ENG 512: Chaucer: Professor John V. Fleming: Fall 2002
"The Paradoxical Heroism of Rutebeuf's Antimendicant Poems, Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* and Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale*: Three Approaches to the Problem of Truth."
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INTRODUCTION:

The works of Rutebeuf, Jean de Meun and Chaucer share an important and perhaps even central theme of the truth, and all three show an awareness of the truth as problem and paradox. For while it is morally necessary to reveal the truth, its revelation is dangerous and undesirable by other more external criteria. It is necessary to protect and conceal it, as it is a secret thing, and as it is fragile and easily destroyed.

This paper will focus on the role of structure, form or genre of writing to fulfill this double aim. Rutebeuf uses satire, in simpler allegory. His later allegorical poems and use of the *dit* form provide some protection. Jean de Meun uses the romance, with its secret-treasure centre. Cunningly, the centre is a sort of central void, emphasized by the presence of a central paradoxical figure, Faus Samblant, Zeno's Cretan Liar paradox incarnate. Around him is built a whole structure of chiasmic layers of "duality and deceit." Chaucer uses the collection of *novelle*.

Moving through these three texts, a progression can be discerned of increasing complexity in the disguise-armour protecting one same Truth. A first section outlines a common background to the common enemy, Falsehood. A second traces a sketch of Rutebeuf's dealings with the truth in his writings. The largest section of this paper is concerned with the *Roman de la Rose* as it uses the most complex ways to protect the truth whilst upholding it. The final section, on the *Summoner's Tale*, is comparatively short, due to Chaucer's solution to the problem being a particularly fine, neat and simple one. In guise of conclusion, it acts more as a happy epilogue to the previous century's turmoils across the Channel.

I. ANTIFRATERNALISM?

All three apparently aim attacks on the Friars alone, the mendicant orders, or indeed the regular clergy as a whole. Looking further outwards, it is so hard to see where one bane of contention begins and another ends - attacks on the clergy, on women - that the reader wonders if the attack is deliberate and pointing at a single, larger-scale - indeed universal - target: hypocrisy, and all that is not truth.

Rutebeuf's antimendicant poetry and that part of Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* have often been viewed as being in a literary sub-genre devoted to attacks on the mendicant orders, a particular

bone of contention at the time (roughly speaking, 1250s through 1270s). The principal orders under attack by Rutebeuf and Jean de Meun were: the Franciscans, also referred to as *freres mineurs* and *Cordeliers* because of the symbolic rope-belt; and the Dominicans or *freres precheurs*, who turn up in much black-and-white imagery due to their habits.

They had all started out, like so many reform movements, as a repudiation of the main orthodox body of the Church's corruption, in a back to basics attempt to return to the model of virtuous life as exemplified by the original disciples and by Christ himself, the *imitatio Christi*. This involved living in simplicity, humility and poverty; living by one's own manual labour and by praying and preaching; but not by begging, and associated acquisition by deception. The aim was a return to the life of truth, with an emphasis on spiritual rather than material wealth. Such movements had been at the origin of the first monastic offshoots from the main body of the Church, such as those of St Gregory, St Martin and St Benedict, and their splinter-groups of Clunisians and Cistertians. These, however, had become rich and corrupt, living off the fat of the land, by the 12th century, hence St Francis' reform-movement, of itinerant friars who were not outside the world enclosed in a monastery, but in it, wandering, living without personal possessions, in poverty, surviving through odd jobs, preaching sermons and praying in return for accommodation, food and very basic clothing. St Dominic started his new group off at the beginning of the 13th century, acting as a wing of the crusade against the Cathar heresy which had gained much popularity due to it, once again, preaching a return to the *imitatio Christi* model, in reaction against the corruption and fabulous wealth of the mother Church. The Dominicans to some extent mimicked the Cathars, a principal subject of their Crusade – drab clothing, again no personal possessions, living by their own work and by preaching.

Both the Franciscan and Dominican orders, however, rapidly followed in the way of all flesh and became corrupt and decadent: by the time of Rutebeuf and Jean de Meun, the Franciscans were suffering the internal strife between the Conventuals – in favour of having some possessions, but held in common at and brothers living in a monastic-style order based at a mother-house: this being based on the ideal of poverty being interpreted more loosely, according to its spirit rather than according to the letter - and the Spirituals – in favour of living in true poverty, interpreting the Gospels literally. The Conventuals won. By this time, they had also been granted the power to hear confession and grant absolution, and to be paid for it, as was usual with the other orders, that is, the secular order, i.e. priests living in the World, and the regular or conventual clergy, living outside the World and by the Rule, in monasteries. As this was a time of significant urban growth, the richest pickings – quantitatively and above all qualitatively - were to be had in towns and cities. Conventual fraternal houses were therefore founded there, as they were supposed, after all, to be living in the world, the better to save as many souls as possible. This threw the Franciscans into competition with

the secular clergy, as they were essentially taking their parochial territory, the Franciscans being somewhat more hot and trendy.

Both the Franciscans and the Dominicans set up separate training and otherwise educational facilities. Eventually they started to infiltrate the universities, and trouble really blew up. Members of these fraternal orders were appointed to chairs, as, despite otherwise having a hypocritical attitude to their original *raison d'être*, they had maintained a general theological stance of interpreting things more according to the letter – the back to basics ethos – as opposed to older orders such as the Cistertians (through their network of cathedral schools) and, especially, lay scholars at the universities, such as at the Sorbonne and Bologna (lay, but usually having undergone some religious training, at least such as at the cathedral schools, and often having taken holy orders at some point). These two groups, at the heart of the 12th century renaissance, had developed a more flexible, subtle and open-minded approach in their old age, attempting a more subtle incorporation into Christian doctrine of the pagan Aristotle, rediscovered through Averroes' commentaries, via contact with Muslim Spain. Essentially, without going into the philosophical-theological debate, the more intellectually inflexible and hard-line Franciscans and Dominicans were therefore favoured by the Papacy and pushed into chairs of philosophy and theology at the Sorbonne.

Meanwhile, there was resistance, such as by Guillaume de Saint Amour, who turns up as a central figure in Rutebeuf's poetry, the *Rose* and in Chaucer's translation/version of it. This resistance involved the fullest possible attack on the fraternal orders, focusing on their hypocrisy – that is, the fraternal orders as false, two-faced, cynically duplicitous – and focusing on the more open ground of their intellectual authority, their way of frequently arguing black to be white for their own benefit, thus twisting, perverting the truth. A sensible course of action, as such intellectual hypocrisy was surely important with respect to their suitability to the job. The same debate took slightly longer to move from France to England; it would appear to have been at its height in Chaucer's time.

The texts at issue here all share very obvious and undeniable antifraternal elements. The central figure in the *Summoner's Tale* is a monk, who, though not directly labelled a Franciscan, possesses characteristics both of the fraternal orders (brotherly references), and hints at Franciscan characteristics, particularly those of their rule and its hypocritical undermining and corruption. The central figure in the central part of the *Roman de la Rose* is False Semblance, who appears to possess the characteristics of the archetypical bad friar. A principal theme running through Rutebeuf's antimendicant poetry-polemic is the critique of the same character. I am treating it as given and accepted that similar antifraternal material is present in all three texts (or sets of texts, depending on how Rutebeuf's work is viewed). I propose to cut to the heart of the matter, that is, to the differences in presentation or form of that same material. This seems to influence how the material

is read, that is, how it is read actively, as *legere ordinaria* rather than *cursoria,* including interpretation as an intrinsic part, in a contemporarily-true exegetical or allegorical reading.

Both Rutebeuf and Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* are not just antifraternal. They go beyond straightforward literal-level material to that of allegorical development, and then onwards and upwards to a general tropological and anagogical conclusion of "repent ye, the end is nigh, and it will be most dreadful doom and gloom" – in other words, ending in a warning of impending apocalypse, so on a final eschatological note. This is true of even Rutebeuf's simpler, more straightforward approach. Both Rutebeuf's and Jean de Meun's work have a message – call it the *sensus* and *sententia* – behind the *littera*, or superficial layer. This message is, however, altered by the literary form chosen.

II. RUTEBEUF

Rutebeuf's form of choice is the *diz*. It is often combined with the *complainte*, such as by the Mother Church-personification in *De Maistre Guillaume De Saint Amour,* a tale of woe and complaint. The *diz* is fitting, simpler and more straightforward as it is structurally linear, a narrative verse form spoken by one first-person voice, and firmly associated with direct speech, *diz* being the substantivized past participle of *dire*. As such, it is a more oral-performance-associated form of poetry, as opposed to one more linked to reading, and so usually more complicated, such as the romance (the form chosen by Jean de Meun). *Diz* and *complainte* are ideal forms for vitriolic polemic, being direct and linear, leading to a climactic end, as befits an end in each case of apocalyptic doom and gloom. Personifications are used to a heavy extent, and usually heavy-handedly compared to the *Roman de la Rose*, in that they follow the linear course of each piece, staying in their allotted allegorical world, without the movement between worlds allowed by the *Rose*'s romance form.

It is worth noting, however, that the same personified characters turn up in both texts, such as Hypocrisy and False Semblance. While they are associated more or les directly with negative fraternal characteristics, they go beyond such literal reference to more generalised characteristics of vice; thus, even Rutebeuf can be said to be rather more than just antifraternal. Some other common strands weave throughout Rutebeuf's works and the *Rose*. The old trickster-figure, Renart, wanders in and out haphazardly, spreading chaos in his wake. He is assimilated with his latest avatar, the monk. Old and new are interwoven in Rutebeuf's well-known *bêtes noires*: allegedly personal-autobiographical cynical misanthropy, "my life's a bitch and then I die"; universal misanthropy, anti-Hypocrisy and pro-Truth, strongly critical both in the negative sense and as a positive cry to mankind to wake up and save itself.

Of Rutebeuf's total poetic output (54 pieces), about 21 bear at least some passing reference to antimendicant debates, to which can be added the positive counter-*exempla* of the more personal *complainte* (another 8) and its praise of virtuous poverty, and the directly religious *exempla* of hagiography and prayer (another 7). An overall pattern emerges of attacks on falsehood and corruption, and praise of truth. For the purposes of this paper, however, I shall focus on a selection of the more directly antimendicant poems (taken from Jean Dufournet's *Poèmes de l'Infortune et autres poèmes*). I split the relevant texts into two groups: simpler polemical rants, based on simpler, more direct, and more oral forms - such as the song, ballad, and the *diz*; and a second group, based on more complex forms used more for reading, such as the romance.

The first group is of simpler style and form. These poems are more lyric, shorter, snappy, and look – indeed, sound, if read aloud – more intended for oral performance. They feature tighter syntax, less enjambment, and short stanzas with repeated refrains, just to make sure the point was not missed. This is not a consistent feature of Rutebeuf's writing, and as he uses both this style and a more elaborate one that looks more intended for reading. I am content to tag the simpler poems as more directly antifraternal, with a couple of reservations, as they do after all form part of a coherent or self-coherent whole body of work, and hints are dropped which will be later developed in, or which refer back to, more complex development as full allegorical figures. Real anecdotes are used here as exempla, but unlike those of the *Rose* they are placed in a straightforward manner in a straightforward rant, without the use of contradictory embedding devices, classic scholastic debate-structures and double-tongued speakers. False Semblance is everywhere, paranoia abounds, and all will end in tears with the apocalypse, a frequent conclusion of Rutebeuf's, in solemn warning. Some images should be mentioned, as they will be refashioned in the *Summoner's Tale*. Here, then, we have: *Li Diz des Cordeliers, De la Descorde de l'Université et des Jacobins, Des Regles, Des ordres, and Li Diz des Beguines*.

The *Cordeliers* features *imitatio christi* material and concentrates on the significance of the rope-belt in a fine exegetical exercise. Odour also appears, as a common *topos* of the time, here in the selling of spices. Spices would be a good smell but only superficially so, as used to cover up the bad smells of corruption, whether bad B.O. (including sulphurous farts) or rotting meat.

In *L'Université v.les Jacobins,* we have personifications of Envy and Orgueix, a black and white image pairing Dominicans with Fortune, and the wolf and the fox-friar. The foxy friar will reappear regularly in Rutebeuf and the *Rose*, but I shall not develop it here as it is not relevant to the *Summoner's Tale*. A rhyme scheme is used which turns on *savoir/voir/resemblance*, very common throughout Medieval French literature, highlighting a common and continuing concern with appearance, truth and knowledge, and with true knowledge and/as ultimate redemption.

In *Des Regles*, we see the beginnings of other personifications to be more fully fleshed out later. Truth has been silenced by Hypocrisy; Renart pops up again; and there is a particularly fine passage (v.234) about belief and martyrdom being worthwhile, as contrasted with the opposing view that they are not worthwhile if money is all that matters: the external, worldly, material are contrasted with the internal, spiritual in the all-important question: where lies the truth?

Des Ordres: The worldly comes up again here as the refrain bemoans the betrayal of honour: *Paplart et beguines / Ont le siecle honi.*

Des Beguines stars Hypocrisy in one of her guises, as the two-faced ladies of such an institution, of the entirely goody-two-shoes butter-wouldn't-melt type. The sarcastic refrain echoes: *n'entendeiz tuit se bien non*: you must always hear the truth, because they are protected by authority, and that is what creates truth … The poem ends on *mais n'en dites se bien non: li roix no sofferoit mie*. Temporal authority prevails over the Spritual regarding truth and what can and cannot be said. Throughout the *Beguines* is an insistence on truth and speech, as opposed to silence and potential exile.

Even in banal simple satire there is an exegetical element, of looking beyond the supeficial debate to layers deeper, towars *sensus* and *explicati*. For example, the greed of the beguines is used to point towards questions of truth, universal in time and place. So even at his roughest and readiest, Rutebeuf goes well beyond the antifraternal. An attack on the mendicant orders – for the Dominicans, too, are under attack - is presented in his poems not just as a sign of itself, mapping a direct relation between textual abstracted mark and thing in the world. It does not present but represents, acting as a larger connotative sign of the times, alluding to its associates. In that sense, and especially as the wording of the attacks is very similar – essentially, hypocrisy, avarice, greed – any single attack refers intertextually to the whole group, be they individually on Friars Minor, on Dominicans, eventually on all the regular orders, and even on the clergy as a whole. This would obviously be dangerously close to heresy. But Rutebeuf may escape such condemnation precisely because his attacks are so allusively wide-ranging. Each and every one can be seen as the kind of sign of the times that is a pre-Apocalyptic warning of the times to come and that is a sign also representing what lurks beneath itself. Each poem is emphatically allegorical, inviting the standard allegorical reading which will always maintain all its layers simultaneously in mind – from the *béguines* upwards – whilst aiming for the jugular of the larger senses of Christian historical past, eschatological future, and the individual soul's salvation. In that context, antifraternalism (and its more or less interchangeable companions) is an expression - one vestment, if you will - of Hypocrisy and Falsehood, the wider-ranging enemy of the Truth.

The second group, using more developed allegory, are outside the *diz* and similar shorter structures: *Renart le Bestourné, Du Pharisian, De Maistre Guillaume de Saint Amour, La lections d'Ypocrisie et d'Umilitei.*

Renart draws a fearful portrait of the world, as evil lurks everywhere, a weak king is led by the nose by his four advisers, who look at once rather like the four horsemen of the apocalypse, like mockeries of the four Evangelists with their symbolic beasts, and are the *Renart*-stock characters: Renars, Roneaus, Ysengrins, Bernart. The *sentence* is loud and clear. "Repent ye, the end is nigh" – as Rutebeuf puts it, *l'en senesche guerre et bataille: / il ne me chaut més que bien n'aille.*

Du Pharisian refers to the overturning of the moneylenders' tables in the Temple. Hypocrisy, a fox again, cousin of Heresy, is described as *defors oint et dedenz larde*, once again painted in black and white as are True/False, Fortune, Dominicans. She has taken over the world and imprisoned the just, such as *Freres Guillaume, Robert, Aliaume, Giefroi, Lambert, Lanfroi*. Her flunkeys, the hot shots in town, are *barat …guile*, of simple appearance much emphasised, but cruel and malodorously *deputaire* ("of whorish/bad air"). *Baratz* will appear in the *Rose* as Faus Samblant's father. Positive personnifications who were pillars of the Church are destroyed by her: *Vérité, Pitié, Foi, Charité, Largueece, Humilitié*. It is the coming of the Antichrist, and it is happening right here and now, and thanks to the hypocrites, and "thus is it written in the Scriptures."

De Maistre Guillaume de Saint Amour continues in a similar vein. Mother Church appears as a walking talking personification, as the plaintif in this *complainte*. She refers, as will Faus Samblant later, to one part of the problem of truth, namely, whether it can be discerned through words or through deeds. *Assez puuent chanter et lire / mes moult a entre fere et dire: / c'est la nature: / li diz ext douz et l'uevre dure; / n'est pas tout or quanc'on voit luire*. Guillaume de Saint Amour suffers, exiled to his estate, for having spoken and continuing to speak the truth. Once again "loyalty is betrayed" by hypocrites whose earlier words contrast with their later actions. He has been let down by cowardly students and academics, who were his earlier supporters as he stuck his neck out on their behalf, in the fight for intellectual freedom: *por voir dire l'a l'en conclus*. *Verite a fet son lais / ne l'ose dire clers ne lais.* And, as for personifications, *Pitiez, Charites, Amistiez* are dead, thanks to *Ypocrisie, Vaine Gloire, Tricherie, Faus Samblant, dame Envie, Morte Color*. *Li douz, franz, debonere* are opposed to *cil qui ont fauve la face* in another black/white example. Guillaume de Saint Amour "would be left in peace if he were to swear that true was false, right was wrong, God the Devil, that the insane had reason, and black was white." The poem tails off into a venomous rant, cut short to be rounded off in a prayer.

La Lections d'Ypocrisie et d'Umilitei is one of Rutebeuf's most extensive pieces. The opening is a clear parody of the Guillaume de Lorris part of the *Roman de la Rose.* In a spring opening, the poet falls asleep, his spirit wanders off in a dream-narrative, and he meets Cortois (son of Cortoisie and his wife Bele Chiere), who offers him hospitality. They converse. Here, in one of only two such

occurrences, Rutebeuf names himself, in a reference to Rutebeuf's poems, read by the "faithful" in secret. The hypocrite does not approve. He is presented as an antiregular caricature, with two strings to his bow, desiring to serve both hypocrisy and the world (*le siecle*) whilst in a monastery (*a riegle*). Rome is the city of evil here, converting *boens crestiens …en …fauz farisiens*. Reigning at Rome's court is Avarice, and in her retinue are her cousins *Covoitise, Vainne Gloire, Ypocrisie*. These are usurpers - the old guard have been displaced to the background: *Bone Foiz, Charitiez, Loiauteiz*. Our hero meets Hypocrisy and lives to tell the tale. In a nice little passage, hypocrites are described as wanting the words they say to be believed, and so they go around claiming untruths are true, in a formula which reeks of that used in hagiography and epic/chanson de geste. Courtois (in exile, looking once again like a shadow of Guillaume de Saint Amour) is elected eventually as pope, in a contemporary reference to a similar event in the outside world, in the transition between the weak but pro-Franciscan and anti-Averroean/Aristotelian Alexander IV and the new pope Urban IV (1261). While the immediate, contemporary, outside-world references in *Ypocrisie* are the most eviden, once again it must be emphasised that these are pointers to a larger world, to the *sentence*, lesson to be learned from good (and properly orthodox) exegetical reading.

Rutebeuf is particularly courageous, providing the clearest outline sketch of the enemy under attack. As the poems did not appear in collected form nor in groups but one at a time, and so heard and read each on its own, a poem's content would be more independent, out of the context of the author's works as a whole. Little is even known about Rutebeuf, and only through later manuscript transmission of his poems: it is only more recently that some conception of Rutebeuf as author has emerged, through attempts at grouping the poems chronologically and so showing grouping by theme and a pattern of concerns evolving. As the poems were probably received each on their own, they become more forceful in the absence of any intertext, less subtle, more open to attack. But some choice of form is already useful here in protecting author and work. Contemporary conflict between Truth and her enemies in the outside world is disguised through the use of personifications.

The use of more fictionalising forms may seem to involve a more distanced first person poetic voice, and so protect the poet and his truth. The whole effect of a more elaborate allegory may, however, be undermined in a *complainte* or a *dit,* as only one first-person voice is present, and its opinions could just as easily be ascribed to the poet. In essence, the *dit* is a problem as it brings first-person voices closer together and into the open. It is not altogether successful as a genre associated with profound and personal truth. The truth is unveiled, in a deed as contrary as possible to the deceitful words of hypocrisy, and falsehood's association with dissimulation. As it is unveiled, the truth is laid bare, naked and defenceless. Truth and secrecy cannot coexist; and so they both fall.

III. JEAN DE MEUN, *LE ROMAN DE LA ROSE*

Jean de Meun finds a way around Rutebeuf's problem. In the *Roman de la Rose*, truth and secrecy manage to stay together, in a masterly use of disguise and slippery self-defence. Personification is used once again, here coupled most significantly with a central character of simultaneous truth and falsehood, and in the form of romance. Looking at the centre of the *Rose*, as it is a romance and so it is important, confirms the opinion that debate over the years as to whether the work is anticlerical, antiregular, andtimendicant, antifraternal … or variants, or not … misses the point: it is a very harsh judgement of man, fundamentally misanthropic. But in so doing, holding up such high standards as *miroer*, the *Rose* is also positively idealistic, carrying a final message of hope to mankind, universal once more in its subject being its object, with the book as reader's mirror.

The centre and central question of identification and identity is that of Faus Samblant (False Semblance/Similitude) in his central "straight-talking" speech, framed by confessions – the interrogation by Amour (Love) and Faus Samblant's confession to him, Faus Samblant's promise of loyalty, and then the confession of Malebouche (Wicked Tongue) to Faus Samblant. His straight speech of confession I would be inclined to read as such for the same reason as I would read some of Rutebeuf as straight polemic: there is a significant stylistic change from the surrounding material, here Faus Samblant's duplicitous speech and play with words; and anger come up, which seems to be characteristic of the naked truth. Here, the core is a straight – angry, passionate, true - attack on the mendicant orders, on the basis of their own creed, their rule of poverty, to which they have been untrue. At the absolute heart are references to books, so in a sense the intervention of another level of reality, the real world, and material authority.

Here, and in the next stage, which involves talk of his home, identity, and the swearing of allegiance to Amour, we then see Faus Samblant's morally ambiguous side. His confession is to prove that he is on the side of Good. It is not a foregone conclusion that he is on the side of Evil. In his most naked speech of all, which features substantial use of Zeno's Cretan liar paradox, he shows himself as an agent of good, however paradoxical and perverse, uncovering falseness. The eschatological conclusion of Rutebeuf's polemic is still here, the apocalyptic vision, but as a second-last step before a move towards optimism and possible salvation, of Faus Samblant, in the plot itself, and applicable outside in the reader's world.

The *Rose* then goes a step further. In the next episode, we see Faus Samblant and his henchwoman, Abstinence Contrainte (Constrained/Enforced Abstinence), at work. Disguised as pilgrims and members of the fraternal orders, Dominican and Béguine respectively, they gain admittance to the besieged Castle and practise their "wily arts" (a term picked up on by Chaucer, here in the *Summoner's Tale* and in his *Rose*) on Malebouche. Both preach on the virtues of holding one's

tongue when one can only speak evil, and warn of condemnation to the flames of Hell if Malebouche does not repent. He repents, and is punished as befits his crime: he is strangled and his tongue cut out. This enables the taking of the castle and all the subsequent victories of the Forces of Good.

Here, then, we have attacks on Truth as opposed to Hypocrisy, and a heart of paradoxical truth spoken by a liar, referring right at the structural centre to Guillaume de Saint Amour himself. The *Rose*, however, can go further than Rutebeuf as its petalled-flower structure can go further towards a core of truth to be found by the reader on his own travels through the book.

In the *Rose*, it was clear that Faus Samblant had turned serious because he did not notice when he was being mocked by Amour and the assembled host, right after his passionate defence of free speech in the face of all possible adversity, even though the truth might instill fear and so loathing in those who hear it, the hypocritical mass. We thus have a clear core to the *Rose*, which is thus also eminently attackable by those same dangerous hypocrites in real life. These same layers, which permit such freedom, can also be a source of danger and entrapment. Perhaps they are meshing with the prison-themes in the *Rose,* if a/the central truth is trapped there. The mere presence of an enclosed centre which can be searched for by a reader who is aware of romance's structure is hazardous to the book, its author and indeed, as seen with the enigmatically motile extra 150 lines, to the book's reception and thus its very existence. Romance's structure can thus be as ambivalent as Faus Samblant.

THE *ROMAN DE LA ROSE* AS A WHOLE: ROMANCE AND 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, roughly speaking, themes of quest, pilgrimage, search on the one hand; and on the other the question, 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 Faus Samblant 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. 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.

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 Faus Samblant: 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 *Rose* places particular and appropriate emphasis on disguise. Layers of disguise parallel romance's structural concentric layers. These emphasise the personification-figure's freedom (compared to that in Rutebeuf's *diz,* for instance) to travel between layers of reality. For example, Faus Samblant comes from a mythic order of things, in which the genesis of personifications such as himself occurs alongside that of Venus, Nature, Genius, Love etc. This travel between layers brings in earlier type-characters assimilated into Faus Samblant: the Odyssean hero, Mercurial go-between and trickster; to which the wily fox (of fabular tradition and the *Roman de Renart*, which would have been completed fairly close to the time of Rutebeuf and Jean de Meun) has also been attached. On such travel, as Faus Samblant himself says, he can seem to be at once outside the world and "swimming" in it.

There are twists and turns along the way, which test a reader. Romance can work as a hall of mirrors, with trickster optics. They sometimes apparently amplify and sometimes they apparently diminish parts, disproportionate to their real size and scale, and so cast this real into doubt as mere superficial perception. Hence, for instance, the trickster mirrors lead the reader 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 Jean de Meun's *Rose*; indeed, that is often viewed as his principal move away from Guillaume de Lorris - a move from "art of love" to "mirror of love." Here, we have a central mirror, I think, in the person of Faus Samblant: still a perilous mirror, like that in Guillaume de Lorris's part, as absolutely, resolutely and unresolvably double.

Furthermore, mirrors are scattered throughout Jean de Meun'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 lest they go wrong in commenting exclusively on these sections, such as Reason, Genius and Nature, to the exclusion of all else.

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. It is rarely the answer to a Big Question, 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 the reader looks, worse still, the more ambiguities she finds – 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 action to take.

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: knowlede and truth again, especially, in the contemporary context, if there is 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*. 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. It is only in making such properly informed choices that salvation can be attained, and the balancing act resolved between predestination by a perfect God and free will, and as indeed outlined by Nature and Genius.

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, as he learns from the book. Or, rather, it leads him to knowledge by leading knowledge out of him, acting as a Socratic educator. The reader is thus his own key.

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 Faus Samblant section is a particular minefield. 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. Some of this is down to the intended readership, for instance in a manuscript which would be read by many, such a s in a library: hence the additions before FS's 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 is evident, and an approach focused more on its reading and interpretation than is the case with the modern perception of text as more fixed, with original authorial intention respected. These glosses all give precious information on how the *Rose* was read, and would merit further comparative study, and indeed integration in future editions of the *Rose* as part and parcel of the text. But I digress.

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 Jean de Meun. As it is questioned, as the reader doubts what it is exactly he is looking for, and as she 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 *Rose* 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. is 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 Guillaume de Lorris's *Rose*, and its refashioning in the Christianised "park of the Lamb" in Genius' speech, part of Jean de Meun's final section. 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 as a refashioning of Eve and Pandora. The crystals at the bottom of this fountain have been seen as mirrors, and their optics examined, particularly in the light of hot new Arabic treatises on optics. The *Rose* is still, after all, a specular work, *miroir d'amours*. The mirrors/crystals are distorting, refractory. The initial image of the Rose is illusory, possibly multiple, certainly problematic. I would suggest that this central part throws the following light on the debate. In Faus Samblant's 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 Faus Samblant is "everywhere and nowhere."

Second, 4. as a centre refers 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 commandements, crossed with Christ's commandment to love) fall in the centre of Guillaume de Lorris's part. In Genius' part, we have the complicatedly, and possibly partially 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 Jean de Meun's writing).

It happens to fit with another frame referring to love, in 3. and 5. Either side of Faus Samblant's central part lie very obvious arts of love. The Jealous Husband's advice is embedded within Friend's speech, and is mirrored by the Vielle's words of wisdom to Bel Acueill, both also of obvious Ovidian thrust. Something very strange happens between them, in Faus Samblant's section. A parallel almost happens, but not quite. The lover recites his credo – *Confiteor (remissionem peccatorem?)* – to Love, 10400. It 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), namely Douz Regarz, Esperance and Bel Acueill.

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 Acueill is held, and all this will eventually lead to some sort of resolution to the Lover getting his Rose. However, something strange 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 Faus Samblant 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, pitiez et largece, Hardemens, honnour, cortoisie, Deliz, simplece, compaingnie, Seürtez, deduiz et leesce, Jolivetez, biautez, juenesce, Humilitiez 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 Abstinence Contrainte'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.

FAUS SAMBLANT

The central Faus Samblant part has further "key points," on closer view, as follows:

1. 10460s: Faus Samblant is first introduced, as the son of Fraud (*Baraz*) and "Hypocrisy of the rotten heart (-> smell), who betrayed many a region in a religious habit." Fraud, persuasion, worse than the simple theft of the Friar's Tale, as it is theft of the soul. Love is not too happy, but Abstinence Contrainte defends Faus Samblant (10490) as "even if he doesn't want to love people, it is necessary to me that he be loved and declared a good and saintly man; he is my friend and I his."

2. Promises, promises: Love accepts Abstinence Contrainte's explanation, I think for the same reason as he accepts Faus Samblant's *sermon* in 10. below, and also as the Faus Samblant-Abstinence Contrainte couple show bonds of loyalty in friendship, companionship and/or love. Love continues his harangue of 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 Faus Samblant and Abstinence Contrainte. 10920s: it is decided that Faus Samblant is to be accepted, but guardedly and on condition that he satisfy Love -

3. – so Love interrogates Faus Samblant, to ensure his trustworthiness. Faus Samblant's reply is in the form of a confession, with a few shorter interruptions or interventions by Love which serve to change topic within one conversation around a central theme, which gradually becomes apparent. They also add pace, as Faus Samblant will move between garulousness and hesitancy, such as 10950s, when he wishes to tell the truth, but fears reprisals from those who do not wish to hear it, so Love reassures him. Faus Samblant's longer replies are shortish declarations on topics pertinent to the antifraternal debate, as picked up in the *ST*, and as extended here too into a core *quaestio*-style question of truth v. falsehood and appearances. The use of confession is interesting, as the form is closely related to Rutebeuf's *diz* and *complainte*, emphasised intratextually here via Nature's *complainte*/confession following after the Faus Samblant section.

Faus Samblance 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 Faus Samblance defines himself by his disguises, and by his lack of definite identity, by being entirely "semblance." He cannot say where he is from, as he is everywhere, and changes his residence and his garb depending on circumstances. Right now, that means that he is mostly to be found *en cloister*, in monasteries. 11060s: *l'habit ne faict pas le moine*: the religious can be worldly, appearances are not necessarily the same as truth. 11080s move on to disguise, and the need to look at acts to find the truth. The reverse is also true, as the *siecle - seculier* - worldly can be religious/spiritual: 11120s, "good heart made good thought … and good thought made good deed."

His disguises include that of 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. Faus Samblant 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. The 11190s are noteworthy for Faus Samblant's catalogue of his disguises, which include *cordeliers et jacobins*, Franciscans and Dominicans, but they are but two of many disguises, albeit including many orders: "I travel through every region, searching for all religions/orders."

We have a first warning about the wolves of the world masquerading as sheep, so the first of many pointed apocalyptic finger-waggings building towards the only possible *sententia* for the good, virtuous and wise reader.

Disguise is linked here principally to false speech, so he moves on to his right (this looks pretty antifraternal) to hear confession and give absolution: the next section is the most unstable in manuscript transmission, being present in varying length or not at all; modern editions take a similarly variable approach to it as part and parcel of the *Rose*. It is certainly inflammatory, which could explain its absence, omission etc. The argument is highly cynical, on fleecing the plumper

flocks (by second confession, and by supplanting the secular/normal clergy in this) and warning against standing in a friar's way.

The "main narrative" - that which is present in most manuscripts, and less volatile - resumes about line 11227 (Strubel ed.; line numbers go haywire from here), as Faus Samblant had wanted to stop there but Love makes him continue, partly to amuse the others - note that Faus Samblant would appear to be, in contrast, deadly serious; in a snappier exchange, he helps Faus Samblant through his (Franciscan) credo: "you seem to be a saintly hermit?" "it's true, but I'm a hypocrite" "You preach abstinence!" "true, true, but I eat and drink my fill" "You preach poverty." Faus Samblant manages at long last to define himself at this point by Zeno's Cretan liar paradox, 11231-244: 11170s: "without lying I am a traitor, and God has judged me for a thief; I am a perjure." Slightly further, a reference to *barat ne guile.*

Faus Samblant goes off again, on a 330-line absolutely straight sermon-style speech explaining and defending poverty and begging, with appropriate Biblical exempla. The rich are preferred. Wealth ought to be evenly distributed. The poor are a lost cause and not worthwhile (pursuing as souls). The classic *imitatio christi* argument for poverty is presented, but also for living by one's own manual labour. Some doubt is expressed as to the possibility of exceptions from the rule. Saint Paul's admonition to the disciples is mentioned, on working for one's living and not begging, as that is theft. It is all right to live by prayer, but only in a monastery. There are a few cases when begging can be sanctioned: when one is incapable of doing anything else, and ideally as a stop-gap solution. All of the above was the original *raison d'être* of the Franciscans, and the same is true of many reform movements up until the present. The speech is based strongly on the *Consolation* and on Guillaume de Saint Amour's *Periculis* .

Guillaume de Saint Amour appears for the first time (11492) as defender of the above ideas. Faus Samblant comes out in the open in the name of truth (11505), defying all dangers: "I shall not be silent on this, even if I were to lose my life, or be unjustly thrown into an obscure prison like St Paul, or be wrongfully banished from the kingdom like Master Guillaume de Saint Amour, whom Hypocrisy had exiled out of great envy. … my mother exiled him … because he upheld the truth, in a book in which all his life was described."

He then turns to the world being Godless, a hell on earth, dog eat dog. Faus Samblant "fools the foolers and the fools, robs the robbers and the robbed", gets rich, and uses a network of deceivers, who deal in secrets (another old figure reappropriated: the Mercurial go-between). He refers to the Pharisees as hypocrites 11610, with reference to glossing. One should read them before doing anything oneself: contrarily, one ought to follow their words, not their actions, as they are quite happy to preach good whilst doing evil.

Talk of the conspirators leads into a rant and, finally, to a description of Faus Samblant's home. He is everywhere, and, in a beautiful few lines, he describes the typical challenges facing a personification: "I am in the towns and the castles and the cities, I have my halls and my palaces, where one can run freely, and I can still say that I am outside of this world; but I dive into it and float around and swim etc." Before declaring his allegiance: he is one of the valets of the Antichrist. A warning: pay up or else - reminds of the Friar's threats?

4. Within the speech, we have a growing apocalyptic swell – from which Faus Samblant is identified with the Antichrist (though there is more to this) – and reference to apocalypse averted, through *l'evangile pardurable* (11806), Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, *Liber introductorius ad evangilium aeternum*, referring in turn to the 12th c. heretical Franciscan Joachim de Flore. The Sorbonne had saved the world in 1255 by banning this millenarian-syndrome annunciation of a new gospel: "a diabolical book, claiming to surpass the Gospels" … 11860s, some discussion, then Faus Samblant stops short, turns around and returns to the apocalyptic vision of the empire of his parents, Fraud and Hypocrisy, 11900s.

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

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

7. 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*.

8. A fourth: the "treasure-chest"-symbol: the book. Three books are in the Faus Samblant section [→ reading and interpretation at the heart]:

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

(b) Guillaume de Saint Amour's *Periculis* (11492), which also forms the backbone of most of Faus Samblant'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 homs 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].

9. The liar paradox is repeated in 11972-980, and its repetition viewed by the crowd as rhetorical trick and comic effect. The laughter reveals something less light and comical, and a complicating misunderstanding of Faus Samblant, as the crowd, misled by appearances and his reputation, laughs at him – the shepherd boy who cried wolf. The harder he tries, the worse it gets, and the more they laugh. At the same time, the outside reader laughs against the crowd and it is here that she turns to fullest sympathy with Faus Samblant in his very highest attempts at communicating and spreading truth. For Faus Samblant seems to be in deadliest earnest when everyone else is not, 11990-12013, thus making a lonely stand for the truth, like his contemporary in the outside world, Guillaume de Saint Amour.

Faus Samblant promises without promising, including a question, against all the rules, but in terms of loyalty – still acting in character, as being paradoxical as usual. He does not promise fealty to Love. He passes the matter to Love's judgement, using terms picked up later at the end of Genius'sermon, terms at once of the justice of human law-courts, of the Last Judgement, and of the critical judgement of reading. He leaves the matter with Love: "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 and writing: 11994 *Metez vous en avanture! Car se pleges en requerrez Ja plus aseür n'en serez; 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 priviledged status of written text? Should everything be questioned? In the light of Faus Samblant'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

10. Faus Samblant's not-quite-promise is acepted by Love, as

> - *je t'en croi sanz plevir* 12014: partly on the basis of Faus Samblant's love for Abstinence Contrainte, symmetrically paired with Love's similar acceptance, earlier, of Abstinence Contrainte's love for Faus Samblant;
> - as a matter of trust, belief, faith and
> - his free decision, as a matter of reading and interpreting Faus Samblant. A Boethian subtext on free will is implied here, as combined with the grand design (note, this *grand dessin* often comes up in titles on the *Rose*). Reading is perpetual questioning, and resolving such questions for the right reasons. If there is such a thing, that might just be the central truth here. References to all levels of allegorical significance are already simultaneously layered in the text, inviting, surely, reading of the whole text in a similar vein, its interpretation as all levels of allegory simultaneously. The literal level is present in antifraternal critique. The allegorical is in antihypocritical critique, and the fall of man. The tropological is here in 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 would be in application, in the search for spiritual truth, which of course interestingly joins up full circle with the literal.

11. In the next episode, in a sense a parodic reversal, subversion and perversion of the rest of the Faus Samblant section, Faus Samblant and Abstinence Contrainte go to break down Malebouche's resistance. They are disguised as pilgrims, Faus Samblant as a *frere soier*, a Dominican (12130s). He looks "simple, humble, nice, peaceful" but carries a razor called Cut-Throat. Malebouche recognises the pair as Samblance and Abstinance but not as Faus and Contrainte. Then follows a practical

example of good begging technique, and Abstinence Contrainte's sermon on the virtue of silence, when one ought to hold one's tongue rather than speak evil, of which Malebouche is guilty, and of which he ought to repent or he will go *ou cul d'enfer* (12252), "to the arse of Hell." Malebouche doesn't buy it, accusing them of lying and enchantment, but then Faus Samblant nails him with a spectacular piece of rhetoric built around "to know", "the truth", "love", and concluding similarly. Malebouche is persuaded by this fine proof, as "he cannot reply to it / refute it, whilst seeing in it the semblance of truth." He kneels, confesses (as he is "truly repentant"), and is duly strangled, his tongue is cut out and he is thrown into a ditch.

TRUTH AT THE CENTRE

In the centre, then, we have a section featuring, predominantly, Faus Samblant 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 Faus Samblant in the middle when Jean de Meun could have stuck to using the central lover figure? Previously, we had 1. the poet/dreamer/lover and various personifications in Guillaume de Lorris's part; 2. Reason and the lover; 3. Friend and the lover. Here in 4., we have Love and Faus Samblant. Later, though, there is a change to 5. with Crone and Bel Acueill, 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 Faus Samblant 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 Faus Samblant who is at the centre. Faus Samblant 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 and being in character, suitable, fitting; False Semblance is another way of putting verisimilitude. If Jean de Meun'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.

Faus Samblant 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 Guillaume de Saint Amour within Faus Samblant's discourse, Guillaume de Saint Amour who has been imprisoned and exiled by Hypocrisy, the mother of Faus Samblant (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:

Furthermore, it is thanks to Faus Samblant that the castle can be taken and Bel Acueill 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'ierent simples ne moles. Les oevres 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 trajson ot la face, Blanche dehors, dedans necie* (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* – Guillaume de Lorris'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 Faus Samblant 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 Faus Samblant's part as central, we have Faus Samblant as a central mirror in himself: he can be iconographically similar to Fortune and Janus, two-faced, two-headed.

Other sets of associated figures are I think alluded to – intertextually speaking - who fit Faus Samblant'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 de Meun, the Baptist, the Evangelist, and the Apocalyptic Heretical Franciscan figure. The Guillaumes seem a little clearer: de Lorris and de Saint Amour. The second, central, is a Faus Samblant himself: at once Guillaume, wily foxiness personified, and de Saint Amour, "saintly love." This gives two very tempting leads to what else Guillaume de Saint Amour 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 Acueill 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.

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 one of the "major" debates about the *Rose*, that commonly labelled "antifraternal." 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.

This debate may well have started out while Jean de Meun was writing the *Rose*. In his text are what are usually read as "recantations" and "auctorial interventions," and included as such in manuscript rubrication, both being around his treatment of the regular clergy (and care about religion as a whole), firstly throughout Faus Samblant's discourse and then as a general recantation of Faus Samblant as a character, summarily thrown out of Love's army around 19400 with Abstinence Contrainte following him rapidly, tail between her legs. These self-defences are juggled around in certain manuscripts, so as to be closer to the parts they concern.

To what extent Jean de Meun was involved in these additions and their placing I do not know; however, they are there, and they form and 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 Jean de Meun's *Rose* as an exemplary attack on hypocrisy itself. Second, Jean de Meun'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 Faus Samblant 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 Leesce* (1372-73), subtleties in the separation of personae had suffered - Jean de Meun the real life person, Jean de Meun the author, then within the *Rose* the poet, the dreamer, the lover, and the various personifications had all become to an extent conflated; Faus Samblant 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 antifraternal/antimendicant/anticlerical debate arises in, precisely, discussion of hypocrisy. Moving from a more primary, literal level of attack on friars in the here and now, through the two being generalised attacks on human beings, 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: it is of course, 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 hypocrisy.

CONCLUSION

SUMMONER'S TALE (1): STRUCTURAL CHANGES AND CHANGES OF SENSE

This core of truth to be discerned by a reader is picked up and changed again in the *Sumoner's Tale*, thanks to the *novella*-based form with its associations of newness, renewal, to make material relevant and appropriate to the time; and thanks to the frame narrative of pilgrimage. Again, a formal change enables a different approach to the message, the *sensum* and *sententia*. The same basic message remains: be false, and you will have your due and appropriate comeupance. The theme of

Falsehood / Falseness v. Truth is articulated quite differently in the *ST*, with a shift in the character's description away from Rutebeuf's and Jean de Meun's emphasis on disguise.

More immediately, there is a move away from romance and into a Decameronesque collection of short stories within a frame-story, with emphasis very much on the inner tales and little frame-narrative, especially as compared to the *Decameron*. The new structure is built less on circular motifs, such as the romance's treasure-chest centre, which permits a first decentralisation, The tales stand more independently than Jean de Meun's personnifications' speeches; visually, they would look like a string of equal-sized beads on a necklace, as opposed to the *Rose* as a Celtic knotwork brooch, with a gem at its centre. The theme of truth can be better dissimulated as more dispersed throughout the tales, as are also the figures of truth and of falsehood (the *ST* being but one example; the *Wife of Bath* being another). Compared to the *Rose*, the clearer distinction here between narrative voices, in a firmer external narrative frame, permits the poet even greater distance from opinions expressed by his characters.

In the *Canterbury Tales*, we see perhaps the most cunning writing and disguise of truth, in its dissemination throughout the tales, and the larger figure of falsehood refracted into various human embodiments: false summoner, false friar, various false women, etc. No estate is immune from subversion. Furthermore, as the presence of the frame story emphasises each individual tale as the expression of its teller's views rather than of the narrator, I think there is some consciousness of and comment on one of the central tenets of the *Querelle de la Rose*: the *Rose* was more open to criticism as its author's view were less clearly distanced from his characters'.

The latter two works succeed better in hiding a centre of truth through the literary form chosen the need to read the work as a whole, and therefore either the reader must include the many internal contradictions, or choose amongst them, aware that in so doing it is not the *Rose* or the *CT* that he reads but his own version of them. That is particularly evident in the *CT*, due to its structure as a group of interconnected tales, each at once independent, and part of the whole, and relating to other tales. That supports an Aristotelian reading, and suggests the Aristotelian debates running through the 13th c as an important intertext.

The *ST* manages to escape the *Rose*'s possible dread fate. The same basic message remains, but it resists attack due to being in the ever-present paradox of the *novella* itself, based as it is in verisimilitude – *vraisemblance* – truthful-seeming, which is itself literally at once Truth and Semblance. It is therefore a conflation of the polar opposites confronted in both Rutebeuf and the *Rose*. The central controlling-figure of the narrator, the key false-truth-maker, is of course absent here in the *ST* as in other tales, as the frame narrators are solely responsible for their tales (and their consequences). Noticeably, in the *ST*, the one thing which stirs the frame-Friar into action is mention of telling *fables* – that is, moral tales, which would include *littera, sensus and sententia*. Due to the truth-

seeming aspect, the Friar in the *ST* thus manages to encompass all three levels of meaning: literal, reference to contemporary antifraternal debate, and their intertextual reference (such as *eructavit … bof*, which may be a subtle passing reference to Rutebeuf, and *false dissemylance*, which looks rather like a reference to Faus Samblant); the deeper debate of Truth and Falsehood / Hypocrisy / Fraud, as personified by the Friar; and for the moral of the tale, how this ought to be applied to real life, in the form of the fact that this is true-seeming: in a sense realistic, makes it all the clearer. The setting of a pilgrimage simply unfolds this: the reading of the story of a pilgrimage acts as a pilgrimage in its own right, which is a search for the truth, then to be put into practice in leading the life of truth.

SUMMONER'S TALE (2): CHANGE OF ENDING AND CHANGE OF *SENTENTIA*

A second shift occurring in the *ST* lies in the further refinement of the appropriate punishment for the Friar – note its appropriateness, again, surely linked to being fitting and so seemly, linked to seeming, and semblance.

This major addition , with respect to Rutebeuf and the *Rose*, is of course the fart. Thomas' fart may be related to more generic "arsehole of hell" passages such as included in Jean de Meun's description (12252) of the *cul d'enfer*. Resemblances are striking to Rutebeuf's *Dis dou pet au vilain*. In this *fabliau*-style piece, the fate of the *villain* (somewhere between a rich peasant and lower bourgeois) is bemoaned, as he can go neither to Heaven nor to Hell. He is denied Heaven, as he has no *charitei, bien, foi, loiauté, pitié humainne, n'amerent clerc ne prestre*, and besides *oncques a Jhesucrit ne place / que vilainz ait habergerie / avec le fil sainte Marie, / car il n'est raisons ne droiture: / ce trovons nos en Escriture.* The *Dis* describes how the *vilain* also came to be denied access to Hell. As our hero *vilain* lies on his sickbed, a demon appears and fixes the usual bag to the ailing man's behind, ready to receive his soul, supposed to leave the body by the nether orifice. Unbeknownst to the demon, however, the sick man had earlier consumed a potion, a large quantity of beef in garlic, and some good hot greasy bouillon. Our hero reckons that he is on the mend, and that the decisive turning-point will be getting out the fart: *n'a mais doute qu'il soit periz / s'or puet porre, il iert garis.* The demon bags his takings, returns to Hell, and subsequent de-bagging leads to a meeting at which it is decided to bar all *vilains* from Hell, as *que jameis nuns arme n'aport / qui de vilain sera issue / ne puet estre qu'ele ne pue.*

The tale is recalled by Chaucer's, and similarities underline differences, such as Chaucer's more conscious peasant with a more deliberate fart and greater planned intent – as opposed to the fortuitous accident in Rutebeuf. The association between demons and friars is strengthened through their links to the fluid imagery of Hell/rear and farts/souls. Thomas' fart was first heralded in the *Summoner's Prologue*, in its preface-story of a kind of genesis of the friars, commonly viewed as diabolical, who live in Satan's nether regions, to be emitted in vaste apoclyptic hordes. There is a

buildup through reference to *fundament* and *farthing*. When the dread thing arises, it makes *swich a soun*, rather as the sounding of the last trump before the coming of the Antichrist. It also marks the split between the two halves of the tale, when the Friar's world unravels and turns topsy-turvy.

In the first half, we had a picture-perfect parody Friar, complete with all requisite vices and trickster sermon. As in the *Rose*, he does utter a straight sermon, defending the original point of the Franciscans, as any other reform movement: the *imitatio Christi*. He is quite literally "hoist by his own petard." Thomas (an allusion to doubting Thomas, the apostle?) refuses confession and makes his final gift (as mock last bequest), after which the reversal occurs. The Friar then acts contrary to his words, a theme taken up from the other two texts, on judging by acts rather than words, and on the mendicant orders' original obligation to live by their acts: he becoms angry. Once again, though, this is also a sign of truthfulness. He then confesses to another of his clients, the Lord, who hears him out in similar interrogative and non-judgemental mode to that of Amour. Finally, and appropriately, we have a classic answer to the distribution-dilemma, and a doubly paradoxical one. The friar, in his reversed-self, interprets the problem literally, by the letter rather than according to the spirit, i.e. contrary to the usual devious fraternal methods, capable of arguing black to be white for their own benefit. The answer, and the proper interpretation of the gift as appropriate, is given by an inappropriate figure: the young squire. Though he is appropriate in Biblical terms: "the first shall be last, and the last shall be first," in this Last Judgement; and the judgement comes "out of the mouths of babes and children."

Why is the fart appropriate? It is, as John V. Fleming points out at the end of his article on antifraternalism in the *ST,* at once scatological and eschatological. It represents the Friar's speech: diabolical, perverse, foul-smelling, sulphurous hot air, as opposed to the sweet (and usually rose-scented) perfume of saintliness. The inner rot comes out; the truth will out in the end. His speech is all form – see its spectacular sound – and of no content. It is a perversion of human speech at its best: man's own creation, usually to be in the form of prayer, song, music, glorifying the Divine. Here, though, we have its opposite – the glorification of the speaker, who cheats other of their very souls through illegitimate confession (and last rites). This is *outremesure* and *outrecuyder*, pride, going beyond one's bounds and beyond the bounds of the permissible. There is a contrast between *cuyder*, worldly concupiscence, synonymous with *cupiditas*, and *caritas*, love, of the spiritual – worldly riches against spiritual. It is thus appropriate to remind the Friar of the comparative poverty of the carnal and temporal as opposed to spiritual riches. Thus, the fart is at once a mimetic representation of the Friar's speech (and sin) and his punishment for it. There is return full circle to the central questions of semblance – the representative side – and truth – the judgement, conclusion, moral, eschatological, anagogical.

As such, its final symbolic effect is to unite semblance and truth, which is also associated with the conjunction of *solaas* and *sentence*. Furthermore, the nature of the fart combined with its placing here unify meaning and form, *matiere* and *sans*.

This final note of conjunction reinforces once again the dangers of only interpreting literally (ex. this text as antifraternal), or seeing the fart as mere entertaining fluff. While it is an import from the *fabliau* tradition, this is fully integrated into the whole; as integrated as is the fabliau tradition, however easily viewed as lesser, lower, fluffy, just because it is rooted in the real world and reflects the more base, animal side of man.

On the other hand, only reading at the supposedly higher levels is just as dangerous, with a reading of the fart as purely serious, part of a central debate pitting truth against falsehood, and in defence of the writer's free speech. Besides, that option only invites ridicule

The fart, just like the Friar, could be seen as the perfect example of conjoined *solaas* and *sentence*, as only then can concluding meaning or the full *sententia* of application be attained, of integration into real life (conjunction once again), into a life of truth – which must include the lower and baser, if it is to be honest[1]. Such appropriateness and verisimilitude make Chaucer's tale more successful in the same purpose as those of Rutebeuf and Jean de Meun – and in a purpose which goes well beyond antifraternal, antimendicant, antiregular or anticlerical rant.

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[1] This, in turn, may allude to Guillaume de Saint Amour and other supporters of the Aristotelian-Averroean based solution to the problem of the good life and salvation: *grosso modo*, it could be earned here below in the temporal world, if there are two truths, higher and lower, and the human/lower/temporal has no access to the higher whilst here below. Very roughly speaking.

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All English translations used, for Rutebeuf and Jean de Meun, are my own. I apologise herewith for their sloppiness. I also apologise for having failed to tidy them up systematically and properly, as I ought to have done, by removing all translations and replacing them with direct quotation from the text. Faute de temps.

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