

Medieval Graduate Colloquium: Fall 2002
 Misogyny, False Semblance and Truth: The Example of Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose*
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INTRODUCTION

First of all, a couple of introductory remarks on the *Roman de la Rose* which might be useful, and which I've put on the handout.

The "major parts" most frequently looked at in the *Roman de la Rose* are the long speeches of Reason, Nature, and Genius. "Major" due to length, and concentration of (more obvious) reference / intertextual reference to more "major" sources: especially Ovid. Also Reason and Nature seen as more "major" by scholars searching for a female voice in the RR, such as HA, SH, SK, as they are perceived as the appropriate realm of female personifications. Genius as "major" as placed at the end – i.e. looking at the beginning and the end of JdM's section; and, if looking at the work as a whole, looking at the end of JdM's section in relation to GdL's one.

I shall not be presenting a reading of the parts of the RR usually looked at. This is partly as I am working from a different perception of what counts as most "major" (if something absolutely has to), which I hope to show is a more Medieval reading of romance in general, and of this one in particular. It is also partly to fit the necessary parameters of a talk, i.e. not to bore you too much, but whilst giving some idea of how big and hairy this thing is ... The perhaps slightly unorthodox part of the RR which I have chosen to concentrate on is at first glance a fairly small section of text, perhaps appropriate as this should be a fairly short talk.

I cannot hope to cover every possible angle and contextual inter-relationship, but as far as practicable I shall still attempt to keep the whole of the *Rose* in the picture, at least in the background. The operative terms will be context, and reading being fitting and proper, reasonable, appropriate, *vraisemblable* – verisimilitudinous. These fit with contemporary reading; these terms come up in the three texts which would have been extremely important at the time: in Plato's *Timaeus* 29; this was the only Platonic text transmitted as such consistently throughout late antiquity and the middle ages (though much other Plato was known of, as intertext and *materia*, such as through a Boethian-based textual group); they also turn up in Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*, which, besides the Averroes versions (late 12th c), had just been translated into Latin: the former by William of Moerbeke, in the 1260s and 70s, the latter by Boethius of Dacia in the 1270s. Both of whom were based at Paris, where JdM was too ...

There are many further connections to be drawn in the work which can only be hinted at here – intratextual connections, between text and image, and of course the concept of this as a text. And all these are not merely connections to a central text – a central text being the words what be written down on the page, like so ... [FLAP AROUND TALK NOTES] ... but are an intergral part of it, all these parts – the various layers of text, image, other physical features, intertextual allusions so a certain metaphorical, allusive presence of many other texts and images just hinted at – all of them being COMPLEMENTARY parts which together form a whole. This would be aiming towards Peter Dembowski's ideal of "literary criticism combining poetic, iconographical, and codicological research," which he mentions in a review praising Sylvia Huot's exemplary analytical methods.

I shall be talking, then, about that part of the *Rose* devoted to False Semblance. In a first part, I shall discuss this part as being central and to do with "truth." In a second part, I shall look at the figure of "False Semblance." In a third and final part, I shall look at certain contexts – and a certain consort - which suggest a different solution to the ever-burning issue of whether or not the *Rose* is a misogynist work.

I. "TRUTH"

The *Rose* is a romance. At its most basic definition: it is written, in a vernacular, and in verse. It should be fairly long; this is an extreme example. There are certain classic themes – the materials of Rome, Thebes and Britain/Brittany/basically Celtic; these can be extended to include the grey areas of *histories*, "stories" and "histories", hagiographies, mythographies, long lyric, long philosophical poems (indeed, recalling Derrida, "il n'y a pas de hors-texte", the literary complement to the historian looking at all texts as historical documents). The human, and love as the essentially human, usually comes into things somewhere along the way. Hence doubtless the modern association between "romance" and "romantic." You have, roughly speaking, themes of quest, pilgrimage, search on the one hand; and on the other what it is that is being searched for and quested after. These are linked to romance's typical structure, based as it is in on the circle, rather than the straight line.

This in turn is linked to romance itself being a hybrid, mixture of linear narrative and non-linear lyric. Structural considerations are important here on an abstract or symbolic level, as there is a close connection between *forme* and *fonds*, structure and sense, means and meaning. This is relevant and appropriate to looking at FS within the structure of the *Rose* as a romance.

Romance is circular in several senses. First, it is circular in that it is circuitous, a metaphorical pilgrimage, a quest, with many choices along the road of what path to take. Second, those paths twist: romance is circuitous, labyrinthine, looping, with finely constructed digressions or amplifications (depending on your rhetorical frame of mind), structures based in interlace. The reader's patience and faith can be tested in following the thorny path. Third, it is circular, in terms of being symmetrical and chiasmic, with a beginning, a middle and an end, the middle being a "centre." This would look something like this: [PIC REF: BOOK OF KELLS CHI-RHO CARPET PAGE, f. 34 r^o.]

The centre, a turning-point, has to do with knowledge and truth, through questioning. All quite traditional - Aristotle, *Poetics* 7. There is also a link between *quest* and *question* - linguistically, through *quaere*: the search for meaning. A central question can be variants on an actual question; a recognition scene, revelation, revelation of identity; naming and the revelation of identity. This is essentially the "discovery" discussed at some length in Aristotle, *Poetics* 16.; rarely the answer to a Big Question though - more often a matter of asking the right question (or not, in the case of the Graal...). It will often be the most obscure part of a romance, the hardest to figure out, and one may find that one cannot figure it out at all, only find a central ambiguity, doubt, question, crisis - on which the second half of the romance will often depend, as it can be interpreted either way, or even in many ways. The closer you look, worse still, the more ambiguities you may find - a sort of different linguistic, literary, poetic space in the centre, a different space altogether, even a terrifying infinite void, faced with which the reader must take a stand and decide what to do with it.

Central themes of writing, the book, of lyric and narrative poetic voice often come up with romance. Rather as an illumination will often have a book depicted at its very centre, the book being iconographically associated, and hence metaphorically related, to the treasure-chest, the reliquary, repository for valuable treasure, true wealth: knowledge and truth again, especially, in the contemporary context, if you have direct mention to the Bible as ultimate "metabook", so "meta" that it will not often even need the most indirect allusion. A book within a book, and a presence of the ultimate metabook right at the centre, fits well with romance's circular structures, especially that of *mise en abîme*. [PIC REF] What seems very important here is *reading*, or *interpretation*, with a view to *reading allegorically*: that is, looking for levels of significance: the literal, surface, superficial, more tangible, more material-physical-real level; the allegorical itself (a kind of metaphor, essentially, as extended by Quintilian from Aristotle), the tropological and the anagogical. It is a process of questioning which should lead to an examination of self, in the central mirror of the text, and to application of what one learns in future life, with a view, hopefully, to attaining salvation one happy day.

These circular patterns appear on several levels, in layers, which in turn involve some interflow between and through each other; personification-characters can be very useful here, through their ability - as essentially possessing several qualities each normally fixed to one layer only - to cross between textual layers, or imaginary/fictional worlds. A very basic example would be the Reynard the Fox character, who has some part in FS: he will behave as an animal, and as an anthropomorphic parallel - a cunning man - and then again as the abstracted quality of foxiness, wiliness. The circular patterns also appear on several textual levels, of different scales, macroscopically and microscopically. For instance, on the microscopic level: rhymes involving an ABA or ABABA structure, ex alternating true/false, free/imprisoned or exiled. I have been very good and I promise not to inflict some other work on "Boethian imprisonment rhymes" on you.

There are twists and turns along the way, which test a reader. Romance can work as a hall of mirrors, with trickster optics. Also the trickster optics of sometimes apparently amplifying and sometimes apparently diminishing parts, disproportionately to their "real" size and scale, and so casting this "real" into doubt as mere superficial perception. Hence, for instance, leading the reader astray, and leading him astray if he believes and follows what seems to be in front of his nose rather than questioning all the time. Mirrors are mentioned throughout JdM's *Rose*; indeed, that is often viewed as his principal move away from GdL - a move from "art of love" to "mirror of love." Here, we have a central mirror, I think, in the person of FS: still a perilous mirror, like that in GdL's part, perilous as in the prologue to *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*: the danger here being the reader's rage, "the rage of Caliban at seeing his own face reflected there."

Furthermore, mirrors are scattered throughout J's *Rose*: mirrors, lenses, reference to Arabic optics treatises recently discovered, and particularly in Nature's part. Now, these mirrors are not simple: they are multiple, and they distort. What seems large is small, and what seems small is large, for instance. Everything is at once potentially significant in the text, and potentially insignificant. Appearances cannot be trusted; one must go further, with other things besides the senses as a guide - reason, the intellect, and so on. This might,

incidentally, also be where many interpretations "go wrong": they look for a single truth, and they look for it in what appear to be "major sections" in terms of size and length, or at least they go wrong in commenting exclusively on these sections, such as Reason, Genius and Nature, to the exclusion of all else.

At the centre of, it seems, any romance is a quest, a search for truth, for knowledge, a pilgrimage, educational (but also entertaining, through digression). And of course this fits very nicely with the presence of love – love blinding people and distorting perception. Questing is central; and within it specifically the role of the reader in his mini-quest within the tortuous and torturing book, his choices, as free interpreter. The key to the treasure-chest is inside the reader himself (very Socratic method); the reader is thus his own key. Reading itself is a neat balancing act between a global design of a great designer/patternner (*grand plasmateur*) and free will; once again, metaphorical life.

This is to an extent supported by what evidence we have of contemporary reading of works such as the *Rose*. The manuscript variation which it presents is mind-boggling. Within this, the FS section is a particular minefield - I do not envy anyone trying to make an edition of this section. This is statistically one of the most "unstable" parts, in its transmission, in terms of additions, subtractions and rearrangements to what is presented in a manuscript as the basic text, i.e. [WAVE PAPER AROUND: THOSE DARK SIGNS BORDERED BY WHITE SPACE] Some of this is down to the intended readership, for instance in a manuscript which would be read by many, such as in a library: hence additions before FS speech along the lines of "no-one must read this next bit", "only a very few monks should be allowed to read this, and it must be kept from laymen." Some is at a first level of reader's decisions, for instance those of a patron who is already to an extent familiar with the *Rose* before he orders his manuscript to be made, and ensures that he has the parts of it which he wants and not the others. On a second level of reading, there are the various marginal comments added by subsequent readers and readings, in the blank space around what is usually seen as "the text" (although increasingly accepted as just as much a part of the text). All in all, a very free approach to the text itself, and focused more on its reading and interpretation than today's usual perception of text as much more fixed, original authorial intention respected. These glosses all give precious information on how the *Rose* was read.

The *Rose* is a pilgrimage-quest: this is set up from the very start; and much fine work has been done on the digressive, twisting ways of the *Rose*. What is curious here is that an apparent object for the quest – the Rose, love, true love – suffers constant undermining by JdM; as it is questioned, as the reader doubts what it is exactly he is looking for, and gets lost along the way (or even give up in despair or disgust), the *quest* joins up with the *question*-theme of the centre.

The RR could be organised in a symmetrical way as a whole work:

1.	GdL	1-4056 (or so)
2.	Reason	4218-
3.	Friend	7233-
4.	FS	(10311: Love)-10463-10922-12014 (FS1); 12037 – 12384 (FS2)
5.	Crone	12744 -
6.	Nature	15895-
7.	Genius	19446-

This provides the following parallel/symmetrical frames, which I shall be using:

1. GdL	and	7.Genius:	parallel parks
[here in part I: "TRUTH" and in II: "FALSE SEMBLANCE"]			
2. Reason	and	6. Nature:	castration / Abelard without his better part(s)
[in III: "MISOGYNY"]			
3. Friend	and	5. Crone:	arts of love - couples going awry: Abelard + Heloise/Mars + Venus
[here in I: "TRUTH" and in III: "MISOGYNY"]			
4. FS	at the centre.		

Still looking at this part on a larger-scale and symmetrically, what happens?

First, 4. as a centre referring to its frame of 1. and 7.: A parallel has often been drawn between the garden, fountain, and mirror of Narcissus which is approximately central to GdL's *Rose*, and its refashioning in the Christianised "park of the Lamb" in JdM's final section, Genius' speech. In both, we have gardens, with Pre-

Lapsarian and Ovidian Golden Age associations which then form a link through the intervening parts; Genius's garden would be an optimistic refashioning along similar lines to the Virgin Mary is a refashioning of Eve and of Pandora. The crystals at the bottom of this fountain have been seen as mirrors, and their optics examined (D Hult), particularly in the light of hot new Arabic treatises on optics; reference to the *Rose* as specular work, *miroir d'amours*; the mirrors/crystals as distorting, refractory; and the initial image of the Rose being illusory, possibly multiple, certainly problematic. I would suggest that this central part throws the following light on the debate: in FS part, too, we have a garden – but as is appropriate at a centre governed by different space, this is the ultimate anti-garden, the counter to Eden and the Golden Age, the space of the Apocalypse. Furthermore, it is anti-space itself: the space of FS is “everywhere and nowhere.”

Second, 4. as a centre referring back to the frame of both 1. and 7., and to *ou l'ars d'amours est toute enclose* (38): Love's commandments (paralleling the ten commandments, crossed with Christ's commandment to love) fall in the centre of G's part; in Genius' part, we have the occasionally allegedly unorthodox “invitation to use our tools properly,” as Per Nykrog puts it. There is also a parallel at the centre of the work as a whole (as a whole, that is, at the time of J's writing); and it happens to fit with a second frame referring to love, in 3. and 5. Either side of FS's central part lie very obvious arts of love: the Jealous Husband's advice embedded within Friend's speech, and the Vielle's words of wisdom to Bel Accueil, both also of obvious Ovidian thrust. Something very strange happens between them, in FS's section. A parallel almost happens, but not quite. The lover recites his credo – *Confiteor (remissionem peccatorum?)* – to Love, 10400: this is at once a reference to the earlier commandments, and a hint towards the next part, in its confessional or question and answer format. But this is incomplete and unsatisfactory, as the Lover is suffering through lack of his three *conforz* (10422-433), Douz Regarz, Esperance and Bel Accueil.

This could have been a perfectly appropriate mid-point to focus on, as a reader: we have questions, no resolution, an opening-up at this turning-point, as its consequence is that Love brings together his army to besiege the castle in which Bel Accueil is held, and all this will eventually lead to some sort of resolution to the Lover getting his Rose. However, the something strange which happens – which leads not only the reader to sit up and blink, but also the other inhabitants of the *Rose*, such as Love (10481). For it is in this army that FS makes his first appearance, with his sidekick Constrained Abstinence, and their presence is remarked on as incongruous, after the more usual suspects in the army are listed (10455) *Noblece de cuer et richece, Franchise, pitieuz et largece, Hardemens, honnour, cortoisie, Deliz, simplece, compaignie, Seürtez, deduiuz et leesce, Jolivetez, biautez, juvenesce, Humilitieuz et patience*. Love notices this, but even after we have had a brief description of the pair as definite Villains, Love is quite happy to accept CA's reason for the two of them being there. This is bizarre; it in turn could be a central question, and once again, reading on leads on to further strangeness and question.

For the central FS part has further “key points,” on closer view, as follows:

1. Promises, promises: Love accepts CA's explanation - Love harangues the troops, swears allegiance, on his mother, and will not drink nectar again if he lies ... until they win - His troops accept, promise to obey his orders, and plead for clemency for FS and CA.

2. Love questions FS; this takes the form of a confession. FS has to *identify* himself: this looks like a central question of identity. Who is he, where is he from, and where does he live. There is a central ambiguity and paradox here, as FS defines himself by his disguises, and by his lack of definite identity, by being entirely “semblance.” This includes disguise as a member of one of the mendicant orders, but also disguise as a member of many another clerical order, and as many lay professions, and even the odd sex change; FS is the ultimate extension of the older figure of Reynard the Fox, master of trickery and deceit, and here the supreme grand master of disguise. FS also defines himself by the liar paradox, 11231-244:

3. Within this, we have a growing apocalyptic swell – from which FS is identified with the Antichrist (though there is more to this) – and reference to apocalypse averted (*l'evangile pardurable* (11806), Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, *Liber introductorius ad evangelium aeternum*, referring in turn to the 12th c. heretical Franciscan Joachim de Flore).

4. A form of central truth: statement and restatement of the liar paradox;

5. A second form of central truth: words and deeds.

6. A third: flipping of the *mise en abîme* to the material, historical, real world: reference to the Sorbonne problems of the 1250s, Guillaume de Saint Amour, the *evangile pardurable*, and the *universite*.

7. A fourth: the “treasure-chest”-symbol: the book. Three books are in the FS section [→ reading and interpretation at the heart]:

(a) the future *Rose*, that is, *Jehan's* (10621) *Le miroer aus amourens* (10655);

(b) Guillaume de Saint Amour's *Periculis* (11492), which also forms the backbone of most of FS's discourse against begging, which in turn has

- embedded scripture: *l'escripture* 11347, *saint pol* 11387, *machi l'evangeliste* and Old Testament reference 11606, *saint jehan baptiste* 11707, the four evangelists 11826, and

A DATE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE: 11800-801

Quant par mauvaise entencion,

En l'an de l'incarnation

Mil et .ij. c.v. et L,

N'est boms vivanz qui m'en desmante: not to my mind so important as a date, but as the combination of two realities – the material-historical-human-contemporary (11801), and the eternal-spiritual (11800), coexisting, complementary, in two lines but linked by enjambment. It also includes a nice rhyme based around human will: *entencion / incarnation*, which is also will/flesh. Poetry as fundamentally linking, forging together, such contraries in one single thing which is at once BETWEEN, BOTH-AND-NEITHER, a 2-faced figure in a Tripartite / Trinitarian structure.

(c) and the *evangile pardurable* (11806), within which is

- the apocalyptic *jehans* and *pierres* in a central beautiful piece of exegesis (11849-) 11858-11894 of the *evangile pardurable*

[→ reading and interpretation: excellent exegetical example for the reader to follow].

8. Liar paradox, 11972-980 – the crowd laughs at FS – FS seems to be serious when everyone else is not (this is highly debatable), 11990-12013, and promises without promising, including a question, against all the rules, but in terms of loyalty (paradox again). He does not promise fealty to Love, so much as ask “well, up to you whether you believe me or not, and all the proof in the world isn't going to help.” The proof mentioned is that of written texts and other physical documents relating all, however, to speech: 11994 *Metex vous en aventure! Car se pleges en requerrez Ja plus aseür n'en serezz; Non voir, se j'en bailloie ostages Ou lettres ou tesmoins ou gages.* This brings up a very big question indeed: how to interpret the previous privileged status of written text? Question all? In the light of FS's statements of looking below the surface, of not believing appearances, as they can be deceptive. The truth to be searched for lies not in the physical, material, external, surface; but rather in the spiritual, immaterial, internal, depth. Hence

9. This is accepted by Love, as

- *je t'en croi sanz plevir* 12014: a matter of trust, belief, faith and

- his free decision, as a matter of reading and interpreting FS: Boethian subtext on free will as combined with the grand design (note, this *grand dessin* often comes up in titles on the *Rose*); reading as perpetually questioning, and resolving such questions for the right reasons. If there is such a thing, that might just be the central truth here. The layering of references to the levels of allegorical significance – the literal (antifraternal critique), the allegorical (antihypocritical critique, and the fall of man), the tropological (apocalypse and eschatology, and how one might escape it – possible by a statement of belief such as that of Love; certainly by following Philosophy's advice in *Consolation III* and pursuing spiritual rather than worldly wealth, this being an extension or abstraction of the heavy praise of poverty and rants against material greed, including begging), and the anagogical (application, which of course interestingly joins up full circle with the literal: search for spiritual truth).

II. “FALSE SEMBLANCE”

In the center, then, we have a section featuring, predominantly, FS and Love. As seen above, there is something at the heart of the *Rose* about books, reading and free interpretation. This is neatly reflected in a dialogue structure, itself like readerly interactive activities such as glossing and commentating; other “major parts” of the *Rose* have involved two persons in conversation, through which an attempt is made at some form of revelation of truth. But why (apart from plot reasons) put FS in the middle when JdM could have stuck to using the central lover figure? Previously, we had 1. the poet/dreamer/lover and various personifications in GdL’s part; 2. Reason and the lover; 3. Friend and the lover. Here in 4., we have Love and FS. Later, though, there is a change to 5. with Crone and Bel Acueil, 6. with Nature and Genius, and 7. Genius and Love’s forces (or, everyone, including all possible readers). It looks as though a shift in interlocutors occurs, it looks like it happens here in FS section, after which the book quite literally opens out wide to all and sundry, working towards its final climax of dissemination willy-nilly, so to speak.

It is appropriate for it to be FS who is at the centre. FS has as principal activity being interrogated, put to the question, though this is at the same time his confession.

Aside from the liar paradox as outlined above, he is ambiguity, duality incarnate. He is himself the central question, paradox and doubt personified: physically and morally double. Disguise, physically shifty.

False Semblance is falseness and semblance combined in one. In a sense, this also makes him a symbol of literature itself: at once false and seeming true, given both Plato’s and Aristotle’s prescriptions for APPROPRIATENESS, acting and being in character, suitable; False Semblance is another way of putting VERISIMILITUDE. If JdM’s part of the *Rose* was indeed written in the 1270s, this is not an unlikely argument – indeed it fits nicely with verisimilitude – as both the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* had first been translated to Latin around then, and there had been some considerable work from the 1250s onwards, in relation to other of Aristotle’s “natural philosophy” and how it fitted with his logic, which had been one of the pillars of the Medieval scholastic education. This in turn would have fitted in with problems of how this new natural philosophy was compatible with Christian doctrine, how Aristotle and Plato fitted together, a continuation, in a way, of a *translatio* tradition based around Boethius’ brave attempt to combine all of Plato, all of Aristotle and Christian doctrine (outcome unknown). The aim of such experiments would be producing one single unified field of knowledge, science, or philosophy.

FS is *both* good and evil; and this, I feel, needs to be stressed, because he is usually presented as a simple figure of pure evil. While he freely admits to being a big gun on the Antichrist’s team, it is he who sorts the sheep from the goats as the last days dawn. There is also the poor suffering GdSA within FS’s discourse, GdSA who has been imprisoned and exiled by Hypocrisy, the mother of FS (11510-512). This is in turn both a Boethian trope of suffering for the truth, and also a *passio*, martyrdom, in imitation of Christ. It is perhaps for this reason that in one manuscript there is a very interesting iconographic intertext:

[PIC REF]

Furthermore, it is thanks to FS that the castle can be taken and Bel Acueil freed. He also chooses to join Love’s side, when he could have chosen either. He therefore has a capacity for good as well as the more obvious one for evil, and is at once between them, both and neither. Which recalls all that he has said himself, that you should not judge a book by its cover, as *li abiz ne fait pas le moine* (11062). *Ne ja certes pour mon habit Ne savrez o quell gent j’abit; Non ferez vous voir as paroles, Ja tant n’erent simples ne moles. Les oeuvres regardez devez, Si vous n’avez les ieulz crevez ...* (11075-80). One must be careful reading, and do so clearly, with eyes wide open. He could fit the black-and-white mould –

indeed, he is described as such – *Qui de trajison ot la face, Blanche debors, dedans nechie.* (12016-017)

but he does not fit neatly into a simple black-and-white dual category.

He is perhaps – and this is straight interpretation on my part – the most human “character” in the *Rose*. He is an Everyman figure, fatally flawed but still trying to do his best in spite of all that goes against him. Like Man, he is part of a Trinitarian structure, between good and evil, on this “middle earth” between heaven and hell, between animals and God, at once material and spiritual, earthly/carnal and divine: he is always between, at once neither and both. As such, there is still obviously a black-and-white aspect, but he is both at once; and if you remove one side of him, he falls apart and no longer exists as a whole. He is at once between two things, both of them, and neither. This in turn links back to the three physical spaces depicted in the *Rose* – GdL’s garden and fountain of Narcissus in 1., and Genius’ refashioning of it in 7., with FS in 4. and the very peculiar apocalyptic space which FS occupies: once again, he is between, both, and neither: his “personal space” is that of Apocalypse, it is anti-space, the anti-garden, anti-park. And returning to the external frame of the fountain and mirror brought up at the beginning of the previous section, on FS’s part as central, we have FS as a central mirror in himself: he can be iconographically similar to Fortune and Janus, two-faced, two-headed [PIC REF]

I am tempted to see reference here to Augustine's and Boethius' works on the Trinity; and hence the picture on the flyer. Another link to Boethius which should be brought up here is through a whole branch of writing related to the *Consolation of Philosophy*: what could be termed "mystical marriage" narratives, between Martianus Capella's Mercury and Philology for instance.

Two other sets of associated figures are I think alluded to – intertextually speaking - who fit FS's half-and-half "bastard" type. First, we have two central names which come up again and again: Guillaume and Jean. I am not altogether sure what do with the Jeans, apart from mentioning them as dM, the Baptist, the Evangelist, and the Apocalyptic Heretical Franciscan figure. The Guillaumes seem a little clearer: dL and dSA. The second, central, is a FS himself: at once Guillaume, wily foxiness personified, and de Saint Amour, "saintly love." This gives two very tempting leads to what else GdSA is doing at the centre of a book about – built around – love: he is himself a prisoner, an exile; creator of his own prison, in a sense, imprisoned by his own book, entitled *De Periculis*, Peril, which looks rather like Bel Accueil imprisoned by Danger. He is also at once the wiliness of the quest, and the final sanctuary of attaining a goal of spiritual love. This transforms the *Rose*, this revelation that the book as a whole is quite different from the usual expectations, and from what would then have to be read as the false leads of surrounding Ovidian art of love references. Second, there are poetic bastard reference. There is Orpheus, bastard son of Apollo; Hermaphroditus, by some accounts (aka Ovid) son of Hermes (Mercury) and Aphrodite (Venus). He in turn recalls the characteristic gender-bending of FS himself.

III. "MISOGYNY"

This next part is as far as I can see quite unorthodox, so please take it with a pinch of salt; I find no defence of it anywhere. Besides being both male and female, thanks to his trickster nature and knack at disguises, FS appears to be in another kind of complementary pair enclosed in one – this weird kind of duality as part of a trinity. He is part of a central couple, FS and CA, who act TOGETHER. In terms of how the romance is composed, this reflects – very roughly speaking – the critical trope of joining together epic narrative hero and lyric lady, poetry and prose in Menippean satire, masculine and feminine rhymes, etc.

Love apparently made two quite bizarre decisions to accept FS, even though he appeared to be a bad guy. First, he accepted CA's plea for herself and FS to join the forces of good. Then, after FS's confession and what looked like a highly suspect oath of fealty which isn't one at all, he is accepted by Love. There is the *je t'en croi sanz plevir*, Love's acceptance, coincidentally also giving a central example of a free reasoned decision based in faith, in inner truth rather than external appearances. One key term appears, however, in both pledges: loyalty.

*Atant saut contrainte astinence,
Si prist faus samblant par la main.
"Sire, dist ele, o moi l'amain.
Si vous pri qu'il ne vous desplaise,
Maint honor m'a faite et mainte aise:
Cist me soustient, cist me conforte;
S'il ne fust, de fain fusse morte,
Si m'en devreiz maisn blasmer.
Tout ne vueilli il les genz amez,
Et preudon et sainz hom clamez.
Mes amis est et je s'amie,
Si vient o moi par compaignie. (10484-496)"*

...to which Love replies (10497) *Or soit.*

Later, we have the end of FS's huffy, arrogant declaration of "je m'en foutisme":

*M'amie contrainte astinence
A grant mestier de porveance:
Pieça fust morte et malbaillie
S'el ne m'eüst en sa baillie.
Laissez nous, moi et li, chevir. (12009-013).*

...to which Love replies (12014) *Or soit ...*

In the second episode of his part, FS acts in concert with CA as, disguised as pilgrims, they do a good-cop bad-cop routine, by sermon, to persuade Wicked Tongue of the error of his badmouthing ways. Now, I need to do more textual analysis on this part, but it looks creepily like there are at least stylistic echoes from the correspondence of Abelard and Heloise. (This part is still very much at raw hunch level.) What is more evident

is the acting together: the action is consistently by both, with verbs in the third person plural, with the exception of direct speech. There is one other exception, and it looks suspiciously like a misreading in certain editions and perhaps at some transmission stage, based on an ambiguous personal pronoun (thanks to the Charrette Project, I can never look at a personal pronoun again without a certain ominous dread.). Right at the end, Wicked Tongue repents, kneels and prays, before being punished. His punishment is of course appropriate: his tongue is cut off and he is strangled. This punishment looks like it is dealt out by FS; I feel a need to go and look at manuscripts on this one, though I could very well be wrong. The subsequent action is all back in the third person plural, as the body is thrown in a ditch and the drunken guards strangled.

Three features come together here to suggest a further intertextual, and intratextual, link: firstly, the names of False Semblance and Constrained Abstinence, if you reverse the genders and make FS female and CA male. Secondly, there is the acting together, and the talking together part. Thirdly, there is the cutting of a vital part with a razor. This vital part is a source of creativity – here, speech – and central to its owner's identity, indeed a form of nominal metaphor for him: here, it is the tongue which is cut out, and the owner is called Malebouche, or Wicked Tongue. To my eye, these all point to Abelard and Heloise.

Now, JdM would later (1290s) make the first known translation of their letters into French. They also appear earlier, in 3. Friend's speech (8763), with Heloise as a paradoxical example of the virtuous woman in a truthful relationship with a man, regardless of outside conventions (aka marriage, and no marriage for ordained clergy). This appearance is symmetrically twinned with another pair of problematic lovers, Mars and Venus, again acting against convention, in 5. the Crone's section (13844).

At another move away from the centre, in the 2. -6. frame of reference, there is I'm afraid the great castration link: in 2. talk of language and the naming of things, including testicles, in Reason's speech, and the lover's questioning of this as being appropriate from the mouth of a woman. This pairs up on the other side with 6. Saturn's castration, and the call to men to use their tools properly, appropriately, for their due function, if they do not wish to suffer a similar "calamitous ta(i)l(e)" ... Besides the unfortunate squirm factor – once again, the truth can hurt – this mention of parts, and their removal, must surely be reminiscent of the need to deal with any work – of nature, or of human artifice, or the human artifice of love and the couple – as a whole, without removing any of its parts. Once again, there is a sense of turning around a central point of the work as a whole, consisting of inalienable constituent and complementary parts.

CONCLUSION

The symmetrical frames-structure is therefore complete: the *Rose* works as a satisfactory whole romance, all its parts being related to one another and necessary to the whole, in good Aristotelian terms (*Poetics* 8, unity of plot). This reading may also, I hope, feed into to both the "major" debates about the *Rose*, those commonly labelled "antifraternal" and "misogynist." In guise of conclusion or maybe better as an epilogue, here are a few snippets relevant to this reading, taken from from the first phase of these debates, at the start of the 15th century, a debate which continues today.

First, a problem of terminology, which might be solved by a more traditional exegetical approach both to the *Rose* and to the debate itself. "Antifraternal" seems to include antifraternalism proper, i.e. accusations of writing against Franciscan brothers or friars specifically (the fox's reddish-brown coat, and FS); against the mendicant orders more generally, i.e. against the Franciscans and the Dominicans (any mention of black and white in one breath seems to point to them); against the regular clergy, i.e. now also including older monastic orders of Cistercians, Clunians, Benedictines; against the clergy as a whole, i.e. the religious vocation and spiritual life, as opposed to the temporal; and so against Christian religion as a whole. "Misogynist" seems to be more simply targeted against women - but I have yet to see anyone defend J, and certainly not based on his own texts, other of course than Christine de Pisan, coincidentally also his prime detractor.

This debate may well have started out while JdM was writing the RR. In his text are what are usually read as "recantations", both being around his treatment of the regular clergy (and care about religion as a whole), firstly throughout FS's discourse and then as a general recantation of FS as a character, summarily thrown out of Love's army around 19400 (with CA following him rapidly, tail between her legs). Similarly, there is what is often mentioned as an "auctorial intervention", including in manuscript rubrication, around 15200s; this one is addressed to women, and looks like earlier and later prologue-addresses to lady readers, and of women. These self-defences are juggled around in certain manuscripts, so as to be closer to the parts which they concern.

To what extent J was involved in these additions and their placing I do not know; however, they are there, and they form an integral part of the textual tradition or family of the *Rose*, in a sense further extensions to its metatextual and intertextual tentacles, attached by association, however "free" that association might look to us

now. And the *Rose* is seen as including its associations even over a century later, when the *Querelle* explodes in 1402.

Two texts, or sets of texts, are relevant to the argument here. First is Christine de Pisan's *Mutacion de Fortune* (1403), an attack on hypocrisy, which upholds J's *Rose* as an exemplary attack on hypocrisy itself. Second, J's supporters - the royal secretaries Pierre and Gontier Col, Jean de Montreuil - defend him on the grounds of reading excerpted passages *in context*, looking at the work as a whole. Furthermore, characters such as FS should be read as *characters*, and as being judged appropriate or not, and so as good or bad, not on absolute grounds but as acting *in character*, relative effectively to their particular mode of being, their reality, appropriately: Aristotle again (*Poetics* 3, 7, 9, 11). Finally, there is the separation (*Poetics* 3) between character's and author's opinion, and how far the reader should be left free to make up his own mind (as against how far he is capable of doing so) - due to intermediate refashioning such as Guillaume de Deguilleville's *Pelerinage de la Vie Humaine* (1330-32 and 1335) and Jehan le Fevre's *Lamentations de Matheolus* (1371-72) and *Livre de Leesece* (1372-73), subtleties in the separation of personae had suffered - Jean the real life person, J the author, then within the *Rose* the poet, the dreamer, the lover, and the various personifications had all become to an extent conflated; FS seems to have been seen as a particularly tricky and dangerous character, and the first personification to become thus closer to its creator, which may back up his reading as an "everyman" character.

The two debates are seen to come together in, precisely, discussion of *hypocrisy* - moving from a more primary, literal level of attack on friars and women in the here and now, through the two being generalised attacks on human beings, in other words if anything *misanthropist*, to a higher level of abstraction, that of attack on hypocrisy, which can be expanded to involve dealing with matters of truth, as outlined earlier. My only conclusion on the debate itself is that it encapsulates all the problems of reading the *Rose*: the central need to read in context, appropriately, properly. My only conclusion on interpreting the *Rose* as antifraternal or misogynist: it is of course both of these, and many other things besides, as it is the sum of them all; they are as important constituent and weirdly complementary parts as their opposites, and as their associates, through misanthropy and hypocrisy.

[NOT IN TALK: POSTSCRIPT- *Caveats*]

As you may see in the handout, I have provided some textual references: they are to the Strubel edition. This is unfortunately necessary for convenience's sake, although giving a false idea of this as a single text. Ideally, in a full and proper analysis of this as of any section (see SH), it would be "better" to compare all 324 manuscripts, not to mention the fuzzy grey area of at least some of the subsequent "reworkings" - after all, when is a text part of a single textual tradition, say a variant, version, *translatio*-style, gloss, commentary - and when does it go off and become a separate text in its own right? I have no idea how to deal with this grey area, and the more I work with this material, the fuzzier it gets. All very frustrating, for all concerned; but then again that is just like the RR, so not altogether inappropriate. You will also notice from the notes that I have only provided references to the *Roman de la Rose*. I hope to include at least passing reference to other things, but my purpose was to provide an argument based on close text reading, which at least goes towards fulfilling the "poetic research" part of Dembowski's phrase. This being a work of literature, and worse still as close to the mythical "open text" as imaginable, and, the absolute pits, it is the RR - there are of course many ways of reading it. However, just as the *Rose* has many parts which fit together in complementary fashion to make one whole work, and just as the various readings of its various parts fit together to give a bigger picture of the *Rose*, I am quite convinced that there is similarly room for many readings of this one section, and readings "literary" or otherwise.

[NOT IN TALK: A FEW POINTS FOR FURTHER STUDY]

1. The Aristotelian tradition, and attempts at (a) intergrating Aristotle and Plato, via model of Boethius' attempt; (b) Aristotle and Catholic doctrine; (c) Aristotle's natural philosophy and his logic - ex. problems 1270s; (d) how this fits with the 12th c *poeta theologus* business, and other such "experiments in poetic language". [12th - 13th c. Aristotelian and Boethian translations, commentaries, glosses etc.: William of Champeaux, Bernard of Chartres, Peter Abelard, Gilbert of Poitiers, William of Conches, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Averroes ...]

2. Medieval semiotics: Abelard esp. philosophy of language, being the junction/intersection between the branches of Aristotle's philosophies (and cf place of Augustine, Boethius and commentators such as Aquinas in delimiting categories of study, on Trinitarian basis)

[Rijk, L.M. de . "Peter Abelard's Semantics and his Doctrine of Being." *Vivarium* 24.2 November 1986. Leiden: E.J. Brill. 85-127.]

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3. Re *copula* - and intersection of logic, natural philosophy and poetics ...

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4. RR study of FS part in MS, variation, etc.; plus ditto for *remaniments* as part of the same (and single) tradition / *translatio*, for instance those of Guy de Coi, the *moralisé* of Clément Marot ... more fluid and intergrated conception of "text," in which there is significant interflow between roles of author, scribe, copyist, annotator/commentator, reader ...all "talking to" the text.

5. Ditto, for the rest of the RR and another integral part of the same writer/reader network, exchange, community (of *glossators* ... talking with each other, and with the text, in it and through it): rubricators and illuminators.

6. The "super-study" that Sylvia Huot hinted at ... Only really possible for one small part; a fine idea for a Charrette-style "super-research-project." With hyperlinks to associated intertext, context, etc.

7. Here, on my small scale of operation ... Links to *Flamenca: copula*, same time, central couple, central "Wily William" figure, the parallel to "Fides" the high lady ... 13th brings man and woman back together, at the centre of romance. A note of optimism.

Links through Boethius, and both having B as intertext, and the old Occ *Boecis*. And B as an "integrating / copulative / complementary" experiment itself, which brings us back full circle to point 1.

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