

## MDVL 302: WEEK 4: LECTURE NOTES: 1

This week's lectures will narrow in on the text, accompanying the week's readings. Extra material (from the *Querelle de la Rose* & some external links) will be added in a separate document.

### TUESDAY: ATTACKS ON WOMEN

A feminine variety of practical knowledge and expertise: 197-98

The old woman's advice on a twisted sort of "generosity":

**\*\*\*200 (from 12982) – 203 (to §2, "This is no way for a woman to succeed.")**

How women ought to behave:

**\*\*\*204 (from 13235) – 213 (up to 13817)**

How to cheat:

**\*\*\*218 (from 14157) – 221 (to 14351)**

Women have poor judgement: 223

Genius on women:

**\*\*\*252 (from 16317) - 257 (to 16623)**

(and more--from Thursday's reading: Genius on women, 279-80)

### THURSDAY: ATTACKS ON THE CLERGY/RELIGIOUS, CRITICISM OF THE WHOLE OF HUMANITY, AND DEFENCES BY/FOR THE BOOK

#### ANTI-RELIGIOUS & BLASPHEMY

(Recap: Old Woman: Love should be free, chastity (and the regular clergy, ex. monks & friars) are unnatural: 214-18)

Genius: "Tools" and "ploughs," and the obligation to use them:

**\*\*\*301 (from 19513) – 304 (to 19697)**

(links to the recurring topic of castration running throughout this *Romance*; which I leave to readers' discretion and sensibilities)

(commingled conflated creation-narratives: Jupiter etc. Christianised; for a parallel, see the lengthy sections in Nature's lament, plus Plato and neo-Platonism Alain de Lille, *Complaint of Nature / De Planctu Naturae*)

Genius's metaphor is extended in the taking of the Rose: obscenity? or just onanistic overwriting? NB: the lover acquires a pilgrim's outer garb: "gifts" from Nature, but remember False Semblance's religious disguise, and his comment that the habit doesn't make the monk? This whole section, 319-34, is entirely optional reading; there would be something repellent and morally repugnant in *forcing* other human beings to read this. Besides often finding this part of the book highly offensive, many readers find this part tedious, repetitive, OTT; which may also be part of their obscenity, through producing a dulling effect on the reader's senses.

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(319-20, 327, 329-30, 332-34)

### FOR DISCUSSION

The very end is important, however, to our critical theme and the accusations of misogyny levelled against Jean de Meun in the *Querelle*: union with the Rose and questions of consent and rape. The Lover has been approaching the Rose under the watchful eye of Fair Welcome and his mother Courtesy; Fair Welcome has occupied a curious position in the plot, as for part of it he's been an object of desire, replacing the Rose. He has been playing a role in the psychological melodrama / psychomachia: another one of the inner qualities and feelings associated with the Rose and voiced by Assorted Personifications (Shame, Fear, etc.); here, he is expressing consent, desire, and will itself. The way the scene is played out, however, may not entirely convince you that the union is indeed blissful, equally agreeable to both (all?) parties, and acceptable.

**\*\*\*334-35**

### DEFENCES

Criticism of humanity--(lengthy buildup...) despite being blessed with understanding--and commentary by Nature on events in the *Romance of the Rose* plot:

**\*\*\*296 (from f19175) – 299 (end of page)**

In favour of clerks, inner nobility, and bookishness:

**\*\*\*286 (from 18559) – 289 (to 18725)**

**\*\*\*320 (§ from 20711)**

A variation: in praise of rich old women as a means to wealth and happiness, in spite of (lacking) Wealth:

**\*\*\*330 (from 21405) – 332 (to 21553)**

**\*\*\*335**

(An instance of interpretation: 229-30)

(Comment by Genius on the *Romance of the Rose*: see also Love's metafictional comment, 161-64: 306)

Gloss and auctorial self-defence:

**\*\*\*234 (from 15129) – 236 (to 15273)**

The Park of the Lamb: compare to Guillaume de Lorris's Garden: addressed to the audience, as part of the Army of Love?

**\*\*\*307 (from 19901) – 308 (to 20007)**

**\*\*\*312 (from 20213) – 318 (to end of page)**; NB 317, " what do you think of the park and garden together? Judge them rationally..."

I've cut a fair amount of text, mostly of exemplary Classical material, so as to retain the main points and arguments. There's a marvellous Pygmalion passage, for instance, including literal "dressing up" on 323-34. If you're interested in the translation/adaptation aspect of criticism and commentary, such passages might provide fertile ground for your final papers...