in the University of Paris, but also because of the generic imperative of philosophical commentary which required a line by line exegesis of the text at hand. The section between verses 4945 and 5236 of the *Rose* is saturated with Aristotle's philosophy, even as it self-consciously draws attention to itself as poetry. It is certainly not a line-by-line commentary in the manner of Aquinas or Albert, and the poetic nature of Jean's reading of Aristotle enables the philosophy of money, avarice and usury to be used to understand the philosophy of reproduction, sexual desire and, sodomy, as well as the larger overarching system of natural ethics in the *Rose*.

Raison and Amant will go on to wrangle over the relationship between words and things in their famous exchange about the propriety of openly discussing testicles or holy relics.[80] Here, though, the true meaning of 'richece' (wealth) is at stake, as it is in Book I of the *Politics*. Raison opens with what appears to be an oxymoronic paradox:

> Si ne fet pas richece riche
> celui qui en tresor la fiche,
> car soffisance seulemant
> fet home vivre richemant.
> (Riches do not make him rich who identifies them with treasure,
> for sufficiency alone is what makes man live richly.) (4945-48)

It seems to be incontrovertible that it is exactly riches that make one rich and to claim the opposite seems a logical impossibility, like the paradoxical definition of

[80] Cf. pp. 115-16.

love offered by Raison shortly before.[81] Albert, as we have seen, makes it clear that to use money for the accumulation of money is an offense against reason as it is unnaturally giving money an end that is infinite, without end. Raison seems to be agreeing. The paradox of riches not making one rich is clarified in that this offence against logic and reason only occurs when one identifies riches with treasure, with the accumulation of coin.[82] To see wealth in this limitless accumulation of coin is aganst logic and *ratio* and it is *soffisance* (*sufficentia*) that makes true riches, as Aristotle, Aquinas, and Albert all made clear. Raison goes on to justify this through several examples, starting with a merchant so scorned by Aristotle:

> si te puis bien dire conment,
> qu'il en est espoir marchaanz,
> si est ses queurs si meschaanz
> qu'il s'en est soussiez assez
> ainz que cil tas fust amassez,
> ne ne cesse de soussier
> d'acraistre et de monteplier,
> que ja mes assez n'en avra,
> ja tant aquerre n'en savra.
> (And I can easily tell you how. Let us say there is a merchant,
> whose heart is so miserable that he is racked with worry until his
> pile is amassed, and even after that he continues to worry about
> increasing and multiplying for he will never have enough of it,
> however well he knows how to acquire it.) (4952-60)

One reason for Amant and Raison's later dispute, as discussed in the previous chapter, may be that Amant is not of sufficient intellectual mettle to follow Raison's teaching, so warped are his intellective powers by sexual desire, and this could explain why Raison feels she has to resort to the techniques of rhetoric rather than dialectic, the *exemplum* rather than the syllogism.

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[81] Cf. p. 123.

[82] Aristotle makes it quite clear at *Politics*, I.8.1257b10-17 that true weath and money are different things: 'Others maintain that coined money is a mere sham, a thing not natural, but conventional only, because, if the users substitute another commodity for it, it is worthless, and because it is not useful as a means to any of the necessities of life, and, indeed, he who is rich in coin may often be in want of necessary food. But how can that be wealth of which a man may have a great abundance and yet perish with hunger, like Midas in the fable, whose insatiable prayer turned everything that was set before him into gold?'

The orality of Raison's speech is of critical importance to the presentation of knowledge and philosophy in the *Rose* and before exploring her Aristotelian discourse further, I would like to take a moment to tease out a few of its implications. Rather than the stylistic sparseness of a written commentary, the content is fleshed out and explicated for the education of the audience. Raison is giving a lecture to her pupil based closely on Aristotle. La Vieille will later cast herself in a similar position, lecturing on sexual ethics and Aristotelian physiology to Bel Acueil. As Bel Acueil listens, apparently enthusiastically to her advice on how women can make the most of their bodies for profit, La Vieille positions herself as a university master:

> [C]ar bien sai que ceste parole
> sera leüe an mainte escole,
> biau tres douz filz, se vos vivez,
> car bien voi que vos escrivez
> ou livre du queur volentiers
> touz mes enseignemenz antiers,
> et quant de moi departiraiz,
> se Dieu plest, encor an liraiz
> et an seraiz mestres con gié –
> je vos doign de lire congié [...]
> (For I know well that this speech will be read in many schools, my beautiful, very sweet son, if you live, for I see well that you willingly write all my teachings in their entirety in the book of the heart, and when you leave my side, may it please God, you might read them again and be a master of them as I am – I grant you permission to lecture [...]) (13467-76)[83]

Having learnt all la Vieille's lessons, Bel Acueil will have a licence to 'lire', to give lectures just as la Vieille does and Raison does, 'maugré tretouz les chanceliers' (despite all the chancellors) (13477), and to teach schoolboys in wardrobes and attics (13477-86).[84] Alongside sermons, given particularly by Faux Semblant and by Genius, it does not seem unreasonable to see the majority of the figures in the *Rose* as giving parodies of university lectures or sermons on different and often contradictory aspects of philosophy or human knowledge. Amor, moreover,

[83] I have slightly altered the punctuation of Lecoy's edition of this passage, while consulting his base manuscript, BnF, français 1573, fol. 113v.
[84] La Vieille's reference to chancellors is undoubtedly an allusion to Étienne Tempier, promulgator of the Condemnations of 1270 and 1277, who, as well as being Bishop of Paris at the time, was Chancellor of the University.

dubiously claims Jean de Meun as a lecturer in the school of love rather than that of philosophy or Raison (10618-24). Jean will be 'endoctrinez' (learned) with Amor's 'sciance' (knowledge) (10610) and will 'en lira proprement' (lecture on it appropriately) (10618). 'Lire' is to read, but also to proclaim, to expound, to lecture, or to teach, and this recurrent trope of lecturing links the written word with the spoken word and poetic creation with education. As la Vieille lectures to Bel Acueil, her pupil writes her words down diligently in his heart in order that he may himself read them out (or lecture) at a later date.[85] Genius ostensibly reads a speech dictated to him by Nature, a fact that often gets forgotten as he becomes more and more carried away by his theme. The use of *exempla* in the education of Amant (by Ami as much as by Raison), of Bel Acueil, or of any of the audiences in and of the *Rose* is an indication of the enunciated, rhetorical nature of the vast majority of Jean's *Rose*.[86] Far from sharing the implicit claims of a fixed, purely rational progression, delivered by an objective third person voice found in university textbooks and *Summae*, the lectures in the *Rose* are conditioned by the specific, contingent circumstances of their enunciation. With this in mind, I would like to suggest that Raison expounds Aristotle's *Politics* in a freer and more expansive way than that of other medieval Aristotelian commentators. This is made possible in part by the space opened up by Jean de Meun (and Guillaume de Lorris) writing oral readings (lectures) that follow the imperfect and twisting paths of human spoken discourse without the implicit claims of impassive omniscience in written philosophical readings of Aristotle's texts.[87]

To return to Raison's lecture, she immediately follows the negative *exemplum* of the merchant who never has enough with the contrasting positive model of the person who is happy with what he has, lives in the present and puts his faith in God that he will have enough to get by, hoping to reach Heaven after death. In order to illustrate this, she talks about the Parisian dockers who are –

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[85] Cf. *DPN*, X.165: 'Iam mea oratio cartule tue mentis inscripsit qualiter ocii dampnosa pernicies Venerem educauit emphaticam[...] ('Now my speech has inscribed on the little bit of parchemnt of your mind how the harmful disaster of idleness led grandiloquent Venus astray[...]')
[86] Cf. pp. 93-95.
[87] Cf. pp. 1-4.

counterintuitively, again – truly rich. They work all day, carefree, and spend all their money in the tavern, thinking only of providing for their immediate needs of having sufficiency. Provided that they do not trick or steal from people, these 'ribaut' (scoundrels/vagabonds) (5018) are exemplary. They have enough to 'vivere et bene vivere' as Albert might put it, although Raison has managed to undermine her point somewhat. The point she is trying to prove is, in one sense, philosophically sound in the Aristotelian tradition – that it is *soffisance* alone that is the cause of wealth – but in the course of her speech she has ended up catching herself out. Her choice of the *exemplum* is not ideal and she has found herself arguing for a state of permanent drunkenness, for a life lived in taverns with a dependence on alcohol.[88] The slipperiness of the performed spoken teaching is again in evidence, although Raison soldiers bravely on. These 'ribaut de Greve':

> [...] vivent si con vivre doivent –
> tuit cil sunt riche en habundance,
> s'il cuident avoir soffisance,
> plus, ce set Dex li droituriers,
> que s'il estoient usuriers,
> car usurier, bien le t'afiche,
> ne porroient pas estre riche,
> ainz sunt tuit povre et soffroiteus,
> tant sunt aver et covoiteus.
> (live just as they should live – all are rich in abundance if they believe themselves to have sufficency. They are richer, as the just God knows, than if they were usurers, for usurers, let me tell you clearly, could not be rich, and so they are poor and suffer, so avaricious and covetous are they.) (5032-40)

The automatic categorisation of usurers as avaricious and covetous should not be surprising, given the comments of Albert, Aquinas, and Giles, nor should the association between true wealth and *sufficientia*, which also draws on Philosophia's account of wealth and sufficiency in the *De consolatione Philosophiae*, III, pr. 3. Raison does add one element, namely the emphasis on the desires and fears of a subject being the cause of either wealth or poverty. The usurer is poor because he desires too much, because he is too attached to acquisition, and the docker is rich only if he believes himself to have sufficiency.

[88] 'Ribaut' itself is certainly not free from negative connotations; Amor less than flatteringly calls Faux Semblant 'rois des ribauz' at his court. Cf. p. 135.

This emphasis on the spiritual aspect of wealth and poverty chimes in with the medieval Aristotelian association of the spiritual sin of avarice with the active sin of usury which it spawns. However, it does much more than this; Raison's focus on desire that follows makes possible the comparison between avarice and lust, between usury and sodomy. It is also a striking example of the possibilities of writing philosophy in poetic form and evidence of Jean de Meun's project to rework Aristotle so as to allow for Aristotelian readings of specifically medieval concerns not discussed by the Philosopher, notably courtly love and the medieval category of sodomy.

The *bons viveurs* are again contrasted with the merchant, motivated by *chrêmatistikê*, who

> [...] son queur a mis en tel guerre
> qu'il art touz vis de plus aquerre
> ne ja n'avra assez aquis.
> (has put his heart in such a state of warfare that he burns incessantly to acquire more and he will never have enough.) (5043-45)

The same infinity of desire, picked up so strongly by Albert and Thomas, is in evidence here for the merchant. Raison goes on:

> C'est la destrece, c'est l'ardure,
> c'est l'angoisse qui toujors dure,
> c'est la douleur, c'est la bataille
> qui li detranche la coraille
> et le destraint en tel defaut :
> quant plus aquiert, plus li defaut.
> (It is distress, it is burning, it is anguish which lasts forever, it is pain, it is a battle which tears his heart into strips and torments him with this lack: when he acquires more, more he lacks.) (5055-60)

We have also just been told that of the merchant that,

> [e]nprise a merveilleuse peine,
> il bee a boivre toute Seine,

donc ja tant boivre ne pourra
que toujors plus en demourra.
(his is a marvelously painful business, for he desires to drink the Seine dry, while he will never be able to drink so much and there will always be more left over.) (5051-54)

There are no ends: the merchant burns '*touz vis*' (incessantly) and '*ja* n'avra assez' (he will *never* have enough). This desire for wealth, *chrêmatistikê*, or possibly even avarice, '*toujors* dure' (lasts *forever*); the river the merchant wishes metaphorically to drink can never be drained since '*toujors* plus en demourra' (there will *always* be more remaining]) The supposedly idealised physical drinking of the 'ribaut' who works by the Seine is finite and natural and, even if potentially reprehensible, can be contrasted favourably to this infinite, unquenchable thirsting of the spirit that seeks impossibly to drain the natural world to satisfy an incessantly burning desire.[89] If the *Rose* makes the same point as Albert and Aquinas in discussing the infinity, and hence unnaturalness, of the acquisition of money, it is using the possibilities of poetic language, of metaphor to form links and associations not possible within the stricter sphere of logical philosophical language, as will be discussed in chapter 5.

We will shortly proceed to considering how the burning desire of avarice becomes entwined with questions of sexual desire in the *Rose*, but before doing so it is important to prove the centrality of Aristotle's *Politics* to Raison's discussion.[90] It might be possible to argue that Raison's discourse on money and usury is not necessarily responding directly to Aristotle's text, but could be engaging with Aristotelian currents in thought contemporary to Jean de Meun's composition of the *Rose*. Raison, however, unambiguously yokes her analysis of money, usury and avarice to Aristotle. She moves from merchants, via lawyers and doctors, and even those who preach 'por aquerre / honors ou graces ou

[89] Metaphors of fire and burning for desire run throughout the *Rose* and have yet to be fully investigated.
[90] Raison's discussion of riches is also informed by *DCP*'s Lady Philosophia. In II, pr. 5 she discusses how riches can impoverish their owner and how money is best used by spending it. Boethius follows this section immediately with a metrum mourning the loss of the prepecuniary Golden Age.

richeces' (to acquire honours or graces or riches) (5072-73),[91] to the more general category of 'entasseors' (hoarders) (5090). Having made the point that '[l]'avoir n'est preuz for por despendre' (wealth has no value except when it is spent) (5137), she says of these 'entasseors' that

> [a]us richeces font grant ledure
> quant il lor tolent leur nature.
> Leur nature est qu'el doivent corre
> por genz aidier et por secorre
> sanz estre a usure prestees.
> (they do great injury to riches when they remove their nature.
> Their nature is that they should run to help people and to save
> them without being lent usuriously.) (5153-57)

Raison is here referring directly to the *Politics*, I. 8, where the Philosopher writes:

> Of the art of acquisition then there is one kind which by nature is a part of the management of a household, in so far as the art of household management must either find ready to hand, or itself provide, such things necessary to life, and useful for the community of the family or state, as can be stored.[92]

The natural end of acquiring riches is to alleviate need. Raison does not, though, talk of the 'end' of money, but of its 'nature'. As mentioned earlier, Aristotle stated in the *Physics*, II. 2 that a thing's end can be said to be its nature. The same point is, in fact, made in the *Politics* as well: 'The nature of a thing is its end',[93] and Raison is combining ideas from various places in Book I of the *Politics* in a form understandable to her putative pupil, Amant. This is, in fact, a condensed summary of Aristotle's philosophy of money, as expressed in *Politics*, I (with a mild Christian tinge), right down to the inclusion of usury as the most hateful and unnatural use of money as mentioned in *Politics*, I. 10. To make the end of riches the acquisition of more riches is to use them against their nature, unnaturally, to do to them 'grant ledure'; using things against their ends is, according to Raison,

[91] This seems to be a veiled attack on mendicant friars, anticipating that of Faux Semblant. The link to Faux Semblant is strengthened by Raison's claim that of he who preaches for money that '[d]eceüz est tex decevierres' [such a deceiver is deceived] (5079), which is picked up again by Faux Semblant, dressed as a friar, who claims that he deceives deceivers (11521).
[92] *Politics*, I. 8, 1256b26-31.
[93] *Politics*, I.2, 1252b32.

to render them despicable and against nature. The *Politics* is not simply being summarised, translated, or commented on. Usury is framed as the epitome of the misuse of money, just as Raison, Faux Semblant and Nature all chose the usurer as the exemplary figure of the sinner. Whereas, for Aristotle, usury was the most 'hateful' misuse of money, Jean de Meun, in his poetic presentation, has made usury the most 'unnatural' use of money, allowing it to be situated within a systematic ethical framework based on the Aristotelian principle of the natural. In the Aristotelian framework of the late thirteenth century, the concepts of nature, ends, and infinity for thinking about sin hold not just for money but rather they are general and generalising principles that apply to all human behaviour. Here in the *Rose*, this Aristotelianism also allows for the consideration of sin outside of the explicit realm of theology. We have, instead, an ethics based on philosophical principles available to natural reason. In the Introduction, we suggested that some of the Parisian Artists, under the influence of Averroes, attempted to establish philosophy as an autonomous discipline. It is in this context that we should understand the *Rose* as a product of the Arts Faculty. It attempts to answer ethical and philosophical questions in an autonomous secular space, figured as a *locus amoenus*, made possible by the fictional veil of the dream-narrative.

This is not to say that discussion of Holy Doctrine is absent from the *Roman de la rose*. Having proved her point through argumentation, Raison goes on to allude to Ephesians 5: 5 in a curious allegorisation of money that takes the discussion of ethics outside of the spheres both of philosophical and theological discourse as commonly understood in the Middle Ages to place it in the realm of poetry. Coin itself, 'peccune', is made into an allegorical figure. Raison describes how those seeking money suffer 'sanz cessier' (without ceasing) (5171) and then goes to present Lady Coin sitting on her throne:

> Ainsint Peccune se revanche,
> conme dame et raïne et franche,
> des sers qui la tienent enclose.
> En pez se tient et se repose
> et fet les meschaanz vaillier
> et soussier et travaillier.

> Souz piez si cors les tient et donte
> qu'ele a l'ennor, et cil la honte
> et le torment et le domage
> qui languissent en son servage.
> (Thus Coin avenges herself– like a lady, a queen, a freewoman –
> over the serfs who keep her hidden away. She is at peace and rests
> and makes the unfortunates struggle and worry. She holds them
> close under her feet and tames them so that she has the honour
> and those who languish in servitude to her have the shame and the
> torment and the damage.) (5175-84)

Those who give themselves over to avarice have made money into their lady, giving up their natural freedom and enslaving themselves before her in a manner both shameful and painful, and recalls Paul's description of avarice as *servitus idolorum*. This foray into allegory may carry associations of oral performance, such as sermons,[94] as well as gesturing towards the slippery world of metaphors found in lyric poetry, as employed by Guillaume de Lorris in the first part of the *Rose*.[95] This self-conscious allegory, when taken with the integumental reading of Daedalus and Icarus that follows it (5196-5203), is a provocative assertion that for all the philosophy, we are dealing with a *poem*, a rhetorical text that has its own way of presenting knowledge outside of what was possible in the techniques of the institutional philosophical writing.[96] The allegorical figure of Peccune makes it possible to link the theme of avarice and money to other themes in a way that complements the Aristotelian systematising discussed above. The trope of slavery, or at least servitude, in opposite to *naturel franchise* reinforces the concept of nature as an ethical yardstick in the *Rose*.[97] La Vieille will later go on to describe how women are by nature free, but are bound by laws (or society) that have taken away this natural liberty (13845-48), whereas Raison will shortly go on to put forward a different view, namely that it is sin that removes freedom and that justice actually strives against what she terms 'Malice'

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[94] An example would be Alain of Lille's *De arte praedicatoria*, where in his sixth sermon (on avarice), he makes fortune, nature, charity, and the elements into allegorical speaking figures (in a manner similar to his more 'poetic' works, the *De planctu Naturae* and the *Anticlaudianus, PL*, 210.123C-125A.

[95] For Guillaume's use of tropes from courtly literature, especially lyric poetry, cf. Hult, *Self-Fulfilling Prophecies*, pp. 186-262, especially pp. 208-50; Emmanuèle Baumgartner, 'L'absente de tous bouquets', in *Études sur le Roman de la rose de Guillaume de Lorris*, ed. by Jean Dufournet, Collection Unichamp, 4 (Geneva/Paris: Slatkine/Champion, 1984), pp. 37-52.

[96] Cf. chapter 3.

[97] Cf. the concept of 'naturel franchise', discussed at pp. 56-57.

qui fu mere des seigneuries,
dom les franchises sunt peries.
(who was mother of temporal authorities, by which freedoms are lost.) (5535-36)

Regardless of this difference, all the various speaking authorities in the *Rose* that discuss the matter are agreed that in the purely natural state represented by the Golden Age humans were totally free and happy. States of servitude and misery are thus deviations from this state of being purely natural, as is sin generally.[98] Just as Giles of Rome used Aristotle's analysis of money and nature in his sermon on avarice, so Raison here, having shown how usury and avarice go against the nature of money, goes on to consider how avarice corrupts human nature. In his sermon Giles expounds St Paul's repeated assertion that avarice is idolatory, as we have seen, and a similar operation appears to be happening here, although there is a significant shift, which reveals the sophistication of Jean de Meun's poetico-philosophical method. Raison goes on shortly afterwards to assert how

Diex het avers, les vilains natres,
et les dangne conme ydolatres,
les chetis sers desmesurez,
pooreus et maleürez.
(God hates the avaricious, the grasping cretins, and damns them as idolators, those out-of-control, weak, frightened, and miserable serfs.) (5219-23)

The serfs/slaves who have commited themselves to coin are now clearly linked to *sacra doctrina* and compared to idolaters, a common and established trope in discussions of avarice in the theological sphere. Before this explicit comparison has taken place, the allegory of Peccune having dominion over the avaricious, dominion which belongs rightfully to God, already has striking overtones of the avarice as idolatory theme, with coin as idol, overtones almost unmissable for a medieval readership, I would argue, certainly in the context of Paris in the 1270s,

[98] Aristotle briefly discusses of the conventionality or otherwise of the master-slave distinction, and the relationship between slaves and women, and slaves as property in *Politics*, I. 3-4. It is tempting to speculate that this section may also inform discussions about possessions and liberty in the *Rose*, here and elsewhere.

where Giles was teaching and sermonising.[99] Peccune is gendered as an artificial, sterile, female figure. This construction of money as a 'dame' is not only evidence of the slippage that takes place in Raison's expositions as she explains her philosophy through analogy, exemplum, and allegory. It opens up the possibility for – indeed it insists on – comparisons between apparently unconnected topics. For example, if avarice is idolatry, and if through the vehicle of the metaphor money can be made analogous to the lady of a courtly lyric, then the principle that courtly love is idolatrous becomes persuasive, even convincing. Appropriately to a text of rhetoric this argument is an enthymeme and not a dialectic syllogism,[100] and in this rhetorical framework, the combination of the associative literary language of the allegorical 'dream' and an understanding of the *scientia* of Aristotelian teleology makes it possible to read natural and unnatural uses of money and desire for wealth against natural and unnatural sexual acts and sexual desire.

THE END OF SEX

It would be possible to make the association between the idolatory of avarice and sodomy by referring to Romans 1: 20-27, but Jean de Meun goes about the comparison in a much more convoluted, detailed, and systematic way, through sustained meditation on the conventions of lyric poetry and through Aristotelian philosophy. The image of an impassive lady who sits far above her devoted male servant, impervious to his suffering yet offering the ultimately elusive promise seems to belong less to analyses of money than it does to the hopeless despair often found in lyric verse.[101] Amant has pledged his servitude under the total dominion of Amor in the section written by Guillaume de Lorris:

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[99] It also treated extensively in the *DPN*, XII. 87-XIII. 79). Natura lists the daughters of Idolatria that, Siren-like, lure sinners into the shipwreck of idolatory (XII. 18-19). The discussion of avarice's relationship to idolatory is far greater than the discussion of 'Bacchilatria' (excessive drinking) or of gluttony.

[100] Cf. p. 101; p. 110, n. 44.

[101] Cf. Sarah Kay, 'Desire and Subjectivity', in *The Troubadours: An Introduction*, ed. by Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 212-227; Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan. Livre VII, L'éthique de la psychanalyse, 1959-60*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1986), pp. 178-80; Lacan, Jacques, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959-60*, trans. by Dennis Porter (New York and London: Norton, 1997), pp. 149-51. Additionally, cf. Giorgio Agamben's brief but illuminating discussion of how Jean inflects the Ovidian stories of Narcissus and Pygmalion with elements from the medieval love lyric in *Stanze: La parola e il fantasma nella cultura occidentale* (Turin: Einaudi,

Par Deu, volentiers me rendrai,
ja vers vos ne me desfendrai.
Ja Deu ne place que je pense
que j'aie ja vers vos desfense,
car il n'est pas resson ne droiz.
Vos poez quan que vos voudroiz
feire de moi, pendre ou tuer,
bien sai que je ne puis muer,
car ma vie est en vostre main.
(By God, I will give myself up to you willingly; I will never defend myself against you. May it never please God that I have any defence against you for to do so would be neither reasonable nor just. You can do whatever you want with me, hang me or kill me, and I know well that I am powerless; my life is in your hands.)
(1897-1905)

Amant's surrender to the rules of courtly love is a total abdication of his natural 'franchise' and he is just as much a 'serf' as the avarous men in thrall to Peccune.[102] Guillaume de Lorris put a wry spin on the generic, supposedly all-powerful female addressee of lyric, replacing her with an impossible object in the Rose and making Amant give a passionate declaration of self-subjugation to Amor, a male figure representing a decidedly ambiguous abstract principle. It is impossible to miss the constructed, artificial nature of Guillaume's lyric narrative. His part of the *Rose* is famously unfinished (lacking in ending, *infinitus*) and, whatever the reason for its lack of an end, it seems to suggest the ultimate impossibility of achieving satisfaction or total fulfilment from the practices of courtly love. Jean de Meun goes further and links courtly love, which is infinite and lacking in *ratio* – reason or measure – and thus unnatural, to other infinite and unnatural acts, to usury and to sodomy.

1977), pp. 73-83; *Stanzas: Words and Phantasm in Western Culture*, trans. by Ronald L. Martinez, Theory and History of Literature, 69 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 63-72.

[102] The theme of enslavement to love echoes that in the *praefatio* to Andreas Capellanus' *De amore* (*On Love* ed. and trans. by P. G. Walsh (London: Duckworth. 1982), p. 30; 3: 'Novi enim et manifesto experimento percepi quod qui Veneris est servituti obnoxius nil valet perpensius cogitare nisi ut aliquid semper valeat suis actibus operari, quo magis possit ipsius illaqueari catenis. (I know by the clear evidence of personal experience that the man subject to Venus's slavery can give really earnest thought to nothing except the perpetual attempt to achieve by his actions the possibility of being further enchained in her fetters.'

According to the stereotype of courtly love lyrics, all the honour goes to the lady, whose silence and impassivity are the spur for the continued production of verse or at the least the continuing state of being a despairing courtly lover. In fact, there is no *end* to the desire in courtly love. The association between the conventions and practices, fictional or otherwise, of courtly love and questions of avarice and money has been made through the allusion made possible by poetic metaphor. This then opens up a space for subjecting sexual desire and courtly love to an Aristotelian investigation, in an analogous fashion to the investigation of money that Raison is conducting.

Right at the beginning of her speech, more or less right at the beginning of Jean's continuation of the *Rose*, and just before discussion of money, Raison, in response to Amant's question, gives an analysis of sexuality according to its end in proper Aristotelian fashion and situating it within an ethical framework based around the natural. Amant asks Raison to define love, which she proceeds to do using a definition given by Andreas Capellanus in *De amore*:

> Amors, se bien sui apensee,
> c'est maladie de pensee
> antre .II. persones annexe,
> franches entr'els, de divers sexe,
> venanz a genz par ardeur nee
> de vision desordenee,
> pour acoler et pour besier
> pour els charnelment aesier.
> (Love, if I am not mistaken, is a mental illness between two people joined together, neither subservient to the other, of different sexes. It comes to people by means of a burning desire, born of disordered vision, to kiss and to embrace to give themselves physical pleasure.) (4348-54)[103]

Raison has given a formal definition of what it means to be a lover and what 'amor' (love or sexual desire) actually means, including the key category of

[103] *De amore*. I. 1; 'Amor est passio quaedam innata procedens ex visione et immoderata cogitatione formae alterius sexus, ob quam aliquis super omnia cupit alterius potiri amplexibus et omnia de utriusque voluntate in ipsius amplexu amoris præcepta compleri.' [Love is an inborn suffering which results from the sight of, and uncontrolled thinking about, the beauty of the other sex. This feeling makes a man desire before all else the embraces of the other sex, and to achieve the utter fulfilment of the commands of love in the other's embrace by their common desire.] Cf. Kelly, p. 61.

franchise, which is natural to humans (4415-16). If this definition were to be explained in an Aristotelian framework, it could be said that the end of love is sexual gratification. Raison goes on to insist, however, that the true end of sexual desire is, according to Nature, the continuation of the species,

> quar puis que pere et mere faillent,
> Nature veust que li filz saillent
> pour recontinuer ceste euvre,
> si que par l'un l'autre requeuvre.
> Pour ce i mist Nature delit,
> pour ce veust que l'en si delit
> que cist ovrier ne s'en foïssent
> et que ceste euvre ne haïssent,
> quar maint n'i treroient ja tret,
> se n'iert deliz qui les atret.
> (for since mothers and fathers fail, Nature wants sons to spring up to recontinue this work, so that through one individual, she recovers the other. For this reason Nature put pleasure into the work, for this reason she wants individuals to take pleasure in it so that these workers do not flee and they do not hate this work, for many would never attempt one stroke if pleasure were not there to attract them.) (4381-90)[104]

Sex is understood by its end and the ultimate end of sexual desire is procreation. This is not, it should be said, a principle unique to Aristotle, but is a commonplace of medieval thought.[105] Aristotle has made it quite clear that a thing's end can be said to be its nature, and we have already seen Raison elide end and nature together when discussing the proper use of wealth, following Aristotle. Here Nature as allegorical figure and agent is a poetic construct rather than a philosophical principle,[106] but we are given a philosophical definition of sexuality that situates its correct end in nature, any deviation from which will be termed as unnatural, as *contra naturam*, and hence immoral. Both Nature and Genius will go on to condemn those that refuse to use their 'tools' for the correct end, namely to continue the species (19297-19304; 19497-19502).[107] Just like

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[104] Cf. *Rose*, 6935-48.
[105] Cf. James Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
[106] Cf. p. 28.
[107] Roger Dragonetti rightly sees Nature's and Genius' speeches as interpreting Amant's courtly or narcissistic passion as a deviation from natural law. Cf. 'Pygmalion ou les pièges de la fiction

Aristotle's category of unnatural wealth-acquisition (*chrêmatistikê*/*pecuniativa*) as practised by the avaricious, sexual desire that does not lead to reproductive sex puts its end falsely in something which ultimately has no end. The juxtaposition of Raison's discussion of sexual desire and money, and especially the associations of courtly love prompted by the allegorical figure of Peccune as a tyrannical idol, make possible the analogy between desire for sex and the desire for money that runs through the *Rose*. What is more, both are yoked to issues of freedom and the loss of dignity implied in the voluntary acceptance of slavery to desires that cannot be fulfilled. All of the metaphorical comparisons that the *Rose* makes available are ultimately unified by the repeated reference to the poetic conceit of the Golden Age. Ami and Genius both discuss the Golden Age as a time when there is no property and thus no avarice, and no one lacks for sexual fulfilment. The concept of 'franchise' is important; in the Golden Age, humans are free, whereas fallen man is, as Nature puts it 'sers a tretouz les vices' (slave to all the vices) (19206) and not just to Lady Peccune, and from this perspective freedom is freedom from the tyranny of unnatural desires. Desires are for finite things, the provision of food to stay alive (as in the *Politics*) and the continuation of the species, and are instantly fulfilled in this idealised existence; the infinite longing for unattainable objects is totally foreign. The first part of Raison's speech is of fundamental importance in combining poetic fictions of Nature (which nevertheless contain hidden integumental truths) with the Aristotelian teleology necessary for any serious theorising in thirteenth-century Paris. The discussion of ends and nature is such that an underlying, systematic metaphysics of the natural – drawing on Aristotelian teleology – is revealed.

This unique fusing of metaphor and Aristotle allows different kinds of desire to be analysed and, most importantly, compared in a way not possible in philosophy. As soon as Jean de Meun starts his continuation, he subjects sexuality to an Aristotelian teleological analysis and then avarice and money, both in relation to the natural. The unnatural desires and practices in both subjects stem from their lack of an end, from their infinity. The lack of an end is,

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dans *Le Roman de la Rose*', in *La musique et les lettres*, Publications romanes et françaises, 171 (Geneva: Droz, 1988), pp. 345-67, p. 346.

moreover, innately irrational, *contra rationem*, both in the sense of leading humans away from their ultimate rational end which is heaven, but also in the absolute lack of *ratio* in the sense of having limits and natural balance. Being against reason is also the same as being against nature, as Aquinas would agree:

> [N]atura hominis potest dici vel illa quae est propria homini, et secundum hoc, omnia peccata, inquantum sunt contra rationem, sunt etiam contra naturam, ut patet per Damascenum, in II libro.[108] Vel illa quae est communis homini et aliis animalibus: et secundum hoc, quaedam specialia peccata dicuntur esse contra naturam; sicut contra commixtionem maris et feminae, quae est naturalis omnibus animalibus, est concubitus masculorum, quod specialiter dicitur vitium contra naturam.
> (Human nature can be said to be one of two things. Either it is that nature which is proper to the human and according to this, all sins, insofar as they are against reason, are also against nature, as Damascene shows in Book 2 of his *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*. Alternatively it is that which is common to the human and to other animals, and according to this, certain particular sins are said to be against nature. For example, against the union of male and female, which is natural in all animals, is sexual intercourse between men, which is specially said to be a crime against nature.)[109]

It also gives a philosophical underpinning to the concept of the most notorious crime *contra naturam*, mentioned at the end of this excerpt, that of sodomy. The *Rose* explores what it means to be against nature, to use something against its nature, which is its end. Nature and Genius are very clear that sexual organs – specifically male sexual organs – are to be used for their end which is the continuation of the species, hence the refusal to do so is to sin against Nature/nature, resulting in a slightly ludicrous excommunication on the part of Nature's slightly ludicrous priest Genius. Genius' excommunication, like Raison's discourse, is slightly out of control. Nevertheless, the Aristotelian philosophy that, as Gérard Paré noted in 1941, saturates the poem makes it possible for the *Rose* to present serious intellectual challenges to orthodoxy, particularly in its attacks on the celibacy of the clergy.[110]

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[108] *De Fide Orthodoxa*, II. 30; cf. IV. 20, *PG*, 94. 976A; 1195C, and also *DCD*, XII. 3. 7-9; II. 357.
[109] *ST*, Ia IIae, q. 94 a. 3 ad 2.
[110] Cf. p. 24.

STERILITY AND INFINITY: *CONTRA NATURAM*

The principle of 'the natural' subtends the whole of the *Rose*. One of the aims of this thesis is, by examining the things deemed to be against nature, to arrive at a better understanding of the medieval understanding of nature and the natural. Along with the peddlers of medacious artifice embodied by Faux Semblant, the three biggest most prominent targets of the *Rose*'s satire are those who practise courtly love (honestly or falsely), those who accumulate wealth, and those who practise sodomy. What these three actions all have in common is infinity and sterility. Amant's desire for the *Rose*, following the strictures of courtly love, leads to no procreation in Guillaume de Lorris' section, and the continuation of the species through penetrative sex, as demanded by Nature, is only made possible by Amant's abandonment of the sterile code of honour. The hoarding of money, *pecuniativa*, is an infinite process and is opposed to the natural use of money which is to be used up to acquire the means to preserve life. The repeated focus on usurers stems from the most unnatural form of *pecuniativa*, which is the removal of the natural end from the process of accumulation. Money is used solely to acquire more money with no end; this is an artificial, sterile object being made to reproduce infinitely against nature. Sodomy is usury's sibling and bears a close family resemblance. It is the sterile repetition of sex-acts, against their natural end that accordingly is equally infinite. Right at the beginning of his *De planctu naturae*, Alain de Lille depicts a sodomite as one who

> Cudit in incudo que semina nulla monetat
> (He hammers on an anvil that coins no seeds.)[111]

The image of sex in relation to the minting of coins is later used in the *De planctu* to portray Natura at her forge hammering out coins of different types (species),[112] and this is picked up in the narrator's description of Nature at her forge:

> torjorz martele, torjorz forge,
> tourjorz ses pieces renovele

[111] *DPN*, I. 27.
[112] *DPN* VII. 13-16; VIII. 224-32.

par generacion novele.
Quant autre conseill n'i peut metre,
si taille anpraintes de tel letre
qu'el leur doune fourmes veroies
an quoinz de diverses monoies,
don Art fesoit ses examplaires,
qui ne fet pas fourmes si vaires.
(she always hammers, always forges, she always renews her pieces by new generation. Since she cannot think of any other plan, she sculpts imprints of such devices that she gives these pieces true forms as coins of different currencies, of which Art – which never makes forms so true – makes its copies.) (15980-88)
[113]

It is entirely typical that Jean de Meun should complicate matters here by making imperfect metaphor represent natural reproduction in a way that looks weirdly close to usury, the unnatural reproduction of sterile coin. Be that as it may, the coin here is made to represent the end of the sexual act, the continuation of the species. Hence the unnaturalness attacked by Genius of those men who either refuse to have procreative sex, who 'veulent Nature destruire / quant ses anclumes veulent fuire,' (want to destroy Nature, when they want to flee her anvils) (19525-26), those

[...] qui les .II. marteaus reçoivent
et n'an forgent si con il doivent
droitement seur la droite anclume.
(who receive the two hammers and do not forge with them as they should correctly on the correct anvil.) (19607-09)

The celibate seek to preserve a sterile purity, that Faux Semblant has shown to be unnaturally hypocritical.[114] Those practising sodomy perform the sterile pursuit of pleasure without procreation, rather than having sex in the appropriate, procreative fashion.[115] There is an interesting parallel between the Aristotelian analysis of money and the Aristotelian analysis of sexual intercourse

[113] This passage will be examined in greater detail in chapter 5. For now, it should be noted that the 'torjorz/tourjorz' repeated here recalls the 'torjorz' of the restless, infinite desire of the avaricious men discussed by Raison. Nature, vice-regent of God, has claim to infinity of a kind. Another facet of infinite desires is that their infinity seems to impinge on the infinite nature of the divine, and so recalls the association between avarice and idolatry.
[114] Cf. chapter 2.
[115] As will be seen in chapter 5, sodomy is not limited simply to male-male sex, but is a concept that is broader and more vague.

suggested by the *Rose*'s comparison of the two. As Raison told Amant, Nature put pleasure ('delit') in sex in order to continue the species, the natural end of sex. We have seen how Aristotle and the Aristotelians condemn the unnatural use of money when people seek to accumulate it for its own sake rather than for its true end, which is the provision of food. In an analogous fashion those who seek pleasure for its own sake, rather than procreation, which is the end of sex, can be said to be having sex unnaturally. As was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, it was standard in thirteenth-century writing to describe usury as a sin *secundum se*, a sin that in its very structure went against nature. The same, then, holds for the *vitium contra naturam* that is sodomy.[116]

Aristotle, in *Of the Generation of Animals*, writes that 'nature flies from the infinite; for the infinite is imperfect, and nature always seeks an end.'[117] This principle is borne out in the *Rose*, in which, apart from in relation to things divine, that which is without end is shown to be unnatural. The idolatry of avarice, like the idolatry of courtly love, places artificial human creations in the place of natural ends. Service to these sterile, artificial creations results in a perpetually frustrated desire that is a kind of slavery to one's desires, in the loss of the 'franchise', the freedom that was originally proper to humans in the state represented by the Golden Age. That usury and avarice go against the natural order, that sodomy is *contra naturam* are not innovations of the *Rose* as we have seen, nor did they emerge *ex nihilo* with the arrival of Aristotle's texts in Latin earlier in the thirteenth century. Rather, Aristotle made possible an understanding of nature and the natural based on an understanding of ends. Aquinas, that giant of thirteenth-century philosophy, drew on Aristotle to articulate a unified theological vision of the world, and in a manner somewhat similar yet fundamentally different, Jean de Meun presents an Aristotelian vision of what is natural and a unified conception of ethics in relation to it.

[116] Cf. *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 154, a. 12, co.
[117] Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, I. 1, 715b14-16 For a detailed discussion of the infinite in relation to nature, cf. *Physics*, books III and VI.

5

Poetry's Productive Deviations

The *Roman de la rose* both is and is not a paradox.[1] It is an artificial creation which attempts to discuss the natural. It is produced in a celibate, clerical milieu while extolling the virtues of reproduction and attacking celibacy. It offers a theoretical education via a narrative in which a sex-crazed lover scorns reason with no negative repercussions. Such self-contradiction is part of the point of the *Rose* which stages the failure of the intellect after the Fall. A state of paradox suggesting the limitations of rationality and the undermining of claims for totally coherent and systematic knowledge is entirely consistent with the *Rose*'s project. Having suggested the *Rose* as a rhetorical text in chapter 3, I wish now to focus on how logical paradoxes of sexual activity *contra naturam* are imperfectly resolved through the figurative language of rhetoric and how the *Rose* (and all artificial productions) can be understood as queer or as tainted with sin. In order to make these claims, I will, unlike in the rest of the thesis, be drawing on modern theory. One of the most important factors in thinking about the natural and the ethical in thirteenth-century Aristotelian thought in this thesis has been Aristotelian teleology, i. e. considering something in relation to its end, which is also its nature. Even while some of its most reputable speakers condemn unproductive pleasure (Raison, Nature, Genius), the *Rose* at times valorizes the production of art that is not necessarily recuperable into an economy of salvation or social utility. In this sense, while being one of the most Aristotelian works of French literature it is also profoundly un-Aristotelian. Such an undermining of teleology was not theorised in the Middle Ages, even though it was enacted in the *Roman de la rose* (and in Alain de Lille's *De planctu Naturae*, which exerts a highly Augustinian influence on the *Rose*.) In discussing the *Rose*'s theoretical originality, I will, then, draw on certain modern queer theorists' critiques of teleology in relation to sexuality and to ideology as tools to illustrate

[1] An earlier version of this chapter appeared as Jonathan Morton, 'Queer metaphors and queerer reproduction in the *De planctu naturae* and the *Roman de la rose*', in *Dante and Desire in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Manuele Gragnolati, Tristan Kay, *et al.* (Oxford: Legenda, 2012), pp. 208-26.

principles that are at work in the *De planctu* and in the *Rose*, for the paradoxes and irrationality of sodomy are at the heart of how the *Rose* approaches reason, knowledge, and pleasure.

In both the *Rose* and the *De planctu*, writing and sculpting are used as metaphors for the depiction of sexual acts, both straight and queer, and thus questions around the straightness or queerness of artistic creation are opened up alongside questions about the possibility or impossibility of successfully writing either licit or illicit sex. To muddy the waters further, the occasion for these questions – the metaphor – itself becomes subject to question. Is metaphor queer?[2]

Starting with the use of writing as a metaphor for sexual activity, queer or straight, I want to consider how figurative language itself, in its slippages and in the impossibility of its maintaining clear distinctions, can be seen as queer in order to investigate the subject of originality in art. If writing and poetry are used to understand sexual reproduction and illicit sexual acts, how in turn can sexual intercourse be used to understand the processes and meaning of poetic creation?

QUEER INFINITY

In the *Rose*, as in the *De planctu*, an allegorical figure named Genius, descends from above and, dressed in clerical robes, attempts to preserve sexual orthodoxy and to remove sodomy. In both cases sodomy is described metaphorically as incorrect or deviant writing. To modern ears, genius has inescapable associations with exceptional individual creativity or intelligence, yet here Genius is rather a figure that represents the unindividuated natural drive to

[2] While I am principally interested in metaphor in this essay, the deviation entailed by metaphor is equally a phenomenon related to all the other devices that Quintilian categorizes under the heading of 'trope' including metonymy, antonomasia, metalepsis, synecdoche, catachresis and allegory. Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, ed. and trans. by Donald A. Russell, 5 vols. (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), vol. 4., IX. 1. 5. All tropic or figurative language is understood by Quintilian as a departure from natural, straight meaning, and it is the larger genus of a trope that is used as a metaphor for deviant sexual pleasure by Alain de Lille, rather than metaphor itself (cf. p. 213, n. 31).

procreate.[3] It is against the backdrop of the tension between these two principles, between individual innovation and the faithful, unreflecting transmission of the biological or textual legacy, that the processes of literature are to be investigated.

Before considering Genius/genius, I will outline how I wish to use the term 'queer'. Taking my cue from the literary depictions of deviant sex in these medieval texts, I use the term here to refer not only to acts and actors that might fall under medieval or modern understandings of sodomy or to modern non-heterosexual identifications, but also to the nonlinear nature of polysemous figurative language and the deviation involved in human cultural production. Queerness is inextricably intertwined with innovation and artistic originality. In its etymology, as both Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Gary Cestaro have remarked,[4] the 'queer' involves a departure from the straight line (as, in fact, does 'trope', of which metaphor is a category, deriving from the Greek 'τρόπος' – a turn). It is something that deviates from, or that transverses, the wholly straight norm (or rather the *fantasy* of a wholly straight norm). I use the word 'transverse' deliberately: the queer transverses the straight fantasy in that it intersects with this norm,[5] it acts against it, and works to overturn it.[6] 'Transverse' also contains within it another, punning meaning, which is the transposition or translation of an earlier text into verse,[7] a meaning that is wholly imbricated in the notion of a queer genealogy of poetic production that will be introduced towards the end of this chapter. Queerness stems from a failed or failing natural teleology. It is born in sexual acts rooted in the pursuit of pleasure, acts that exclude the putative

[3] Cf. Jane Chance Nitzsche, *The Genius Figure in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1975).
[4] Gary Cestaro, 'Is Ulysses Queer? The Subject of Greek Love in *Inferno* XV and XXVI', in *Dante's Plurilingualism: Authority, Knowledge, Subjectivity*, ed. by Sara Fortuna, Manuele Gragnolati and Jürgen Trabant (London: Legenda, 2010), pp. 179-202, p. 180, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. xii.
[5] Cf. 'transverse, adj., n., adv., and prep.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2013), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/205122?rskey=b4XcTG&result=1&isAdvanced=false> [accessed 24 May 2013].
[6] Cf. 'transverse, v.1', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2013) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/205123?rskey=1hPnHw&result=2&isAdvanced=false> [accessed 24 May 2013].
[7] Cf. 'trans'verse, v.2', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2013)<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/205124?rskey=acv5Xg&result=3&isAdvanced=false> [accessed 24 May 2013].

natural (and thus divinely appointed) end of sex, that is, reproduction and the continuation of the species. This lack of end thus gives rise to a troubling infinity (*infinitus* = endless) that destabilizes the whole order of creation and the imaginary fantasy of the ordered workings of a world that would otherwise be wholly natural or perfectly divine.

It is this queer infinity (encompassing both the lack of a natural end or purpose and eternal, senseless repetition), which renders sodomy irrational, like a journey without a destination. Sodomy (or rather, the unspeakable things that sodomy attempts, and fails, to denote), in its opposition to the ordering rationale of nature and reproduction, disrupts linearity, progression, and logic, on which meaning appears to depend. Sodomy's queer circularity of repetition and its promise of continuous access to jouissance undermine what Lee Edelman has called 'futurism', the idealized fantasies of the future – dependent on reproduction – which are also the idealized fantasies of the past, and which in the *Rose* are figured by the Golden Age and the Parc de l'Agneau.

> Futurism [...] generates generational succession, temporality, and narrative sequence, not toward the end of enabling change, but, instead, of perpetuating sameness, of turning back time to assure repetition – or to assure a logic of resemblance (more precisely: a logic of metaphoricity) in the service of representation and, by extension, of desire.[8]

The eternal repetition of reproduction and the production of meaning that constitutes this straight imaginary are parodied in the spectre of the queer, infinite repetition of jouissance and the production of meaninglessness occasioned by sodomy. The attempt to fix a name onto this meaninglessness, to save it and to bring it into language, does not manage to iron out the kink. Rather, it leads to the multiplication of the queer and its destabilization of the symbolic order. As Bill Burgwinkle points out,

[8] Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 60.

> The mere evocation of sodomy seems to stain all that surrounds it such that distinctions between the sodomitical and normal, between me and it, masculine and feminine, the lawful and unlawful, the symbolic and the imaginary, become impossible to sustain.[9]

Language repeatedly attempts and fails to suture the gap in meaning occasioned by sodomy that cannot be articulated except through imperfect metaphors, and which, through metaphor, spreads, and threatens to cause the whole system of meaning to start unravelling. However, new meanings are generated through a trope's failure to mean solely one thing and thus figurative language, which cannot be made 'to signify monolithically',[10] which always makes meaning plural and divergent, undoes the repetitive linearity of any putative straightness. The plural meanings of tropes make impossible the necessary conclusions that derive from the univocal language of dialectic.[11] On the one hand, then, queerness takes its meaning from that which goes against the established order; it is negative and goes against the continuation of life. On the other, the aspect of queerness that is a departure from the wholly natural leads to originality and novelty. While futurism, despite its apparent imperative towards creation, aims merely at reproduction and entails 'a will to preserve identity',[12] the queer leads, through polyvalent language, to a perverse or a 'transverse' generation of new meanings. The pitfalls and potentialities of deviation and the relationship between the natural and the unnatural are all at stake in questions about Genius. In the second half of this chapter I will turn to the *Rose*, but Jean de Meun's play on ('unnatural') sexuality and art is in response to and draws on the complex and serious games of Alain de Lille, and to understand the *Rose* we need to consider how metaphor and nature work in the *De planctu*.

THE *DE PLANCTU NATURAE*: HOW NOT TO TALK ABOUT SEX

At the end of the *De planctu*, Genius, dressed as a bishop, appears in the narrator's dream and pronounces an excommunication of all sinners, foremost

[9] William E. Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity and the Law in Medieval Literature*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 2.
[10] In Sedgwick's phrase; see Sedgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
[11] Cf. chapter 3.
[12] Edelman, p. 60.

among them anyone who 'legitimum Veneris obliquat incessum' (blocks the Venus' lawful advance).[13] This seems to mean those who carry out queer sex-acts, who disrupt the linearity of reproduction and the continuation of the species. The *De planctu* is a dream-vision in which a first-person narrator begins by lamenting mankind's aberrant sexual practices and how they are corrupting humanity, especially the male half, as unrestrained sexual desire (Venus) turns men into women:

> Cum Venus in Venerem pugnans illos facit illas
> Cumque sui magica deuirat arte uiros.
> (when Venus, fighting with Venus, changes "hes" into "shes" and with the art of magic unmans men.)[14]

The narrator goes on to lament of man that '[a]rs magice Veneris hermafroditat eum' ('Venus' witchcraft hermaphrodites him').[15] The *De planctu*, despite being an extended attack on sodomy, is never much more explicit than this in its description of its subject matter. It can only talk about sexual desire and sexual crime through a veil of metaphor, with the result that we never know exactly what is being discussed. Maybe this should not entirely surprise us given the history of tactical metaphor surrounding sodomy. The euphemism *peccatum* or *nefas contra naturam* used for (avoiding) describing sodomy is found in legal codes dating back to the mid-sixth century,[16] and was still in use for the sanctions outlined for homosex in the Third Lateran Council of 1179.[17] Sodomy itself, as catachresis, is a forced metaphor used to make up for a linguistic lacuna on the part of an author or speaker.[18] Sexual acts against nature, which cannot be outlined explicitly in literal language, can only be represented as those

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[13] *DPN*, XVIII. 146.
[14] *DPN*, I. 5-6.
[15] *DPN*, I. 18.
[16] Chiffoleau, p. 268.
[17] John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 277-78.
[18] Here I am drawing particularly on Paul Ricœur's definition of catachresis drawing on the rhetorics of Pierre Fontanier in Paul Ricœur, *La métaphore vive* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), pp. 84-85 . See also Eva Feder Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987, repr. 1989), p. 296: 'Catachresis is, literally, a misuse of language. It is sometimes taken to refer to those cases of metaphor which arise out of a need to name some unnamed entity – standard examples include "the leg of a chair" or the "foot of a mountain" – or it is sometimes said to be an *abuse* of language.' (emphasis original)

performed by the inhabitants of Sodom (acts of fornication *sodomitico more*, 'in the Sodomitic manner').[19] What are these acts? The lack of a common definition in straight, clear language makes it impossible to say for sure what sodomy is (although male-male anal sex seems pretty inescapably included in the category).[20] Mark Jordan points out that while there are some definitions of sodomy in penitentials, or confession guides, such frank descriptions are few and far between, and do not seem to offer a clear, universally shared understanding of what is being described.[21] Indeed, Alain de Lille, in his guide to confession, the *Liber Poenitentialis*, exhorts the confessor to avoid specific questions about sexual crime (including the sin *contra naturam*) 'ne peccati incogniti inquisitio det peccandi occasionem' ('in case asking about a sin previously unknown leads to the sin taking place').[22] 'sodomy', then, is a metaphor used to avoid the corrupting specifics of deviant sexuality that cannot be openly discussed and, these specifics remaining to an extent unknown, it becomes a signifier without a stable signified. Its meaning, then, can only be intimated through the context of its enunciation.[23] Metaphor here, and in fact anywhere, is far from stable and it is the uncertainty and deviation present in figurative language that sees it opposed to controlled and wholesome philosophical expression.[24] Over the course of the goddess Natura's complaint we see further metaphorical portrayals of sex, which

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[19] Cf. Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*, Chicago Series on Sexuality, History, and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 41-44.

[20] For an extended discussion of the 'vitium contra naturam' that leaves the sense of the term wholly implicit (and opaque), cf. *ST*, IIa IIae, q. 154, a. 12. Peter Lombard, though, uses the concept of acts 'contra naturam' as a euphemism to include certain male-female sex-acts. Cf. *Sententiae*, IV, d. 38, c. 2 (215); II, 482.

[21] Jordan, p. 42 . Cf. also p. 52 for the example of Burchard of Worms' *Decretum*, which includes some description of sodomitical acts yet still avoids explicit clarity, as well as Michel Foucault's famous description of sodomy as 'cette catégorie si confuse' – 'that utterly confused category' (Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité, I: La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 134; translation from Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p. 101).

[22] Alain de Lille, *Liber Poenitentialis*, ed. by Jean Longère, 2 vols., Analecta mediaevalia Namurcensia, 17-18 (Louvain/Lille: Nauwelaerts/Giard, 1965), I. 4; 2. 27 (my translation). Cf. Robert of Flamborough, *Liber poenitentialis*, ed. by J. J. Francis Firth (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971), IV. 224; Michael Goodich, *The Unmentionable Vice: Homosexuality in the Later Medieval Period* (Santa Barbara CA: ABC-Clio, 1979), pp. 56-58.

[23] Cf. Jordan, p. 5.

[24] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibet*, vols. 25: 1-2 in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII edita* (Roma/Paris: Commissio Leonina/Cerf, 1996), VII, q. 6, a. 3, co; I. 31: 'in nulla sciencia humana industria inuenta proprie loquendo potest inueniri nisi litteralis sensus'. [Properly speaking, in no kind of knowledge derived by human industry can there be any meaning except a literal meaning.] Aquinas only allows for figurative language in Scripture, authored as it is by God.

are every bit as queer as the unnamable practices the text seems to be banning.

After Natura has introduced herself to the ignorant narrator, who does not at first recognize her, she starts to explain how mankind's sins against nature have brought her down from the heavens to the brothels. She recounts how all creatures behave according to the law of nature except humans and she adds her own lament to the narrator's complaint, bewailing that

> [s]olus homo, mee modulationis citharam aspernatus, sub delirantis Orphei lira delirat. Humanum namque genus, a sua generositate degenerans, in constructione generum barbarizans, Venereas regulas inuertendo nimis irregulari utitur metaplasmo.
> (Only man, disdaining the cithern of my music, raves to deranged Orpheus' lyre. For humankind, having degenerated from its nobility, using barbarisms in the construction of genders and by perverting Venus' rules, employs most irregular metaplasm.)[25]

Overwhelming desire, awakened by irrational, even anti-rational, music (or, more generally, art) has caused deviation, and, as we shall see later, irrational and queer desire can itself lead to the production of art. The use of language as a metaphor for sex continues with Natura's narrative but the metaphor of gender in grammar becomes exchanged for that of writing. The deviation of Venus from the correct path is described allegorically as *falsigraphia*, 'pseudography', or false writing, a term used by Natura in an allegorical explanation of human sexuality:

> Ad officium etiam scripture calamum prepotentem eidem fueram elargita, ut in competentibus cedulis eiusdem calami scripturam poscentibus quarum mee largitionis beneficio fuerat conpotita iuxta mee orthographie normulam rerum genera figuraret, ne a proprie descriptionis semita in falsigraphie deuia eumdem deuagari minime sustineret.
> (I had also bestowed on her [Venus] a very powerful reed-pen for

[25] *DPN*, VIII. 54-57. A barbarism is a grammatical fault, authoritatively defined in Donatus, *Ars maior*, in Louis Holtz, *Donat et la tradition de l'enseignement grammatical: étude sur l'Ars Donati et sa diffusion (IVe-IXe siècle) et édition critique* de(Paris: CNRS, 1981), pp. 603-74, III. 1; pp. 653-55; cf. *Donat et la tradition*, pp. 137-45. A metaplasm is a grammatical error employed with poetic licence for the sake of meter as defined at *Ars maior*, III. 4; pp. 660-63; cf. *Donat et la tradition*, pp. 170-82. For an extended discussion of metaphors of grammar in Alain de Lille, cf. Jan M. Ziolkowski, *Alan of Lille's Grammar of Sex: The Meaning of Grammar to a Twelfth-Century Intellectual*, Speculum Anniversary Monographs, 10 (Cambridge MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1985), pp. 13-50.

> her writing task in order that – on pages suitable for, and calling out for, that same reed-pen (pages that the kindness of my generosity had made hers) – she should draw images of the different species according to the rule of my correct writing, so that she might not suffer the same pen to deviate in the smallest degree from the path of proper drawing into the deviant path of false writing.)[26]

Correct writing, then, faithful transmission of the given, natural model, stands for procreative sex. *Falsigraphia* stands for sodomitical sex, any sex that has deviated, that is queer. In Natura's narrative, Venus, in her idleness, began to weary of the daily toil of the continuation of the species and turned against her husband, Hymenaeus, committing adulterous fornication with Antigenius and as this confused allegory continues we are told that 'malleos ab incudum exheredans consortio adulterinis dampnauit incudibus' ('she disinherited the hammers of their fellowship with their anvils and condemned them to counterfeit anvils').[27] The hammers – the tools that Natura gave Venus for the continuation of the human species – could be penises, the intended anvils then presumably vaginas and the counterfeit anvils anuses to which the male tools are now attracted. The metaphor is not quite as straightforward as we might think, however. Natura has already complained about how youths have, for the sake of money, converted Venus' hammers to the functions of anvils, a truly bizarre image if the metaphor is to hold.[28] It cannot, and there is a problem here, of which Alain de Lille is hyper-self-conscious, caused by the fact that metaphorical language allows, even necessitates, slippage from straight writing and straight meaning, a point to which we will return.

DIALECTIC AND RHETORIC: METAPHORICAL PERILS

To the burgeoning list of metaphors that Natura uses to describe sex, we should also add the imagery of rhetorical tropes and dialectical proof. Man and woman are compared to a syllogism in which the man is the major term, or the predicate of the major premises of the syllogism (for example, the 'mortal' in 'all men are

[26] *DPN*, X. 30-34.
[27] *DPN*, X. 135-36. Cf. Ziolkowski, *Alan of Lille's Grammar of Sex*, p. 30.
[28] *DPN*, VIII. 78-80.

mortal'), and the woman is the minor term, or the subject of the minor premise (the subject 'socrates' in 'socrates is a man').

MAJOR PREMISE	All men are **mortal**. [predicate/male]
MINOR PREMISE	**Socrates** is a man. [subject/female]
CONCLUSION	Thus **Socrates** is **mortal**. [heterosexual intercourse]

Figure 2. Alain de Lille's metaphor of the syllogism

They join '[i]n assumptione uero relatiuorum osculorum reciprocis impressionibus' ('by the adoption of referential kisses by reciprocal impressions'),[29] and 'in conclusione expressissime inherentie uinculo ueriori subiecti predicatique carnalis celebretur connexio' ('finally in the conclusion the carnal connection of subject and predicate is to be solemnized by the bonds of very close intercourse').[30] Male and female join to result in a purely logical ordered conclusion (therefore Socrates (female subject) is mortal (male predicate)) and correct sexual reproduction is a necessary, dialectic process (cf. figure 2). That Socrates is mortal can be used as a premise for a future syllogism.

In the metaphor, the most natural, ordered progression of language and argument, the way that clear meaning is guaranteed, is when a thing is what it says it is. Socrates is Socrates and (perhaps particularly pertinently) a man is a man, and there is no confusion in getting from premise to conclusion. It should not be wholly surprising, then, that in this metaphor, Natura, drawing on classical rhetorical theory, outlaws the indirect and unstable figurative language.

> Sicut autem quasdam gramatice dialeticeque obseruantias inimicantissime hostilitatis incursus uolui a Veneris anathematizare gignasiis, sic methonomicas rethorum positiones, quas in sue amplitudinis gremio rethorica mater amplectans,

[29] Alain's metaphors are far less clear than they might seem to a casual reader. 'Assumptio' has a secondary meaning. In dialectic, it means the minor proposition of a syllogism, for example 'socrates is mortal'. 'Relativus' is a linguistic term meaning 'referring to something' and 'impressio' means one (or all) of a stamping (as of coin), a squeezing, violent handling, or else a division of speech.
[30] *DPN*, X. 95-98.

> multis suas orationes afflat honoribus, Cypridis artificiis interdixi, ne si nimis dure translationis excursu a suo reclamante subiecto predicatum alienet in aliud, in facinus facetia, in rusticitatem urbanitas, tropus in uicium, in decolorationem color nimius conuertatur.
> (Just as I decided to ban certain practices of Grammar and Dialectic from the schools of Venus, anathematising them as assaults made by a most hostile enemy, so too I banned from the Cyprian's workshop the use of the rhetoricians' metonymies that mother Rhetoric – clasping them to her voluminous bosom – breathes onto speechs with many honours. This was in case she, through much too vigourous a metaphor, should alienate the predicate from its loudly protesting subject to something else, in which case wit would be turned into outrage, urbanity into rusticity, a trope into a defect (or vice) and [rhetorical] colour into discolouration.)[31]

Metonymy is a kind of trope that involves the substitution of one name for another with which it has some connection. One example might be to describe sexual desire as Venus, as Alain does. Invention, tropes and their attendant pleasure, it is suggested in this trope, can be too seductive and might lead the predicate, the male part of the union, into homosexual sin and away from the less alluring female subject.[32] There is a fear here that runs throughout the *De planctu* that sodomy is more pleasurable and desirable than heterosex, just as poetry gives more pleasure than scholastic logic. Venus rebels against her mother, 'magis appetens ociis effeminari sterilibus quam fructuosis exerceri laboribus' ('more desiring to be made effeminate through sterile idleness than to be forced to carry out fruitful labour').[33] From this male perspective, heterosexual vaginal

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[31] *DPN*, X. 108-14. Cf Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, IX.1.4: 'Est igitur tropos sermo a naturali et principali significatione tralatus ad aliam ornandae orationis gratia, vel, ut plerique grammatici finiunt, dictio ab eo loco in quo propria est tralata in eum in quo propria non est'. ('A Trope, then, is language transferred from its natural and principal meaning to another for the sake of embellishment, or (as most *grammatici* define it), "an expression transferred from a context in which it is proper to one in which it is not."'). Alain leaves implicit Quintilian's discussion of natural and unnatural language and its parallels with the sin *contra naturam*: man is turned from his proper place, engaged in vaginal sex with a woman for the continuation of the species, and has become attracted to unnatural sexual practices. For the pleasure caused by metaphors, cf. Cicero, *De oratore, III*, ed. and trans. by H. Rackham (with *De fato*, *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, and *De partitione oratoria* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press/London, 1942), III. 39. 157-61. For more discussion of Alain's use of 'tropus' as a metaphor, cf. Ziolkowski, pp. 15-17.
[32] Grammatically, Alain places the male part of the syllogism, the *predicatum*, in the role of the female passive, acted upon by Venus who might transfer (*alienet*) him, just as the queer transferral or translation effected by sodomy turns active men into passive women (cf. *DPN*, I. 5: *Venus in Venerem pugnans illos facit illas*).
[33] *DPN*, X. 124-25.

penetration is seen as a chore, and it is deviation (sterile idleness) that is truly attractive. The enactment of figurative language (of sodomy?) is shown here as a conscious desire to create beautiful and original expressions risking the result that the pleasure arising from such deviations will undermine natural, unreflective reproduction.

The text seems to go out of its way to undermine its condemnations. The poetic images that Alain de Lille uses to illustrate his arguments against sodomy, even as he condemns such images, self-consciously defeat themselves in their apparent attempt to present a straight argument. (This is maybe not entirely surprising given that the rhetorical trope(/sodomy) has been explicitly opposed to the rational argument of logical formulae.) The merger of genders that take place in the opening meter of the *De planctu* is a perfect example:

> Virginis in labiis cur basia tant quiescunt,
> Cum reditus in eis sumere nemo uelit?
> Que michi pressa semel mellirent oscula succo,
> Que mellita darent mellis in ore fauum.
> (Why do so many kisses lie on virgins' lips while no one wishes to collect revenue from them? If these kisses were but once planted on me, they would grow honey-sweet with moisture, and grown honey-sweet, they would form a honeycomb in my mouth.)[34]

The male speaker, it seems, has been inseminated and impregnated by female kisses, which swell, grow and come to term within him as honeycomb. The metaphor has succeeded in turning the male subject into a female, the very crime for which sodomitical Venus is attacked some fifty lines before.

FAITHFUL TRANSLATION? WRITING AND DEVIATION

What is the point of the *De planctu*, a text so clearly shot through with self-defeating metaphor? I suggest that Alain de Lille, or his narrator, is attempting an act of translation. He is attempting to carry the subject matter of sodomy from an unspeakable, obscene sphere into a licit space, where, avoiding the corruption of the ignorant through the explicit obscenity that he warns against in his *Liber Poenitentialis*, he can demonstrate the dangers posed by unregulated desire to

[34] *DPN*, I. 43-46. Cf. Burgwinkle, p. 191.

the very fabric of nature, truth and language. Natura tells Alain's narrator, citing Boethius, that

> quia *rebus de quibus loquimur cognatos oportet esse sermones*, rerum informitati locutionis debet deformitas conformari.
> (since 'speech should be related to the matters about which we speak', there should be at times an ugliness of style to conform to the deformity of the subject-matter.)

However, she goes on to explain that

> ne locutionis cacephaton lectorum offendat auditum uel in ore uirginali locum collocet turpitudo, predictis uiciorum monstris euphonia orationis uolo pallium elargiri.
> (in order to prevent cacemphaton from offending the ears of readers or anything foul finding a place on a maiden's lips, it is my intention to contribute a mantle of fair-sounding words to the monsters of vice I mentioned earlier.)[35]

This is thoroughly in accordance with Sacred Doctrine. As Paul writes in Eph 5: 3-4:

> fornicatio autem et omnis inmunditia aut avaritia nec nominetur in vobis sicut decet sanctos. aut turpitudo aut stultiloquium aut scurrilitas quae ad rem non pertinent sed magis gratiarum actio.
> (But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints. Or obscenity or foolish talking or scurrility, which is to no purpose: but rather giving of thanks.)

This is a tension here in attempting to articulate cleanly and appropriately the dangers of an evil which must be avoided, an evil whose details are always unfit for human hearing and yet if they are not known, cannot be avoided.[36] Jacques

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[35] *DPN*, VIII. 191-95. Cf. Boethius, *DCP*, III. pr. 12; p. 306. Boethius himself refers to Plato (*Timaeus*) as his authority.

[36] The issue of explicitly describing that which is thought to be obscene is approached in the *Roman de la rose* when Raison and Amant discuss the appropriateness of otherwise of articulating the word 'testicles'; 6898ff., as mentioned at p. 125 above. Amant's complaint about the impropriety of testicles appearing in a maiden's mouth seem to recall Natura's words on improper speech cited here. For discussion of this issue, cf. Alastair Minnis, ' From *coilles* to *bel chose*: Discourses of Obscenity in Jean de Meun and Chaucer', in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. by Nicola McDonald (York/Woodbridge: York Medieval Press/Boydell and Brewer, 2006), pp. 156-78, especially pp. 157-59; Jan M. Ziolkowski, 'The Obscenities of Old Women: Vetularity and

Derrida's investigation of translation, *Qu'est ce qu'est une traduction 'relevante'?*, is helpful here:

> La traduction est toujours une tentative d'appropriation qui vise à transporter chez soi, dans sa langue, le plus proprement possible, de la façon la plus relevante possible le sens le plus propre de l'original, même si c'est le sens propre d'une figure, d'une métaphore, d'une métonymie, d'une catachrèse ou d'une indécidable impropriété.
> (Translation is always an attempt at appropriation that aims to transport home, in its language, in the most appropriate way possible, in the most relevant way possible, the most proper meaning of the original text, even if this is the proper meaning of a figure, metaphor, metonymy, catachresis, or undecidable impropriety.)[37]

Alain is translating sodomy into language, and sodomy is absolutely an 'indécidable impropriété', not to mention a figure of speech – for anal sex or whatever. Alain, translating 'le plus proprement possible', seems to be demonstrating that the multiform, twisting potentialities of sodomy – as it mutates incessantly, transverses the norm and changes men into hermaphrodites or women – can best be translated into written language through metaphor that is irrational, confused and unnatural, that twists itself up in knots and undermines every point that it attempts to make. The *De planctu* is a text with an agenda concerning how language should be used to discuss sex just as it has an agenda concerning the acts themselves. The problem it has, though, is that it is almost too successful in its enunciation of the queer language of desire. Once sodomy has been raised, it cannot be banished through language.

This is all a little bit unsettling and at the end of the text there is an attempt to banish the corruption of sodomy. After further complaints from the talkative Natura and the introduction of several other allegorical figures such as Hymenaeus, Truth and Generosity, we see Genius, Natura's other self, who 'in

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Vernacularity', in *Obscenity: Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages*, ed. by Jan M. Ziolkowski, Cultures, Beliefs, and Traditions, 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 73-89, p. 76; and Fleming, *Reason and the Lover*), p. 106, n. 9.

[37] Jacques Derrida, *Qu'est ce qu'une traduction « relevante»?* (Paris: L'Herne, 2005), pp. 19-20. Translation from Jacques Derrida and Lawrence Venuti, 'What is a "relevant" translation?', *Critical Inquiry*, 27:2 (2001), 174-200, pp. 178-79.

sacerdotali ancillatur officio' ('serves [her] as a priest').[38] He arrives and solemnly dons priestly clothes before ruling that everyone who blocks the lawful path of Nature or who deviates in other ways from the perfect, idealised norm be excommunicated or 'naturalium rerum uniformi concilio segregetur' ('removed from the uniform council of natural things').[39] Then the narrator wakes up and the text ends. At first glance, this appears to provide a reassuring sense of stability and reassertion of the correct, straight, natural order of things. Genius, in these texts, is a concept that seems to represent a principle of masculinity and procreation. It is understandable for him to oppose sodomy, which is sex that avoids procreation and, what is more, which undermines masculinity, as is signaled at the beginning of the *De planctu*. Yet he, like every other character in the text, cannot escape falling into sodomitical traps. As mentioned earlier, Alain uses the writing process as a metaphor for sex when describing the powerful pen that Natura gave to Venus to ensure the preservation of the species. An analogous reed-pen, a *calamus*, is held in the right hand of Genius when he approaches at the end of the *De planctu* to deliver his excommunication. In his left hand he holds the skin of a dead animal

> in qua stili obsequentis subsidio imagines rerum ab umbra picture ad ueritatem sue essentie transmigrantes, uita sui generis munerabat.
> (on which, with the help of the obedient pen, he endowed with the life of their genus images of things that were transmigrating from the shadow of a picture to the truth of their being.)[40]

Genius, Natura's son and father of Truth, writes creatures into being, just as Natura herself does in the second prose of the *De planctu*.[41] The pen could represent genitals and writing could be procreative sex (although by now, we should be fairly wary of trusting Alain's metaphors). However, when Genius' right hand becomes tired then we hear about the other hand,

[38] *DPN*, XVI. 175.
[39] *DPN*, XVIII. 145.
[40] *DPN*, XVIII. 71-72.
[41] *DPN*, IV. 3-6.

> [q]ue ab orthographe semita falsigraphie claudicatione recedens, rerum figuras immo figurarum laruas umbratiles, semiplena picturatione creabat.
> (which, withdrawing with limping steps from the path of correct writing to false writing, created figures of things or rather the shadowy spectres of figures in a half-completed painting.)[42]

Falsigraphia, deviation from the ordered path, has been used to stand in for sodomy in Natura's description of Venus, as we saw. This depiction of Genius, a wholly natural, undeviating principle, seems, however, to naturalize sodomy, which now is figured as happening when natural male sexuality becomes tired from the hard labour of heterosexual reproduction and then writes 'rerum figuras immo figurarum laruas umbratiles'. If this *falsigraphia* is sodomy, it is nevertheless productive; it presents images, shady imitations even, of natural things in an identical manner to art – *simia naturae* – that creates parodic reproductions of natural creatures.[43] This is a queer parody of natural reproduction, just as the infinite aspect of queer sex is a parody of the reproductive ideal of futurism.[44] Like the tropes of the rhetoricians, art is ostensibly made to give pleasure, and is associated with queer sexuality, which seems to be made natural here. It is no wonder that Alain quickly draws his work to a close, still unresolved. The prosimetrum, which in the author's lifetime only circulated in a very close circle of associates, seems to expose some of the inherent contradictions in medieval conceptions of natural sexuality and conceives of poetic invention as a transgressive yet paradoxically natural act.

The Genius of the *De planctu naturae* finds its translated reincarnation in the French verse of Jean de Meun's section of the *Roman de la rose*. As with metaphor, however, all translation necessarily sees some slippage in meaning in

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[42] *DPN*, XVIII. 84-85.
[43] Cf Roger Dragonetti's remark that '[l]e discours doctrinal sur le « Singe de Nature » est structuré selon une antithèse qui ouvre un intervalle infranchissable entre la fécondité de l'imitation par *Nature* et l'impouvoir qui caractérise le mode mimétique du practicien de l'art.' (The doctrinal discourse concerning the 'Monkey of Nature' is structured according to a dichotomy which opens up an uncrossable gap between the abundance of the imitation carried out by *Nature* and the impotence which is the defining factor of the mimetic mode practised by the artist.) Roger Dragonetti, 'Le "Singe de Nature" dans le *Roman de la Rose*', in *La musique et les lettres*, Publications romanes et françaises, 171 (Geneva: Droz, 1988), pp. 369-80, p. 369 (my translation).
[44] For discussion of the irrational endlessness of sodomy and of courtly love, cf. pp. 195-98.

its departure from an original, primary sense.[45] Jean's Genius flaunts the impossibility of a totally faithful translation and Jean seems to delight overtaking the model he has inherited from Alain.[46]

One of the earliest critics of the Rose, Ernest Langlois, claimed that of Jean de Meun's 17 500 lines of poetry, he had identified around 12 000 that had been taken from earlier sources.[47] It is tempting to see Jean, then, primarily as an omnivorous, encyclopaedic translator who reorders his material in interesting ways, creating a new text by juxtaposing a cornucopia of literary sources. This view is far too simplistic, though; Jean's translation can certainly not be said to be faithful in any modern sense of the term. Rather than translate *verbum pro verbo*, word for word, as Cicero and Jerome – and the medieval theorists they influenced – described literal translation, Jean's is a rhetorical, interpretative translation that reproduces Alain's text in a new form.[48] This practice, characterised by Rita Copeland as 'secondary translation', sees the earlier text/s providing the source material for an appropriative translation that uses rhetorical models of invention.[49] Copeland defines the Classical rhetorical mode of translation, inherited from Cicero in the following way.

> The aim of translation is to reinvent the source, so that, as in rhetorical theory, attention is focused on the active production of a

[45] Both metaphor and translation have their etymological roots in metaphors of carrying something away from its original context. Metaphor, from the Greek 'μεταφέρειν' ('to carry away' or 'to transfer'), sees the name of one thing taken from its original, natural subject onto something new. Translation, from the Latin 'transferre' ('to carry away') sees a text carried from its original language and setting into a new one. Cf. Isidore, *Etmologiae*, I. 37. 1-2: 'Metaphora est verbi alicuius usurpata translatio.' [Metaphor is the transfer of a given word from its proper meaning.]

[46] While I largely agree with Susan Schibanoff's analysis of Alain's use of metaphor, I disagree with her argument that Jean de Meun 'attempted – but failed – to rewrite the *Plaint* in order to forestall sodomy's return.' (Susan Schibanoff, 'sodomy's Mark: Alan of Lille, Jean de Meun and the Medieval Theory of Authorship', in *Queering the Middle Ages*, ed. by Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger, Medieval Cultures, 2 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 28-56, p. 29.

[47] Ernest Langlois, *Origines et sources du Roman de la rose*, Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 58 (Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1891), p. 102.

[48] Cf. Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 2.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

> new text endowed with its own affective powers and suited to the particular historical circumstances of its reception.[50]

According to this model, the translator does not merely pass down an inherited textual body, but refashions a new text from existing material. Jean de Meun brings to the fore inconsistencies in the *De planctu naturae* and he skews the focus of inquiry so that rather than primarily using images of tropes and of writing to think about sodomy, he starts with sodomy and disordered sexuality and uses it as a way of reflecting on artistic creation and poetic creation. In both texts, rhetoric and queer sex are used to reflect and to reflect on the other, but whereas Alain's prosimetrum attempts to show a hopeless inescapable loop of sodomy, the *Rose* offers a productive chain of creation that stems from the queerness of deviant sexuality and deviant writing. Having considered the use of figurative language to investigate sexual desire and actions, I now want to look at how sexual desire, queer or otherwise, can be used to understand poetic invention and artistic creation.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF GENIUS

Genius descends to earth in Jean's poem, on Nature's orders, in order to preach to Amor's army of allegorical figures who have gathered to help the dreaming narrator enter the castle where Jalousie guards the Rose. He gives a speech in which he condemns all those who spurn procreation and goes on to yell hysterically for their castration. He will go on to preach of a bizarrely carnal heaven, the entry to which is largely predicated on having as much procreative sex as possible but first he pronounces the following anathema:

> saient tuit esconmenié
> li delleal, li renié,
> et condampné san nul respit,
> qui les euvres ont en despit,
> soit de grant gent soit de menue,
> par cui Nature est sustenue.
> (Let them all be excommunicated, those disloyal ones, those renegades, and let them be condemned without reprieve, those

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

> who, whether of high or low rank, hold in scorn the works by
> which Nature is sustained.) (19497-15002)

This looks similar to the excommunication pronounced by Genius at the end of Alain's text, although it is far from being a literal translation, with a shift of focus (there is, for example, no discussion of non-sexual sins), a reordering of the original material, and the inclusion of new factors (the emphasis on procreation rather than on the sexual act itself). The sexual content and the inherent slippage in metaphor give occasion for Jean to carry out a sustained reflection on the queerness of art. Starting with the alteration of one apparently innocuous word in Jean's translation we can see how translation is as unstable as metaphor and poetry, and how it gets caught up in the same web of sodomitical deviation as metaphor and poetry.

Alain's Genius in his condemnation says elliptically,

> Qui a regula Veneris exceptionem facit anomalam, Veneris
> priuetur sigillo.
> (Let he who makes an anomalous exception from the rule of Venus
> lose the seal of Venus.)[51]

Scanlon notes that while the seal of Venus could mean genitalia so that Genius is calling for castration, an alternative meaning is very present:

> If we take *Veneris sigillum* as 'seal of Venus,' then Genius's sanction
> would mean that these sinners were to be deprived of offspring,
> since the metaphor of sealing has been used throughout De
> planctu Naturae to mean generation.[52]

Jean excludes this possibility, changing 'seal' for 'sign' and throwing in some extra metaphor for good measure, as his Genius declares:

> cil qui tel metresse despisent
> quant a rebours ses regles lisent,
> et qui, por le droit san antandre,

[51] *DPN*, XVIII. 150-51.
[52] Larry Scanlon, 'speaking the Unspeakable: Sexual Regulation and the Priesthood of Genius', *Romanic Review*, 86: 2 (1995), 213-42, p. 241.

par le bon chief nes veulent prandre,
ainz pervertissent l'escriture
quant il vienent a la lecture:
o tout l'esconmeniemant
qui touz les mete a dampnemant,
puis que la se veulent aherdre,
ainz qu'il muirent, *puissent il perdre*
et l'aumosniere et les estalles
don il ont signe d'estre malles!
Perte leur viegne des pandanz
a quoi l'aumosniere est pandanz!
Les marteaus dedanz estachiez
puissent il avoir arrachiez!
(those who scorn such a mistress [Nature] when they read her rules backwards, who do not want to take them in the right way to understand the meaning correctly, thus pervert the writing when they come to reading it, along with excommunication which damns them all, since they want to stick to their behaviour, *let them*, before they die, *lose the purses and the torches, which are the signs of their masculinity!* May they lose the bits by which the purse hangs! May the hammers within be ripped out!) (*Rose*, 19627-42)

There can be (almost) no doubt that what is being described is castration. Where Alain has compulsively made his metaphors ambiguous or paradoxical, Jean provides an example of how ambiguous metaphors can be appropriated by an unscrupulous reader and how slippage can occur in the rewriting of existing texts. The loss of the seal of Venus, the *sigillum Veneris*, could mean the loss of genitals or it could mean the loss of reproduction, the end-point and thus the seal of the sexual act. In the French it is rendered a *signe d'estre malles* (a 'sign of masculinity'), the loss of which is much more likely to mean castration, especially when used in conjunction with so many metaphors that unambiguously refer to male sexual organs. In fact, Genius in the *Rose* makes repeated and insistent use of metaphors of tools – hammers, anvils, pens, tablets, ploughs – for genitals in a way that is far less ambiguous than Alain, though not free from the queerness and deviation with which metaphor is inextricably bound.

The translation into French also sees a switch in tone. The measured and elegant condemnation found in the Latin source has now come to be a hysterical and repetitive screaming. This Genius, far from being any figure of genuine authority,

is shown to be quite unbalanced, so preoccupied is he with the preservation of the human race, not to mention fetishistically obsessed with genitalia. His clothing as a bishop is shown to be a travesty,[53] as becomes fully clear later on in his rambling sermon, which, in contrast to the very short speech of Alain's Genius, goes on for some 2000 lines. As we saw earlier, the French Genius preaches about the (only) slightly preposterous Parc de l'Agneau in which heaven is described as a park.[54] Its occupants are witless sheep whose chief pleasure is eating to their hearts' content and in order to gain entrance to the park, these sheep must have as much procreative sex as possible. This monomaniac vision of a world revolving around the hysterical preservation of heterosex is a provocative reading of Alain's arguably unbalanced take on human sexuality, and it also picks up on the self-contradictory nature of the *De plantu naturae*'s unstable message. Just as Alain is translating the 'indécidable impropriété' of sodomy into language, so Jean de Meun is translating not simply the literal content of Alain's text but also the unspoken and inappropriate self-contradiction of Alain's impossible exclusion of the queer. After calling for castration, Genius will go on to to say that '[g]ranz pechiez est d'ome escoillier' (it is a great sin to castrate a man)(20020), when discussing Jupiter's forcible removal of his father Saturn's testicles. Self-contradiction is taken furthest in Genius' metaphor of reading and writing for sex (as outlined in the passage quoted above), which is a deliberately perverse poetic translation, a deliberately falsifying *falsigraphia*. Taking Alain's metaphor of Venus writing and miswriting, Jean rewrites and twists its original model to create a text that bears some resemblance to its predecessor but which has deviated and carries with it new meanings, just as the artistic productions drawn with the left hand of Alain's Genius are shadowy perversions of their natural models. The *Roman de la rose* itself does more literally what Genius says that sodomites do metaphorically. They

> pervertissent l'escriture
> quant il vienent a la lecture.

[53] Cf. discussion of the artificial nature of clothing at pp. 62-76 and pp. 140-42.
[54] Cf. pp. 44 and 50.

(pervert the writing when they come to reading it (/lecturing).)[55]
(19631-32)

Jean de Meun has, in his reading of the *De planctu*, changed the words and the sense of the received text and his new production has deviated from the French Genius' ideal of a faithful, direct reproduction. However, Genius himself is not aware that he himself is a perverse figure appearing in a perverse text. He demands faithful logical transmission of texts (or straight, strictly procreational sex) following Alain's Natura. In the *De planctu* Natura tells us that she banned rhetorical devices and imagery from Venus' workshop when tasking her with the work of reproduction. Instead, as we saw earlier, the optimal model is that of the syllogism, standing in metaphorically for straight sex, an undeviating and controlled logical process of reproduction that excludes pleasure and deviation. True heterosexual reproduction, like straight writing or a perfect, lossless translation, does not embellish or seek originality, but rather is the faithful recopying of the original model, the transmission of a scribe rather than that of an author.

POETIC CREATION: QUEER REPRODUCTION

This heteronormative fantasy, both of controlled reproductive sexuality and of the controlled transmission of ideas without slippage, is shown in both texts to be impossible and self-defeating. There is always a deviation, a degree of loss (and, in fact, gain) in metaphor and in translation, and especially in rhetorical or poetic translation. If writing is being used as a metaphor for the practices and regulation of sexual desire, the conclusion to be drawn then is that the imperative issued by both Geniuses to be totally straight is as impossible as a perfect translation.

Figures of writing make it possible to explore sexual desire and drive in otherwise impossible ways. But how might the sexual drive help to understand processes of writing? Giorgio Agamben's concept of Genius, as in the *Roman de la rose* and the *De planctu naturae*, is as an unindividuated and universal force, a

[55] We are told Genius is himself reading out a text that Nature has dictated to him, although we have no way of ascertaining whether he does so faithfully.

common natural drive or series of drives and his analysis is useful in thinking about the relationship between desire and artistic production. For Agamben,

> Genius non è solo spiritualità, non riguarda soltanto le cose che siamo abituati a considerare piú nobili e alte. Tutto l'impersonale in noi è geniale, geniale è innanzitutto la forza che spinge il sangue nelle nostre vene o ci fa sprofondare nel sonno, l'ignota potenza che nel nostro corpo regola e distribuisce cosí soavemente il tepore e scioglie o contrae le fibre dei nostri muscoli. È Genius che oscuramente presentiamo nell'intimità della nostra vita fisiologica, là dove il piú proprio è il piú estraneo e impersonale, il piú vicino è il piú remoto e impadroneggiabile. Se non ci abbandonassimo a Genius, se fossimo soltanto Io e coscienza, non potremmo nemmeno orinare. Vivere con Genius significa, in questo senso, vivere nell'intimità di un essere estraneo, tenersi costantemente in relazione con una zona di non-conoscenza.
> (Genius is not merely spirituality and is not just concerned with the things that we customarily regard as higher and more noble. Everything in us that is impersonal is genial. The force that pushes the blood through our veins or that plunges us into sleep, the unknown power in our body that gently regulates and distributes its warmth or that relaxes or contracts the fibers of our muscles-that too is genial. It is Genius that we obscurely sense in the intimacy of our physiological life, in which what is most one's own is also strange and impersonal, and in which what is nearest somehow remains distant and escapes mastery. If we did not abandon ourselves to Genius, if we were only ego and consciousness, we would not even be able to urinate. Living with Genius means, in this sense, living in the intimacy of a strange being, remaining constantly in relation to a zone of nonconsciousness.)[56]

Genius, then, is the a-rational, physiological mechanism that preserves life. It is everything about our bodies that is outside of our control. Yet Genius is meaningless unless it is put into contact with an individual, just as for Aristotle, matter can have no sense unless combined with form. Each individual is a combination of ego, the conscious, thinking, deciding part, the part where our identity is lodged, and Genius, the system of physiological existence and unconscious movement. How does this link to writing and artistic creation?

[56] Giorgio Agamben, *Profanazioni* (Rome: Nottetempo, 2005), pp. 10-11. Translation from Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations*, trans. by Jeff Fort (New York: Zone, 2008), p. 11.

> Qual è, allora, per Io, il modo migliore di testimoniare di Genius? Supponiamo che Io voglia scrivere. Scrivere non questa o quell'opera, soltanto scrivere, e basta. Questo desiderio significa: Io sento che da qualche parte Genius esiste, che vi è in me una potenza impersonale che spinge alla scrittura. Ma l'ultima cosa di cui Genius ha bisogno è un'opera, lui che non ha mai preso in mano una penna (e tanto meno un computer). Si scrive per diventare impersonali, per diventare geniali e, tuttavia, scrivendo, ci individuiamo come autori di questa o quell'opera, ci allontaniamo da Genius, che non può mai avere la forma di un Io, e tanto meno di un autore.
> (What, then, is the best way for Ego to testify to Genius? Suppose the ego wants to write - not to write this or that work, but simply to write, period. This desire means: I (Ego) feel that somewhere Genius exists, that there is in me an impersonal power that presses toward writing. But this Genius, who has never taken up a pen (much less a computer) - has no inclination to produce a work. One writes in order to become impersonal, to become genial, and yet, in writing, we individuate ourselves as authors of this or that work; we move away from Genius, who can never have the form of an ego, much less that of an author.)[57]

It is impossible to create to even the smallest degree without some conscious decision, without individuation, without ego. The ego is both the condition for and necessary cause of originality and of deviation from the unindividuated, physical and uniform drive, which it nevertheless seeks to appease in writing. Neither the Natura of the *De planctu* nor the Genius of the *Rose*, both abstract concepts of physics or physiology that have artificially been given speaking voices, grasp the concept of the ego and individuation. Writing, painting, or sculpting require the combination of the impersonal drive of Genius and the personal choices of the ego. These personal choices result in deviation from the given model, a translation that cannot be truly faithful, that strays from the wholly natural path and that results in the queerness at the heart of all artistic creation.

Questions of sexuality, as we have seen, are inextricably interwoven with ideas of writing and artistic creation. This is nowhere clearer than in the person of Orpheus, the Classical figure who narrates most of Book X of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and who, apart from his foray into the Underworld, is known for

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

two things. He is a symbol of artistic creation, thanks to the amazing power of his music, and he is a symbol for sodomy, thanks to his preference for young boys as his sexual companions and his rejection of the female sex after the death of Eurydice that led to his death at the hands of the Thracian women. As mentioned earlier, in the *De planctu*, Natura describes the descent into sodomy in metaphorical terms as mankind being crazed into sexual deviancy by the power of Orpheus' lyre, and the separating line there between seductive art and alluring sexual licentiousness is so thin as to be barely discernible. Orpheus makes only one appearance in the *Rose*, but Sylvia Huot is undoubtedly right to detect his ghost haunting the whole poetic enterprise.[58] Jean de Meun alludes to Natura's description of the following of Orpheus when he has his Genius condemn sodomites who

> [...] Orpheüs veulent ansivre,
> qui ne sot arer ne escrivre
> ne forgier en la droite forge
> (panduz soit il par mi la gorge!)
> (want to follow Orpheus, who did not know how to plough nor to write, nor to hammer at the correct forge (may he be hanged from the neck!)) (19621-24)

Orpheus' importance as a symbol of artistic creation is left unspoken but present, hanging over the condemnation of those who write against Nature, those who have sex for pleasure, who write for pleasure, who commit acts *contra naturam*. It is not, though, until we come to the figure of Pygmalion that the contradictions of Orpheus are fully brought to life and the productive power of sodomy is brought to the fore.

In Book X of *Metamorphoses*, a lovesick, mourning Orpheus himself sings of Pygmalion who scorns women (the predicate abandoning the subject, to follow the *De planctu Naturae*'s metaphor of the syllogism) and so, using his art, he fashions a beautiful female sculpture with which he falls in love.[59] The interaction of ego and Genius identified by Agamben is at work in harnessing the

[58] Sylvia Huot, *Dreams of Lovers*, p. 56.
[59] *Metamorphoses*, X. 243-97.

artistic drive which is inextricable from the sexual urge. Pygmalion ends up praying to the gods to bring the artificial object of his unnatural love to life, a prayer granted by Venus.

Jean de Meun's telling of the story takes place just after Genius' sermon and immediately before the final penetrative sex scene that finishes the *Rose*. In this French version, Pygmalion is racked by the passion of his unnatural desire, which 'est si horrible / qu'el ne vient mie de Nature' (is so horrible that it cannot come from Nature) (20832-33), and so prays to Venus through the playing of all sorts of musical instruments in an attempt to animate the inanimate object.

> [Puis] prent freteaus et refretele;
> et chalumeaus, et chalumele;
> et tabor et fleüste et tymbre,
> et tabore et fleüste et tymbre;
> et cythole et tronpe et chevrie,
> et cythole et tronpe et chevrie;
> et psalterion et vïele,
> et psalterion et vïele.
> (Then he takes a panpipe and pipes on it, and a reed-pipe and pipes on that; and his drum, flute, and timbrel he drums, flutes, and timbrels; and his citole, trumpet, and bagpipe he citoles, trumpets, and pipes; and his psaltery and his fiddle he psalteries and fiddles.) (21013-20)

He is, as Genius might say, following Orpheus, attempting to use the power of song to move objects and control nature as Orpheus did. He is also following Orpheus through his refusal to use his figurative hammers – testicles – to sculpt literal human beings in the 'natural', straight way commanded by Genius.[60] He has, rather, used a literal hammer to make a figure of a human being. The metaphors are flying out of control here, as they do in the *De planctu*, and the only way they can be resolved is through silence or by paradox. Where Alain opted for *aporia* at the end of his work, Jean de Meun grasps the paradox with both hands. Through the intervention of the Venus – or, metonymically, sexual desire – Pygmalion's misuse of his hammer, in sculpting an artificial object for his lust *contra naturam*, leads to a parodically queer kind of reproduction. The

[60] Cf. Huot, *Dreams of Lovers*, p. 79.

sculpture comes to life. At this stage, the *Rose* surpasses the *De planctu Naturae*. Where the Latin text has suggested that figurative, poetic writing is hopelessly shot through with queerness, the French poem takes the idea further and shows how queerness, how art/sodomy, how the pursuit of pleasure following a passion that is undoubtedly *contra naturam* – it 'ne vient mie de Nature' – can lead to reproduction outside of 'natural' heterosex; it can lead to the production of art. Rather than the shadowy images drawn with Genius' left hand as depicted by Alain, Jean shows the power of individuated desire, of the ego, to combine with Genius to produce art that, speaking metaphorically of course, has a life of its own.

The association between sexual intercourse and art does not stop there, however. Pygmalion marries his now living but nameless sculpture and they have children. The artist has sexual intercourse, possibly incestuously,[61] with his unnatural offspring, a living work of art, in order to continue his lineage. If as has often been suggested, the Pygmalion story emblematizes the process of poetic creation,[62] the artist having sex with his creation can be read metaphorically as a writer spawning textual offspring, reproducing new versions of his own text through translating, adapting or continuing it. It is far less incestuous, however, to have sex with someone else's work of art. Jean de Meun has taken the first part of the *Roman de la Rose*, written by Guillaume de Lorris, and like Pygmalion having sex with his sculpture has caused the text to reproduce, to produce a new *Rose*, just as the *Rose* would be continued, adapted, abridged or aped in the centuries that were to follow. Sexual intercourse can be just as much a metaphor for writing as the other way around. Medieval authorship and creation, and indeed translation, involve taking earlier materials and reworking them through the mediation of an author into something new. If, for the *De planctu*, poetry, and

[61] Incest recurs further down the family tree in *Metamorphoses*, when Pygmalion's granddaughter, Myrrha falls in love with her father, Cinyras, and tricks him into sleeping with her, as Orpheus recounts immediately after the Pygmalion story at X. 298-502. The misbegotten child of her incest is Adonis (*Rose*, 21171-73), with whom Venus will fall in love and whose story is told by La Vieille (15647-15720). Huot notes that, 'Jean's Pygmalion absorbs the tainted aura of 'unnaturalness' that Ovid identified with Myrrha.' (*Dreams of Lovers*, p. 78).

[62] Cf., for example, Hill, *op. cit.*; Kevin Brownlee, 'Orpheus' Song Re-Sung: Jean de Meun's Reworking of *Metamorphoses*, X', *Romance Philology*, 36:2 (1982), 201-209; and, more recently, Reinier Leushuis, 'Pygmalion's Folly and the Author's Craft in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose*', *Neophilologus*, 90: 4 (2006), 521-33.

by extension art, is queer, then the *Rose* shows how queer art can be productive and life-giving, as well as pleasurable and unsettling. Artistic or literary creation, with the attendant pleasure that it causes, preserves an idea and transverses it, transmits it in a new way through new texts just as sexual reproduction, with the attendant pleasure that it causes, continues the human species by resulting in new individuals.[63] The author, inescapably gendered as masculine, metaphorically couples with the female body of the text and queerly creates his literary offspring.

Both the *De planctu Naturae* and the *Roman de la rose* wrestle, or play, with the question of excluding queerness from a vision of 'natural', perfectly straight, sexual activity, and both demonstrate the productive paradoxes of the restless deviation of figurative language. The only way to remain totally straight is not to write or to speak or think; it is to abolish the ego, and be no more than an unindividuated sex-machine. This kind of untroubled total heterosexuality is shown to be impossible for humans, certainly for fallen sinful humans. Queerness and artistic creation go hand in hand, and the more original the piece of art the queerer it is. For all the focus on nature as a principle which gives order and moral purpose to the world, the *Rose* seems, in a conflicted and uncomfortable way, to celebrate its own fallen nature. While in the Faculty of Theology discussions of human nature tended to consider man as he was in Eden before the Fall, Jean de Meun is much more concerned with the complexity of human nature in these postlapsarian times.

[63] Cf. Raison's Aristotelian treatment of sexual desire and reproduction discussed at p. 197.

Conclusion

A FLAWED BUT USEFUL ARTEFACT

Nature and the natural appear to be the guarantors of morality and order yet it is abundantly clear that attempts to access the purely natural and the perfect are doomed to failure when the only tools available are artificial (although tools are always already artificial).[1] There is, then, a dichotomy – or rather, an abyssal disjunction – between the compromised, artificial constructions of fallen humans and the unadulterated, natural living available in Eden (or during the Golden Age as represented by the various fictions of the *Rose*). Art may imitate nature, but only as far as it can ('in quantum potest'),[2] which is to say that art can never fully succeed in assimilating itself to nature and can never be more than nature's monkey, limited to producing imperfect imitations of natural things.[3]

The spectres of the Neoplatonist Alain de Lille and his figure Natura with her damning complaint about human sinfulness, haunt the *Rose*,[4] and this despite the Aristotelian science to which a wealth of allusions are made both by the French Nature and by other speakers in the text. Jean de Meun's extensive borrowing from the *De planctu Naturae* is not simply parody, even if moments – particularly during Genius' discussions of women and sodomy – are parodic. In the *Rose*, as in the *De planctu*, the prehistoric catastrophe of the Fall shattered the bond between humans and nature resulting in the need for artificial productions. Such productions are necessarily compromised, made as they are by compromised humans who have lost the grace of the first parents.[5] These compromised humans are often in thrall to their desires and appetites, and unaided reason is no longer sufficient to guide them to knowledge, to correct living, and ultimately to heaven, or at the very least, towards a natural, ethical way of living on the

[1] Cf. the discussion of Zeuxis at pp. 148-50.
[2] Thomas Aquinas, *Ex. post. anal.*, I. 1. 53; p. 5.
[3] Cf. p. 218.
[4] My use of this concept is informed by Helen Swift's theorising of intertextual haunting or 'spectropoetics'. Cf. Helen J. Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance: Men Defending Women in Late Medieval France, 1440-1538* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2008), pp. 18-99.
[5] Cf. pp. 52-61.

terrestrial plane ('in hac vita').[6] Instead, those in thrall to appetite need to be lured by their appetites towards the good. We repeatedly see the staging of stupidity and sin caused by misplaced appetite in the *Rose*, in the figures of Ami, La Vieille, and, of course, Amant, not to mention characters from history or myth, such as Appius the lustful judge in Raison's speech, satirical clichés, such as Le Jaloux, and the wider category of all of the desiring hypocrites for whom Faux Semblant claims to stand. According to Nature, all animals other than humans follow her rules and are thus purely natural. Humans – *animales rationales* – without the guidance of theoretical reasoning and the moral framework that might follow from reason do not, however, become more natural because closer to the animals, but rather they become monstrous creatures going against the order of nature.[7] (They also go against their individual natures in the Aristotelian senses of a nature either as a formal or a final cause.) For all the humour and playfulness in the *Rose* there is a profound unease at the disorder caused to the human soul by uncontrolled unnatural desire, of which the exemplary kind is avarice.

The *Rose*, though, is not a pessimistic text, even if it treats human failings in a far more sustained and consistent manner than is generally acknowledged. Nor is it ascetic or puritanical; pleasure is not held up as wholly or even predominantly evil but is, in fact, essential for moral and spiritual progress. The narrative thrust of the whole poem is the pursuit of pleasure (delit), which, if used correctly, can lead to knowledge or wisdom (profit). If fallen humans are somewhat bestial, despite being generally if incompletely rational, appeals to reason will have only limited success. Thus arises the need for entertainment, for rhetorical or literary performance that appeals to the passions and to desire. Having said that, Amant, the lustful pilgrim, does not make any serious moral or intellectual progress. Essentially he rejects the idiotic ideology of courtly love only to embrace a nihilistic hypocrisy, interested only in satisfying his appetite. The success of his sexual project does not mark spiritual discovery or growth but rather the orgasmic effacement or forgetting of reason (and Raison). The subjects who are

[6] Cf. pp. 10-12.
[7] Cf. chapter 2.

supposed to learn and who are being led to greater knowledge are not any characters within the text but its readers.

THE *ROSE*'S MORAL AGENDA

Modern readings of the *Rose* have tended either to avoid discussing the text's moral agenda(s) or to assert the impossibility of identifying any secure ethical position in the text beyond the undermining of all authority. This places an overwhelming emphasis on the pleasure or the *delit* afforded by a text that is explicitly about love and pleasure, while neglecting what the *profit* or intellectual gain might be. Again and again, this thesis has returned to the touchstone that is Faux Semblant whose interpretation is key for how a reader understands the *Rose* and its agenda. If the ethical and satirical dimensions of his depiction are put to one side he stands only for the indeterminacy of the *Rose*, literature, and language generally, a reading which makes the text cyclical, amoral, or even immoral, like Faux Semblant himself. The *Rose* has come to be seen as an enjoyable puzzle that intrigues and entertains. But is that its primary purpose? As Raison points out when discussing love, we should not mistake the means for the end, since the end of sexual pleasure is the continuation of the species. Amant makes just this mistake in choosing sexual pleasure as his ultimate goal. Avaricious merchants do the same believing that the accumulation of coin is an end in itself rather than the means to satisfying material wants. It is made explicit several times in the *Rose* that in an analogous way the purpose of putting pleasure in a rhetorical or poetic text is the means to lead to the end of acquiring knowledge or correct ethical beliefs.[8] Of course, we do not have to take these assertions at face value. The delight we might take in the text does not solely serve the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and it would be naive and misguided to take such a po-faced, utilitarian view of the multifaceted comedy. However, to focus excessively on the *Rose* as entertainment and to see the philosophical debates as subordinate to the jokes and literary games is to misread the poem. Jean de Meun does not engage with Aristotelian philosophy, with Boethius, with the controversies over Guillaume de Saint-Amour's *De periculis novissorum temporum*, with optics, with Cicero simply in order to

[8] Cf. chapter 3, pp. 125-26.

entertain. There is a reason why the overwhelming majority of the texts cited or referred to in the *Rose* are Latin and scholarly. Jean de Meun, almost certainly a teacher in the Arts Faculty of the University of Paris,[9] adapts a vast range of erudite material from scholarly texts into accessible and witty French verse. A lay audience, less able than *clercs* to follow the more rational argumentation of dialectic, needs to be distracted in order to learn and is given an ethical and metaphysical education tailored to its intellectual needs. It is perhaps unsurprising that Jean de Meun was to become an emblematic figure of clerical authority (at least to his supporters) in later disputes about the value of his text, disputes conducted outside the context of the University. The pose that in Jean's writing 'toute est por anseignemant' (15173) should not, of course, be taken at face value, and the very real paradoxes of the *Rose* cannot be brushed under the carpet. In fact, one of the strongpoints of recent *Rose* scholarship and its focus on the stylistic and 'literary' aspects of the text has been to show how important paradox and irreducibility are to its meaning. On one level – the level of *delit* – paradoxes such as Raison speaking unreasonably, to give a particular example, or, more generally, the repeated inconsistency and impossibility of the allegory, are hugely appealing. The extraordinary process of interweaving allusions and imagery across over 20 000 verses makes literal or simple, consistent, overarching allegorical interpretations impossible but rather affords the reader the kind of delight one might feel on witnessing an extraordinary feat of acrobatics. However, this virtuosity is not just an end in itself. It has been my contention throughout this thesis that the *Rose* engages with thirteenth-century philosophy in a serious and radical fashion, and the paradoxes, difficulty, and self-contradiction of the text are part of its philosophical engagement and its teaching, its *profit*.

David Rollo has shown the 'hermaphroditic' pleasure afforded by textual paradoxes.[10] The perversity of such pleasure is appropriate for perverse humans, particularly when it stems from a paradox that bears witness to a fundamental

[9] Even were he not a *maître-ès-arts*, he certainly lived and worked in an academic milieu and the *Rose* itself demonstrates an intimate knowledge of the texts and debates current in the Arts Faculty in the third quarter of the thirteenth century. Cf. p. 5.
[10] Rollo, *Kiss My Relics*.

uncertainty about the whole process of knowledge acquisition through rational or logical enquiry. All artificial productions are in one sense against nature, or rather outside of nature and they always fail to achieve the simplicity and perfection of nature. Nature, as Aristotle says, does nothing in vain,[11] and every creature has an end. Artificial (and, still more, artistic) productions are less perfect than natural creatures and will at times do things in vain and deviate from their end. For all that pleasure should ideally be directed towards profit, there will be occasions when the flawed artificial production will be useless. There will be moments in which consideration of the entertaining surface of the text does not lead to greater understanding and, as with courtly love or avarice, or sodomy, unnatural pleasure and infinite desire will disrupt any totalitarian attempts to control meaning and to impose usefulness on a text. Not everything in a literary work can be ordered towards a nobler cause and the *Rose*, in its paradoxes, signals its own artificial, imperfect nature, emphasising the unrecuperable and pleasurable uselessness that is at the heart of any artificial, poetic creation and, ultimately, at the heart of all human endeavour. Alain de Lille signals something similar in the *De planctu* but is more concerned with highlighting the paradox than he is with seeing it as in any way positive. In a manner very different to dialectical works of philosophy, self-contradiction highlights the importance of uncertainty in the processes of establishing truth and acquiring knowledge. This, perhaps, explains the relentless play of paradoxes in a text that promises to educate its readers. The *Rose*'s scope for sustaining self-contradiction and irrationality allows for Nature to be framed metaphorically and paradoxically as an artisan, hammering humans and other animals into existence. It allows Genius to sermonise about a theologically dubious heaven, and it places at its centre the figure of Faux Semblant whose incisive account of hypocrisy and mendacity is given by a figure unapologetic about his own untrustworthiness. This last move, presenting knowledge in the frame of a fiction, that is to say in a text whose relationship to truth is never assured, is an analogy for the philosophy of the *Rose*. The knowledge promised is always incomplete, and it signals the incompleteness of all human attempts at knowledge and the limitations of any human authority. Such uncertainty places a

[11] *Politics*, I. 2, 1253a9; *On the Heavens*, I. 4, 217a33.

greater interpretative load on the reader or listener who must decide what value there is in a useful but always flawed authority. The flawed nature of the text is, then, formative and necessary for bringing flawed readers closer to the always limited knowledge to which their always limited reason has access. The 1270s saw (at least the fear of) the assertion of philosophy as sufficient on its own to live a happy life. In the *Rose* the knowledge gained from poetry or from philosophy is on its own insufficient for a good life, however understood. Jean places Genius' discussion of the necessity of following the Lamb to get to heaven, figured as a slightly (though certainly not wholly) absurd Parc de l'Agneau where happy sheep live in a state of pure nature, just before the Pygmalion story that emblematises unnatural paradox of the productive work of art and the end of the text. Salvation and the mystery of the trinitary crystal into which the heavenly sheep gaze occur just before an example of perverse artistic creation.

THE ARTIFICIAL TEXT: FICTION AND KNOWLEDGE

I propose an understanding of the *Roman de la rose* as a hybrid, imperfect project whose aim is the necessarily imperfect and incomplete use of enjoyment for intellectual and spiritual profit, which is to say, for education.[12] If no literary text is ever 'just literature' or 'just for entertainment' and always has an epistemological, or at the very least ideological, function the *Rose* is closer to philosophy than most. In this thesis I have started to scratch the surface of the *Rose*'s debt to and dialogue with contemporary philosophy and thought. I hope to have shown the need for literary scholars to engage more thoroughly with thirteenth-century thought in order to understand the poem. I hope also to persuade intellectual historians to read the *Rose* more closely. Its disguise as an octosyllabic poem about a love affair, which allowed its philosophy to survive the tense intellectual atmosphere of 1270s Paris, has fooled them into leaving it for the literary scholars rather than treating it as a text important for the history of ideas. Jean de Meun was, though, undoubtedly among the most intelligent and innovative writers of the Middle Ages in his use of the vernacular to convey knowledge and to incite intellectual activity. The *Roman de la rose* makes a significant contribution to medieval discussions of what nature and the natural

[12] Cf. *DDC*, I. 3. 7; pp. 14-15.

mean and how artificial (and, in particular, cultural) productions can be understood in relation to human ontology, epistemology, and ethics. As such, it merits greater consideration and more sustained attention by intellectual historians; it merits being treated as philosophical text, although of a kind *sui generis* requiring techniques of reading wholly different from other medieval works of philosophy.

Jean de Meun is not, however, the only French medieval literary author to use verse as a medium for thinking about what nature means or how it relates to the artificial literary text. He is not even the only author of the *Roman de la rose* to do so. The overwhelming focus of this thesis has been on Jean's continuation, and the dazzling range and sophistication of his 17 000 verses has often overshadowed Guillaume's less celebrated first section. If Aristotle's distinction between the natural and the artificial is a cornerstone of late thirteenth-century natural philosophy, in the work of Jean de Meun as much as in the work of Thomas Aquinas, the poetic tradition also demonstrates an awareness of the artificial and of the difficulties and paradoxes of attempting to represent nature. In Guillaume de Lorris' section of the *Rose*, Amant famously makes the mistake of looking into the fountain in which Narcissus saw his own reflection and fell in love with it. It is in the double crystal and the bottom of this fountain that Amant sees half of Deduit's orchard reflected and in which he spies the most beautiful rosebud in the garden, before he is shot repeatedly by Amor and becomes a slave to desire. The self-consciously intertextual fountain recalls other intertextual, artisanal (and thus artificial) productions appearing in medieval romances that inscribe earlier literary events, such as the saddle on Enide's palfrey in Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide*, on which the whole story of Dido and Æneas is represented.[13] Guillaume's fountain differs from the ekphrastic model, however, and is described as follows:

> En un trop biau leu arivé,
> en un destor, ou je trové
> une fontaine soz un pin.

[13] Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec et Enide*, ed. by Mario Roques, Classiques françaises du Moyen Âge (Paris: Champion, 1952), 5289-98.

Mes puis Charle ne puis Pepin
ne fu ausi biaus pins veüz,
et si estoit si hauz creüz
qu'el vergier n'ot nul plus haut arbre.
Dedenz une piere de mabre
ot Nature par grant mestrise
soz le pin la fontaine asise;
si ot desus la pierre escrites
el bort amont letres petites,
qui disoient, ilec desus
estoit morz li biau Narcisus.
(I arrived in a most beautiful place, in a clearing, where I found a fountain underneath a pine tree. Never since the time of Charlemagne or the time of Pepin had such a beautiful pine tree been seen, and it had grown so high that there was no higher tree in the whole orchard. Through her great artistry Nature had situated the fountain within a marble stone under the pine, and on the stone were written, on the upper edge, little letters which said, 'On this spot died beautiful Narcissus.') (1423-36)

If Jean drew attention to the figure of Nature the artisan at her forge to think through the paradoxes of representing natural processes in an artificial text, he is taking his cue from Guillaume de Lorris. In this passage, a philosophically impossible fiction (Nature, figured as a subject capable of volition) has used artistry to make this fountain. The term 'mestrise' can mean authority or power, but more than that it denotes craftsmanship and skill, which is to say, artifice, the shaping of natural material by an external force. Nature cannot produce the artificial, therefore the only way to make sense of this image is to read it as a metaphor – an unnatural or artificial use of language[14] – with the persona of Nature used to represent the fact that the fountain occurred naturally. Such a reading is somewhat strained, however, and does not efface the impossibility of a suitably sized piece of marble naturally occurring under a pine tree in an orchard, and in any case an orchard represents an artificial mastery over untamed nature. This fountain then is shot through with unnatural paradox. For all that the narrator tells us that the fountain has been fashioned by Nature, it is the cause of Narcissus' unnatural, hopeless, and infinite desire for an image of himself that foreshadows Amant's love for the Rose not to mention the repeated motif of unnatural and infinite, male-male sexual desire and sodomy. How natural, then,

[14] Cf. p. 213, n. 31.

is this fountain, which exists in a literary fiction? Some manuscript minatures show the fountain as a stream flowing under the tree with no ostensible marks of sculpture whereas other versions show a manmade fountain set in a garden.[15] The confusion is indicative of the uncertainty figured by the fountain. It stands as the focal point of Deduit's garden, which is as fictional and literary (and hence artificial) as the fountain, Narcissus, and the Ovidian myth in which both feature. The fountain is also a way of understanding the text. In fact, the fountain *is* a written text. Rather than the ekphrasis of an artefact visually representing an earlier text against which to read the present one in other romances, the fountain is inscribed with the text of an earlier story: 'ilec desus /estoit morz li biau Narcisus.' It is not clear whether it is Nature herself who wrote the letters onto the fountain or a later writer or sculptor.[16] The text of the fountain blends into the text of the *Rose*. The poem immediately continues thus:

> Narcisus fu uns demoisiaus
> qui Amors tint en ses raisiaus.
> (Narcissus was a young man whom Love trapped in his nets.)
> (1437-38)

A reworking of Ovid's story of Narcissus and Echo follows and it is never totally clear if the narrator is reading the story from the fountain or if the story is a later addition on the part of the narrator and all that was written is the 'here died Narcissus' notice. Guillaume de Lorris makes the *Roman de la rose* – which Jean will later called the *Miroër aus Amoreus* (*Mirror for Lovers*) (10621) – into a text that is wholly compromised by its fictional and artificial status and which self-consciously if not wholly seriously signals itself as a dangerous mirror capable of provoking unnatural desire. Guillaume de Lorris' poem is insistent in its

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[15] Cf. For natural fountains cf. Albi, Bibliothèque municipale d'Albi, Rochegude 103, fol. 10v; Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 5226, fol. 12r. For artificial fountains, cf. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Douce 332, fol. 17r; Paris, BnF français 380, fol. 10v; Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ludwig XV 7, fol. 11r. More examples can be consulted at the *Roman de la Rose* Digital Library: www.romandelarose.org.

[16] In addition, it is not wholly clear whether the letters are painted onto the surface or en graved into it. The latter option would link Narcissus' fountain with the figure of Nature hammering on her forge in Jean's text and, still more, with the sculptor Pygmalion whose narrative appears at the end of Jean's text as a symbol for artistic creation. In any case, the presence of letters on a stone object that is associated with 'mestrise' clearly suggests the close association of writing with sculpture and the possibility of using one to think the other in the *Rose*.

artificiality. Another striking example is the walking text that is Amor, whose clothing is formed by the representations of natural creatures – flowers and animals – made by the ingenious patterning of real flowers.

> Mes de sa robe deviser
> crien durement qu'encombré soie,
> qu'il n'avoit pas robe de soie,
> ainz avoit robe de floreites,
> fete par fines amoreites.
> A losenges, a escuciaus,
> a oiselez, a lionciaus
> et a betes et a liparz
> fu sa robe de toutes parz
> portrete, et ovree de flors
> par diversité de colors.
> (But I greatly fear myself to be incapable of describing his robe, for he did not have a robe of silk but a robe of little flowers made by delicate little love-affairs. The robe was covered all over with pictures of lozenges, shields, little birds, lion-cubs and beasts and leopards, and worked with flowers of a whole range of colours.)
> (874-84)

The 'real' flowers which form the robe are themselves impossibly (or metaphorically, and hence artificially) made by delicate little love-affairs. In turn they then become the artificial representations of natural beasts. Amor, a metonym for human sexual desire, wears allegorical flowers that become ekphrastic animals, thus forming trope upon trope of layered artifice. The only truth that can be easily identified, the only underlying natural reality is physical desire possibly hinted at by the figures of natural animals. In fact, the one truth that this first part of the *Rose* promises with any degree of certainty is that at some point a young man experienced overwhelming sexual desire. The literary games that result from this are a testament to the constructed nature of *fin'amor* and the role that artificial texts and conventions play in provoking or exacerbating this desire, which has its ultimate origin in the natural. The apparent presence of the figure of Nature in relation to Narcissus' fountain and her ultimate impossibility only heightens the overwhelming artificiality of the text. Jean has taken advantage of the extreme artificiality of Guillaume's poem to investigate what might be natural and to use the lens of paradoxical, artificial, poetic fictions to think about the ontology and the ethics of the natural. In this

light, Genius' rewriting of Deduit's orchard as the Parc de l'Agneau at the end of the text can function loosely as an analogy for Jean's poetic project as a whole. Guillaume de Lorris' garden has its dual artificial crystal that leads to perverse and fruitless desire. Genius' park has a divine triple crystal that surpasses both natural and artificial and brings knowledge not accessible to unaided mortals.[17] Guillaume's *Rose*, like Alain de Lille's *De planctu*, demonstrates the circularity of perverse desire. Throughout his text, though, Jean uses perversity and desire as a tool for engineering greater knowledge in his readers in order ultimately to bring them towards spiritual and moral improvement.

Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose* is a new way of presenting knowledge that is based around entertainment and uncertainty. The key word for understanding why and how the *Rose* does philosophy might be distraction. Due to our imperfections, fallen humans become distracted (confused) and so need to be distracted (entertained) in order to be educated. The *Rose* in fact stages both kinds of distraction. It stages the imperfections of human understanding and then offers itself as an imperfect remedy to those imperfections. The entertainment thus becomes philosophical, or philosophy to be effective has to become rhetorical and has to become entertaining, as Cicero suggested in *De inventione*. This poetico-philosophical method is a serious game; it uses pleasurable lies to tell the truth through a poem that is always also metaphorically a distorting lens or mirror. The *Rose*, though, is not simply a dumbing down of philosophy to make it accessible to a non-scholastic audience. It also uses the distorting methods of artificial fiction and the associations made possible by metaphorical language to weave a tapestry of the world in which courtly love can usefully be understood through avarice, in which money can be considered in relation to sodomy, in which the animal side of human nature can be used to understand both sexual desire and abuses of power, and in which the act of writing and artificial creation is understood through all of these things just as it is the means by which they are understood. For all that it encompasses a

[17] Cf. Kevin Brownlee, 'Jean de Meun and the Limits of Romance: Genius as a Rewriter of Guillaume de Lorris', in *Romance: Generic Transformation from Chrétien de Troyes to Cervantes*, ed. by Kevin Brownlee and Marina Scordilis Brownlee (Hanover, NH & London: University Press of New England for Dartmouth College, 1985), pp. 114-134.

small world of literary themes, this game is deliberately limited in its scope due to the limitations of human understanding. It is thus an imperfect or incomplete mirror in which the world is reflected. When discussing the difficult problem of free will in relation to divine omniscience, Nature describes God as being Himself a 'mirouer pardurable' (an eternal mirror) (17438), in which He sees all time reflected simultaneously. That perfect mirror is closely linked to the knowledge-giving triple crystal in the Parc de l'Agneau. Such a perfect mirror, a true *Speculum mundi*, is not available to humans outside of heaven so, for better or worse, unless we are fortunate enough to become happy sheep munching grass forever in the eternal spring of heaven, we will have to make do with the pleasurable distortions of art.

Abbreviations

BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
Commentum	Grillius, *Commentum in Ciceronis rhetorica*
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CUP	*Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*
DCD	Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate Dei, libri XXII*
DCP	Boethius, *De consolatione Philosophiae*
DDC	Augustine of Hippo, *De doctrina christiana*
De inv.	Cicero, *De inventione*
De malo	Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones diputatae de malo*
De periculis	Guillaume de Saint-Amour, *De periculis novissimorum temporum*
'De tribus vitiis'	Giles of Rome, 'sermones de tribus vitiis mundi'
DPN	Alain de Lille, *De planctu Naturae*
EMS	Odd Langholm, *Economics in the Medieval Schools*
Etymologiae	Isidore, *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*
Exp. post. anal.	Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri posteriorum*
Explicationes	Marius Victorinus, *Explanationes in Ciceronis rhetoricam*
In Eth.	Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*
In Meta.	Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaphysicam Aristotelis Commentaria*
In Phys.	Thomas Aquinas, *In Octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis Expositio*
In Pol.	Thomas Aquinas, *In libros Politicorum Aristotelis expositio*
In Rhet.	Giles of Rome, *Commentaria in Rhetoricam Aristotelis*
In Somnium	Macrobius, *In Somnium Scipionis expositio*
MGR	*Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric*, ed. by Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter
PG	*Patrologia graeca*, ed. by J.-P. Migne
PL	*Patrologia latina*, ed. by J.-P. Migne
Politicorum	Albert the Great, *Comentarii in octo libros Politicorum*
Rose	Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le roman de la rose* (Félix Lecoy, ed.)

Sent. de anima	Thomas Aquinas, *Sentencia libri 'De anima'*
Sententiae	Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*
ST	Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*
Super Epistolas	Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolas S. Pauli lectura*

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