The Romance of the Rose Study Guide

The Romance of the Rose by Guillaume De Lorris

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Lines 1-20

Lines 1-20 Summary

The narrator explains that while people often consider dreams to be misleading and false, he argues that dreams can often contain symbolic truth.

Lines 1-20 Analysis

Here the poet explains his principal literary device, which is an allegory presented in the form of a dream. The idea of the figures in dreams symbolizing mental, emotional, or spiritual truths is ancient. It predates Freud's theories of psychoanalysis by many centuries. This idea prepares the reader for the allegory that is to follow.

Using a dream as a mechanism for telling a tale also helps avoid many difficulties that may appear when using allegory. Dreams are known to be unrealistic, so the narrator is able to use fantastic, idealized, and unrealistic elements freely. Dreams that have these elements are "realistic."

Lines 21-48

Lines 21-48 Summary

The narrator reveals that he will write down a dream he had five years ago at the age of twenty, naming it the Romance of the Rose. He expresses a wish that the lady he loves will receive it well.

Lines 21-48 Analysis

The narrator reveals three motives for writing down his dream. Firstly, he hopes that the audience will enjoy it and that it will make their hearts "gaye and light." Secondly, he reveals that Love commanded him to do it. In other words, he wants to write this as an expression of his love for a lady, which is confirmed by his wish that she receives the poem well. Thirdly, he also wants to explain the "art of Love" within the poem.

The "Art of Love" is a direct reference to Ovid's Ars Amantis, which is very popular in Chaucer's day when discussions of romantic love, including both its nature and rules, are discussed by members of high society. Queens will sometimes hold "Courts of Love" where they debate and pass judgment on romantic problems in a lighthearted parody of a law court. Works explaining the "Arts of Love" by Ovid and others such as Andreas Cappelanus are used in place of legal manuscripts and constitutions. The poet makes a contribution to this "legal canon" with The Romance of the Rose.

It is interesting to note that the tendency to look for books of rules and neutral arbitration in matters of the heart can still be seen today. This is evident in the popularity of talk shows and books explaining "The Rules" of dating and relationships.

Lines 49-146

Lines 49-146 Summary

The narrator describes the setting of his dream. It is May. The narrator sets out to visit the countryside and enjoy the beauties of nature in the springtime such as the fresh leaves, the flowers, and birdsong. He finds a river of clear water and follows its course. He comes across a garden encircled by high walls with many pictures painted on it.

Lines 49-146 Analysis

These lines are, for the most part, a celebration of springtime and the beauties of nature, especially after the deadness and sterility of winter. Allegorically, springtime represents youth and the time of life when humans first experience romantic stirrings.

This poem was translated into (Middle) English by Chaucer. It is interesting to compare this passage with Chaucer's well-known Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. The main comparison lies in the idea that the coming of spring inspires people with a longing to travel and experience the beauties of the countryside.

This springtime setting was something of a convention in the Courtly romances. The convention is very appropriate, as youth are drawn to the springtime of life when love and romance become very important. Spring is a time of year when the fertility of nature can be seen in great abundance, which forms a link between the role of love and romance as well as human fertility and life. The idea of "it's part of nature and made by God, so it is therefore good" is a point often argued in the favor of romantic love and its relations to moral and spiritual issues.

Lines 147-474

Lines 147-474 Summary

The narrator describes the images of the vices or qualities depicted on the outside of the walled garden: Hate, Felonye, Vilanye, Coveityse, Avarice, Envye, Sorowe, Elde, Time, Pope-holy, and Povert.

Lines 147-474 Analysis

The qualities painted on the outside of the wall show that they are excluded from the garden, instead of being a "contents label" of what is inside, which might be the assumption of a modern reader. Allegorically speaking, these qualities are the ones that bar an individual from taking part in Courtly Love. Vices such as Hate, Sorrow, Envy, and Avarice need little explanation. It is obvious why these would debar an individual from finding love. The appearance of Time, Elde (Old Age), and Povert(y) seem rather unfair, as if the poet is saying that poor people and old people will never find love. However, it is important to bear in mind that the poem speaks of Courtly Love, which is a "game" and a fashion among the younger members of the upper classes. Queens are the ones that held the Courts of Love while peasant women did not. However, the reader should not think that writers of the Middle Ages assume that old or poor people are incapable of loving. Many of the courtly romances have impoverished members of the nobility playing important romantic roles. For example, Chaucer's Wife of Bath in the Canterbury Tales is a delightfully amorous and bawdy older woman who would quite happily take on a young husband.

The fact that the figures painted on the walls are depicted as female is probably not intended as misogyny. Either these figures are female to provide a negative counterpart to the Classical Muses or Graces, which are always depicted as female, or they are intended to represent characteristics of a woman that the narrator would not consider as potential lovers.

Hate and Felonye (Felony) are straightforward vices and need little explanation. The others require more detail.

Vilanye (Villainy) in modern language would be called Boorishness, Crassness, or Crudeness. Rudeness and a lack of sensitivity and tact are the hallmarks of this quality.

Coveityse (Covetousness or Greed) is described in terms of the crimes and wrongs in society that "she" provokes, such as robbery, "miscounting" (fraud or embezzlement), prostitution, and usury. This vice is depicted with her hands stretched out to grasp, as she is "wood" (mad) for gain and consumption. The appearance of this vice highlights a major cultural difference between modern times and the Middle Ages. In fact, the modern economic system with its credit system, high-interest loans (the modern name for usury), advertising, conspicuous consumption, and the like would be looked on in

horror by people of the Middle Ages, who classed Covetousness as one of the Seven Deadly sins. A modern translation of this allegory could well call this figure Mrs. Jones of Madison Avenue whom everyone tries to keep up with.

Avarice is the opposite extreme to Covetousness. Yet both are motivated by a love of money. Avarice refuses to part with a penny, even for her own good. Ebenezer Scrooge is a familiar literary character who displays this vice. Avarice is a "tightwad" and a modern allegorical equivalent would probably be called Penny Pincher.

Envye (Envy) is shown as being another form of pride that reveals a self-centered nature. Envy is only pleased with the misfortunes of others, especially the misfortunes of the famous, wealthy, or good, and feels furious when good things happen to other people and not to her. The final description of Envy, portrayed with her eyes tightly shut and her face averted so she cannot see anybody else who is happy, beautiful, praised, or loved, is a graphic description of self-centered pride.

Sorowe (Sorrow) at first glance appears to be mere sadness. However, a closer look at the description reveals that this quality is more than just the temporary emotion felt by all humanity. This sorrow seems almost to be a deliberate choice. Sorrow never takes any pleasure in anything and nothing will ever please her, and her sorrow is "ententyf" (described as "eager, devoted, careful, and diligent.) It is intriguing that some of this emotion is attributed to "ire" or anger. Another interesting point is Sorrow's tendency towards self-harming. This is damaging behavior that is obviously not a modern phenomenon. The fact that deliberate sorrow is considered a vice also illustrates that the Medieval mind would not have sympathized with the Gothic/Romantic/Emo concept of angst or dark moods being considered desirable or indicative of a sensitive soul. Sorrow is pitiful, as the narrator stresses, but it may be hinted that a lot of this deliberate sorrow is self-pity.

Elde (Old Age) and Time are very similar. Both are depicted as withered old women who have been beautiful once. The description of Elde is a graphic portrayal of the aging human body, while the description of Time stresses the inevitability of decay, change, and death. Time never stands still and will destroy everything. This description could be seen as a warning to the reader where we should not take youth for granted. Everyone will grow old and death comes to all. Time also serves as a counterbalance to the vices of Covetousness and Avarice. Time will destroy everything, including kings and emperors with all their wealth. Material possessions cannot hold Time back.

Pope-holy could also be called Hypocrisy. Privately, Pope-holy indulges in all sorts of vices, while putting on a public appearance of righteousness. The name "Pope-holy" should not be interpreted as a criticism of the Catholic church by a Protestant writer. Guillaume de Loris predates Martin Luther by two centuries. The idea reveals that this sort of hypocrisy puts on a public show of being as "holy as the Pope." It is interesting that Pope-holy is described as publicly shunning joy and cheerfulness as part of this false religion.

Povert(y) is graphically described as a diseased beggar dressed in a filthy sack, set apart from the other vices. The appearance of Poverty among the vices may strike the reader as being unfair. Like Age and Time, Poverty may serve as a warning. It may be no coincidence that Poverty appears in the same place as Covetousness, Envy, and Avarice, with the implication that where the first three are, Poverty will also be found. Although Poverty is set apart from the others, unseen by them.

Lines 475-644

Lines 475-644 Summary

The narrator returns to his description of the wall and longs to enter the garden as he hears birdsong coming from within it. He begins to search for a way into the garden and finds a small door. He knocks on the door and Ydelnesse opens the door. She explains that the garden belongs to Mirth, who built and designed it, and he is holding court within. The narrator enters to join them.

Lines 475-644 Analysis

The narrator's longing to enter the beautiful garden is reminiscent of the Biblical story of the Garden of Eden. What is within this garden seems to contain enough joy to make the whole world happy, and the narrator's longing to enter the garden reads like a yearning for Paradise Lost. It is significant that the walls of the garden are square, and this description is used twice. A square represents equality, regularity, harmony, stability, and perfection, albeit an earthly perfection. It is the circle that represented heaven or eternity.

Idleness is the porter who lets him into the garden. Again, this indicates that the "game" of courtly love is reserved for the upper classes and requires leisure to participate in it. It is not suggested that Idleness is sinful or morally wrong. The concept that "the Devil finds work for idle hands to do" is not introduced until later. Idleness is described in some detail, with the almost humorous comment that the only work she has to do is to groom herself and put on her finery.

Idleness describes the trees as originating from "the lande Alexandryn" or what we would call the Middle East. This gives the garden a hint of exotic mystery. To readers of the Middle Ages, the Middle East is a land of luxury and refinement. Hints of this luxury are brought back in tales by the Crusaders, along with luxury goods such as silk, apricots, oranges, muslin, and the like.

Allegorically, the garden represents the world of the court or the place of leisure and worldly happiness.

Lines 645-1308

Lines 645-1308 Summary

The narrator enters the delightful garden and meets Sir Mirth and his company and joins in their dance. The company includes Gladness, Courtesy, Cupid, Sweet-Looking, Beauty, Rich(n)ess, Largesse, Fraunchyse, and Youth.

Lines 645-1308 Analysis

These characters are the reverse of the vices portrayed on the outer wall. They represent the characteristics desirable in a lover or in the idealized world of the court. The overall tone in this passage is one of perpetual beauty, joy, festivity, and celebration, where the natural music is paralleled and complemented by the singing and playing of the musicians.

Courtesy is the virtue who invites the narrator into the dance. This indicates that proper behavior and good manners are the first prerequisite for entering into the world of Courtly Love.

Cupid is the most significant of the characters appearing here. Like all these allegorical figures, he is described in great detail to give an overall impression of what the virtue or characteristic is like. Cupid or Romantic Love will have a significant role to play and this description introduces and describes his five golden arrows, which is an instance of foreshadowing. These arrows, held by his squire Sweet-Looking, are described in some detail as being Beauty, Simplesse (Simplicity or Innocence), Fraunchyse, Company and Fair-Semblaunt. These arrows can "wound" with love, although some hurt less than others. It is also interesting that Cupid and his squire have five other arrows that bestow or inflict the opposite qualities (Pride, Vilanye, Shame, Wanhope (Despair), and Newe Thought.

Presumably, the golden arrows, shot from a bow of beautifully carved wood, are the qualities in a maiden that will make a young man fall in love (or vice versa), while the black arrows shot from the bow made of black wood from a tree that bears sour fruit are the qualities that make someone fall out of love. The qualities that make a person fall out of love are an interesting mixture. Pride and Villainy in the other person are obvious reasons for renouncing love, as are Shame and Despair (shame here could either mean a sense of unworthiness or could indicate embarrassment about sexual matters and the biological aspects of romantic love.) New Thought, however, is quite startling, as it implies that a person can stop loving, either because they have "thought it over" and listened to reason or because their fancies are taken by another person. It is a pity that this arrow is not described in more detail.

The narrator explicitly states that more will be told of the arrows later. As de Lorris never finished the Romance of the Rose, it is interesting to speculate whether we would have

seen the black arrows in use as well as the golden ones, if he had lived to finish the work.

Cupid is not the "baby angel" of popular artwork. Instead, he is portrayed as an adult and a warrior. The portrayal of Cupid in this work and in most Courtly romances is serious in intent. It does not contain any trace of the comic mischief-maker who delights in making folk fall in love with unsuitable people and make fools of themselves, which was the way Cupid was portrayed in earlier works (such as that of Ovid) or in later ones (e.g. Shakespeare's somewhat jocular references.)

Gladness, Beauty, Courtesy, and Youth are concepts or figures that are easy to understand and need little commentary, except to notice that Youth is described as being eleven years old. This reminds the modern reader that the concept of teenagers as being a stage of life that is neither child nor adult is a very recent idea. In the writer's day, puberty and adolescence form the entry into adulthood rather than a betwixt-and-between stage. Gladness is described as being pledged in love to Mirth since she is twelve years old, without any hint that this is considered to be far too young to enter into the world of love, romance, and marriage, even in an allegory. There may be a hint of satire in the description of Youth as being somewhat foolish ("nyce") and thinking of nothing but playing and kissing.

Richness is quite different in character from the vices Avarice and Covetousness, although it is stated explicitly that those who curry favor with Richness often misuse their power and oppress others. The comment that "no good man loveth [their] company" is revealing as well. This oppression for gain is done behind the back of Richness herself. Richness has power, but it is stated that this power can be used to help those less fortunate or to harm them. Richness in herself is neutral. The clothes that dress the allegorical figure of Richness stress this ability of wealth to be used for good where the stone in her girdle can cure all diseases. Richness dances with a young man who seems to represent a well-kept and wealthy household.

Largesse accompanies Richness in the same way that Avarice follows Covetousness. Largesse is Generosity, whose delight is in giving and her motto is "have this." Largesse is shown as being stronger than Avarice, as her desire to give is shown as being greater than Avarice's desire to clutch and keep. Paradoxically, the more she gives away, the more she has, and her generosity continually wins her friends and admiration. It is stated that her ability to give endlessly is divine. It is God who sends her more as she gives away. The description of Largesse could stand alone as a parable to illustrate a moral tale, as it describes what a generous person is like, and the benefits of being generous. Largesse dances with a young knight who does great deeds of daring on behalf of his beloved, thus offering another example of generous self-giving.

Fraunchyse or Frankness is the reverse of Villainy. Frankness is the quality of the freeborn or nobility (at least an ideal nobility), and this allegorical figure does nothing except as what she wants to do. However, her power is not misused. Mercy and sensitivity to the needs of others seem to be her primary characteristic. In the idealized world of this allegory, those in positions of power or nobility do not (or should not)

misuse their power to harm those less fortunate than themselves. This could possibly be the reason why Poverty is placed outside the idealized garden.

Lines 1309-1454

Lines 1309-1454 Summary

The dance ends and the narrator watches as the couples go apart for dalliance. The narrator goes to explore the garden further. Cupid prepares his golden arrows and orders Sweet-Looking to string his golden bow. The narrator describes the trees, the animals, and the fountains (wells) that he passes, but Cupid stalks him like a hunter.

Lines 1309-1454 Analysis

On the allegorical level, this passage is very easy to interpret. The young man at court is surrounded by happy couples, although he is unattached. He also looks around at the beauties of the court . Possibly the wells symbolize the unattached women of the court. The metaphor of a fountain or well for a beloved woman is also found in the Biblical Song of Solomon immediately adjacent to the metaphor of a garden. This interpretation is backed by the somewhat sexual terms used to describe the wells. The grass is described as being softer than a feather-bed that a man might take his lover to "to play." The approach of Cupid is inevitable and we can all guess that a young man in these circumstances will fall in love with one of these women surrounding him.

The passage where the narrator comments on the lifestyle of the happy couples in the garden is somewhat wistful in tone, and it is unsurprising that Cupid begins to stalk him after this. The metaphor/allegory of Cupid as a hunter, stalking young people with his bow, is a very familiar one.

On the surface level, the catalog of the trees and the animals, and the description of the wells, is another example of luscious nature poetry. Again, the description is reminiscent of the Garden of Eden, with animals frolicking carelessly and every species of tree, which are both exotic (figs, almonds and nutmegs), familiar (apple, oak, plum), and flourishing. The description of the wells is particularly luscious and sensuous. Again, the fertility and beauty of nature seems to be emphasized.

Lines 1455-1548

Lines 1455-1548 Summary

The narrator sits down to rest beneath a pine, which is the tallest tree in the garden, beside a fountain. He reads an inscription beside the fountain that warns him that this is the well where Narcissus died. The narrator then recounts the myth of Narcissus where Narcissus is a beautiful youth. A nymph named Echo pines away and dies of unrequited love for this youth. Narcissus himself also dies by pining away from unrequited love. He sees his own reflection in a fountain and falls hopelessly in love with it. This tale ends with a plea to the ladies in the audience not to be cruel and "daungerous" towards their lovers.

Lines 1455-1548 Analysis

The tale of Narcissus is taken directly from Classical mythology and would have been very familiar to a Medieval audience. However, it is not likely that the warning on the fountain is a warning against "Narcissism" in the modern sense of selfishness. Instead, what the inscription on the fountain and the tale of Narcissus and Echo that follows seem to warn against is actually the dangers and pains of unrequited love. This is what kills Narcissus when he looked in the fountain and kills Echo as well.

This digression into the myth of Narcissus and Echo is a form of foreshadowing. Later, the narrator will suffer the pangs of unrequited love.

The mention that Narcissus was "daungerous" also hints at the difficulties that Amans the narrator will experience when confronted with Daunger. Seen along with the plea to the ladies of the audience and the earlier wish that the lady the poet loves will receive the poem well, these attempts can be construed as a way of softening the heart of the lady he loves. It is tempting to read the allegory as quasi-autobiographical (at least the section written by de Lorris.) Is this story of a young man falling in love and being continually rebuffed by the lady's "daunger" based on actual experience? Is it written with the intention of softening the heart of the woman he loves? Is the allegory written in an attempt to resolve the problems faced by the narrator?

These factors and the questions they raise give the reader a different perspective on the allegory. Instead of considering the narrative from the inside as a story that is symbolic, we are invited to see it from the outside and to consider what the allegory represents. We are reminded that the characters are symbolic.

Lines 1549-1705

Lines 1549-1705 Summary

The narrator decides to look in the well in spite of the warning. At the bottom of the well, he sees two mirror-like crystals. These crystals are the "Perilous Mirror" that make whoever looks into them fall in love with what he or she sees reflected there. Narcissus sees his own reflection here. The narrator gazes into the crystals. In the crystals, he sees a rose plot surrounded by a hedge and filled with sweet-smelling roses. One particularly fragrant red rosebud catches the narrator's attention and he is filled with longing to pluck this rose.

Lines 1549-1705 Analysis

On the allegorical level, here the young man looks into the eyes of one woman and he begins to feel an attraction towards her.

This passage contains several powerful allegorical images, namely the magic mirrors and the rose itself.

The rose has been (and still is) a symbol of love, romance, and sexuality from the earliest days of history. This flower is sacred to Venus and is prized for its scent and beauty. The Biblical Song of Solomon also uses the metaphor of the "Rose of Sharon" to symbolize the Beloved (the woman.) Even today, red roses are among the most "romantic" of flowers, with the gift of a single red rose being especially significant. Possibly, the modern significance of the rose is a legacy of this work, and a mark of The Romance of the Rose's importance in Western literature, symbolism, and thought.

The rose does not symbolize the lady herself. Instead it symbolizes her love.

The magic mirrors in the fountain have many equivalents in Western literature, with the best known one being the "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall" of Snow White, although the Queen's Mirror has slightly different powers. Intriguingly, when this mirror reappears in the first Shrek film, it shows Lord Farquaad three princesses as possible love objects and the Mirror is once again the Mirror of Love. Mirrors are also associated with Venus. The astrological/astronomical symbol for Venus, more familiar today as the symbol for femininity with the circle with a cross descending from it is a stylized mirror. This passage describing the mirror also contains the first reference to Venus, as opposed to Cupid. Cupid is romantic love while Venus, his mother, is sexuality. The mention of Venus and the brief mention of Kinde (who set the Rose in place) help to form a link between romantic love and its biological role in fertility. Kinde is the life-force, and this mention is another instance of the "it's part of nature" justification for romantic love.

The magical quality of mirrors and reflections seen in mirrors is best described by C.S. Lewis in The Last Battle where he describes a beautiful scene viewed in a mirror to be

"deeper, more wonderful...as if it meant more." Alice's longing as she stands before the mirror in "Alice Through the Looking Glass" to go through the mirror and enter its world also seems to express this quality.

The narrator also steps out of his tale and comments on his own actions. He describes himself as being "trapped" and that states it is a "sorry hour" in which he looked into the mirror. Again, we are invited to step outside the action of the narrative and view the allegory from outside. Is the poet now shaking his head at his youthful follies of five years ago, having learned about love the hard way?

The narrator's comment that while other books have not been able to describe the Well of Love as well has he has also reminds us that this work is an allegory and that it is "made up."

Lines 1706-1926

Lines 1706-1926 Summary

The narrator turns towards the rose garden to seek the rose. He notices the hedges surrounding the rose plot, especially the thorns in this hedge. Cupid comes out from behind a fig tree and shoots his five arrows, one after the other into the narrator, first Beauty, then Simplesse, then Curtesye, then Company, and finally Fair-Semmblaunt. The narrator strives to pull the arrows out of his heart so he can continue towards the rose garden, noticing that the wounds do not bleed. However, the points of the arrows remain fixed in his heart. Each time he is struck by an arrow, the narrator swoons, but his desire for the Rose increases.

Lines 1706-1926 Analysis

The allegorical significance of this passage is very clear. The young man falls in love, smitten by the woman's beauty, innocence, good manners, and general charm also known as "fair semblaunce."

It is here that the allegory takes on its most dream-like quality. Unlike the descriptions of the trees, the descriptions of the wounds are anything but realistic. The emphasis placed on the bloodless nature of the wounds stresses the allegorical nature of the wounds of love and the narrator states that he knows that he cannot find a cure for his wounds. This dreamlike quality is emphasized by the vivid and naturalistic descriptions of Cupid drawing the bow and the arrows themselves. Another aspect that highlights the dreamlike and allegorical quality of this passage is the pacing. The action seems to move in slow motion, alternating between descriptions of the narrator's longing for the rose and the wounds from Cupid's arrows. Here, the choice of using a dream of a literary mechanism is justified where a realistic tale would not be able to use the same effects so well.

The alternation between the descriptions of the wounds, the description of the thorny hedges and the narrator's ever-increasing desire for the rose seem to sum up the paradoxical combination of pleasure and pain. Love and Beauty uplift the heart and bring great joy but they also feel like pain and sorrow. This close link between joyful longing and an inconsolable ache is reflected in the language we still use today to describe strong emotions such as a "thrill" originally is used to mean a wound, while "poignant" means "piercing or cutting."

The passage is also punctuated by a few descriptions of the physical feelings of falling in love such as a sudden cold thrill, sighing, and feeling faint.

Lines 1927-2950

Lines 1927-2950 Summary

Cupid (Love) calls on the narrator to surrender and enter his service. The narrator succumbs, claiming to be Love's prisoner, vowing to serve him and giving his heart as a hostage to Love. Love instructs him in the duties of a lover, with the narrator prefacing these instructions with a few introductory comments about the importance of this part of the romance. The lover must shun all villainy and be a good example of courtesy, avoiding ribald speech. He must speak the praises of women in general, and must correct anybody who speaks ill of them. He must be diligent in doing the wishes of women, he must not be proud, he must groom himself thoroughly, he must always be cheerful in spite of the pains of love, and he must not be "daungerous" or stand-offish.

In addition, he must learn to be a good rider and knight so he can win praise, he must learn to be a musician and sing songs to praise and please his lady, and he must be generous to all. Love warns him that he will suffer great sorrow for the sake of love, which he must express alone. Love then describes the physical ways this love-sorrow will be manifested through sighing, weeping, thinking of the lady, blushing when he looks at her, weight loss, being tongue-tied, and lack of sleep as he alternates between dreaming of the lady and longing for her.

However, the lover will be rewarded for his sorrows. He will find comfort in Good Hope, Sweet Thought, Sweet Speech, and Sweet Looking.

Lines 1927-2950 Analysis

This section forms the didactic (teaching) part of the romance, and the author makes a special point of introducing it (lines 2145 to 2174.) These lines seem to indicate that Love's instructions are the whole point of the romance, and that this part is not allegorical. It is reasonable to assume that the author intended this part to be read and re-read by an audience hungry to discuss and debate the rules and nature of Courtly Love. He even states that a reader could stop here and not read the romance to the end. The author patterns this section on the works of Ovid and others, thus outlining the "crafte of love."

The demands of Love are divided in two parts:

1 The duties and proper behavior of a lover, followed by a brief summary (the prescriptive section).

2 The experience of being in love (the descriptive section).

The narrator's surrender to love and swearing fealty is modeled on the conventions of the feudal system, where knights would submit to their overlords and swear to serve

them loyally, the lords doing the same for kings. This section, even though it speaks of a lover submitting to and surrendering to the God of Love, gives the reader an insight into the workings of the feudal system. Love is victorious and has taken the narrator prisoner. The prisoner submits and does homage in the form of a kiss. The narrator first goes to kiss the feet of Love as a token of complete abasement, but Love recognizes the nobility of the narrator and allows him to kiss his mouth. This highlights a point of difference between our culture and that of the Middle Ages. Obviously, not all kisses were sexual or erotic; some traces of this remain today with the Pope kissing the ground as he visits a country as a token of humility, and the demand to kiss one's foot (or another portion of the anatomy that de Lorris, who bans Villanye (Vulgarity) from his ideal garden would not mention) as a token of submission or surrender. This is followed by Love taking a hostage (in this case, the narrator's heart) and an outline of the duties of the one who has surrendered. Love also says that he will give help and thanks to the one who serves him; this help includes assuaging his pains.

Brief mention is made of "recreaundyse" (treachery or faithlessness), but as Love has no doubt about the narrator's dedication, this is not elaborated. Presumably, a formal surrender and oath-taking would include an outline of the penalties for treachery or breaking their "pledge of allegiance". (The formal Pledge of Allegiance is another trace of the feudal system in modern culture - this process of submission and loyal service in return for protection was very likely to have been in the minds of the Founding Fathers who wrote the Pledge.)

Love's demands and conditions are an explicit description of the "rules" of courtly love and its conventions. It focuses more on the male role in courtly love while other works would outline the female equivalent.

The first point of the demands is to shun Villainy (Vulgarity) and to be an example of courtesy and good behavior. This strips a lot of the potential for crude, sexuality from Courtly Love, making it clear that behavior such as unwanted groping and crude sexual talk was well and truly off-limits. However Courtesy is involved more than this. Courtesy has to govern a "real" lover's manners and speech. The author points to examples from the popular Arthurian literature of the day, contrasting Kay with Gawaine. In the Courtly Arthurian tales, Kaye consistently snarls, sneers, jeers, and demands without any trace of politeness, while Gawaine is known for his tact and good manners. A stock situation in many Arthurian romances involves Kay attempting to get the attention of the protagonist by pushing, shoving, and surliness. This inevitably results in Kay being badly wounded as the protagonist defended himself, while Gawaine politely approaches the protagonist. He then discovers that who they thought was a stranger is actually long-lost member of the Round Table.

An interesting point here is that Cupid claims that "vilany maketh vilayn," implying that it is vulgar and crude behavior that makes one into a churl or peasant, rather than the other way round. Noble birth or high status, Love says, does not automatically make someone noble of character. This may be the beginning of the idea that an individual's behavior is what is important rather than their status. Certainly, later writers in the

Courtly style agreed that those of low birth (e.g. shepherds) could show the same courtesy that a knight or noble could, while lords could act boorishly and crudely.

The good manners specified by Love include greeting people properly and avoiding "foule words" and ribaldry (dirty joking.) The "Ladies First" concept is paramount, and a courteous lover had to speak well of all women (not just the lady he loves) and to serve them. Part of this ethos included reprimanding those who broke the code, especially those who denigrated women.

Humility (lack of pride) seems to be linked with the Ladies First principle, but Love (as the author's mouthpiece) is quick to point out that good grooming is not proud behavior. Instead it is part of courtesy and one of the duties of a lover. Many of the points of good grooming Love outlines would be familiar to a modern audience such as properly-fitting clothes and shoes, clean teeth, and clean nails. Others highlight the difference between the past and present, such as the lover wearing fresh flowers on his hat but refraining from painting his face. It is implied that both these actions were acceptable for males in the culture of the Middle Ages.

Cheerfulness is enjoined on the lover, in contrast to the love-sorrow that is considered part of the experience of love. The author is aware of the contrast and dwells on it, noting that mood swings are typical behavior for a lover.

Generosity is dwelt on at some length, and this is intended to mean both generosity to people in general, but also generosity towards the lady and showering her with gifts.

Other aspects of the duties of the lover seem to involve ensuring that the lover is of good repute. One of the justifications for the Courtly Love tradition was that it made a man a better person. Specifically, Cupid lists good riding, feats of arms, good dancing, the ability to sing and play an instrument, and writing poetry as things a lover can do to increase his good repute.

The mention of poems and songs to soften the heart of a lady is somewhat reflexive, especially taken in conjunction with the dedication at the start of The Romance of the Rose. This takes the reader outside the poem and we can see it as possibly being an example of one of these "compleyntes" describing a love-sorrow and appealing to a lady's pity.

The prescriptive section of Love's demands governed public behavior. The descriptive section describes private behavior, and the need to keep one's love-sorrow private and secret was stressed. This may partly be because the classical Courtly Love affair was adultery, with Lancelot and Guinevere being the best known example. This secrecy applied not only to expressions of love-sorrow but also to visits to the lady, which had to be conducted in the early morning so nobody could see. This secrecy also meant that if someone noticed the physical symptoms of love, the lover is to blame them on some other sickness.

The descriptive section of Love's demands can be read in two ways. Either, they can be interpreted as being a kind of "diagnostic tool" by which a young man (in this case) or

his friends can tell if he is in love or not. Love is often described as a sickness or malady, and also as a burning fire, and the sufferings of a lover are proof that he is really in love. Several times, Cupid states that not demonstrating the "symptoms" are the mark of a false lover.

The second way of reading the descriptive part of Love's demands is as a satire. While being in love can inspire a man to become a better person (the prescriptive section), it can also make him into a fool. There may even be a hint of self-mockery in the highly detailed descriptions of the changed behavior; the description of the sleepless night is particularly vivid and realistic.

The lover's thoughts during the sleepless night are interesting, especially taken in conjunction with the statement that this long passage analysed here will "unhyde" the romance. Cupid describes the lover as longing to enjoy the sexual favors of his lady, but refraining from asking for this because to do so would be outrageous (either to the lady or to society or both). Instead, the lover knows he must be rewarded only with kind looks, kind words, and occasional kisses. Even being able to look at her is considered a reward.

The description of rising early and traveling through all weathers, no matter how uncomfortable, to visit the lady seems to be very closely modelled on Ovid's Art of Love.

The pains of unrequited love are stressed quite heavily and the reader can sympathize with the narrator when he wonders how anyone can bear all the torment of love and live for more than a month. Cupid's response is to describe the comfort and joy that lovers will find in Good Hope, Sweet Thought, Sweet Speech, and Sweet Looking, and also to state that people prize what they have suffered for. Good Hope is the perpetual hope of the lover that one day, his lady will relent and grant him her favors. Sweet Thought is pleasant thoughts about the lady and her beauty. Sweet Speech is expressing the feelings of love out loud to the lady, often via songs and poems, while Sweet Looking is being able to gaze longingly at the lady. These not only bring joy and comfort to the lover, but the latter two can soften the heart of a lady towards a particular man.

Lines 2951-3079

Lines 2951-3079 Summary

The narrator approaches the rose bed and is greeted by a young squire named Bialacoil, who takes him through the hedges. Bialacoil warns him about the guardians of the roses: the giant Daunger, Wikked-Tunge, and Shame. Shame has been sent as keeper of the roses by Reason and Chastity to guard the roses from the attacks of Venus. Bialacoil shows the narrator the roses and gives him a leaf that grew near the Rose.

Lines 2951-3079 Analysis

Here, the didactic section ends and the allegory begins again. Allegorically, the young man approaches the lady he has fallen in love with and she is friendly towards him. However, he realizes that he will not be able to win her love, as several aspects of her personality (her "daunger," her desire to keep a good reputation, and her natural modesty about sexual matters.) However, she gives him a token of intimacy (probably a kiss or a kind look, as mentioned in the analysis of the previous section.)

Bialacoil literally means "fair welcome." Bialacoil is described as being the son of Courtesy. This character represents an aspect of the lady's personality. Bialacoil is slightly more than ordinary common politeness and good manners but is not quite the same as flirtation or sexual attraction. Bialacoil represents the attitude taken by a woman towards a man who she initially likes but is not yet attracted to.

The guardians of the rose bed represent aspects of the woman's personality that stop her from yielding herself to the narrator. These factors would apply whether the woman was one of the unmarried damsels of the court, or the wife of the lord. Given the role played by Shame, a married woman would be unlikely to be embarrassed or reticent about sexual matters. Furthermore, recall that one of the arrows Cupid wounded the narrator with was Innocence, which is further indication that he has fallen in love with an unattached woman. The genealogy of Shame is intriguing. Shame is the daughter of Trespass and Reason, so her shame or modesty may be a result of her moral code, rather than a result of ignorance about sexual matters.

Wikked-Tonge (Gossip) would be able to ruin a young woman's chances of making a good marriage if it was known that the woman was free with her sexual favors. Even if the Rose does not represent sexual intimacy, the code of Courtly Love demanded secrecy, so a woman who wanted to abide by this code of conduct would want to avoid gossip and scandal about her love affairs.

Daunger is a more difficult concept to understand. It is something akin to self-respect. A woman who responds with "How dare you? What do you take me for?" to a request for intimacy is demonstrating "daunger." Daunger may also be associated with social

status. The women of the court who attended the overlord's wife would be of a higher social status than the knights of the court, and this would be another factor contributing to the woman's "daunger." These women of the court were in a minority and would not admit "just anyone" to their favors, yet another factor that would. Daunger made a woman stand-offish, cold, and cruel to the men who paid court to them.

In this passage, Daunger is hiding but is ready to leap out on anybody who tries to take the Rose.

Lines 3080-3189

Lines 3080-3189 Summary

The narrator tells Bialacoil how he is wounded by Cupid's arrows and asks to pick the Rose. Bialacoil is alarmed and tells him to wait until the Rose has opened fully. Daunger awakens, snarling, and asks Bialacoil who the stranger is. Bialacoil flees and the narrator is chased outside the hedges by Daunger.

Lines 3080-3189 Analysis

The allegory here is easy to understand. The young man reveals his love to the lady and asks for further intimacy. She grows cold and prickly towards him, and her friendly welcome towards him vanishes.

The detail revealed by Bialacoil about waiting until the Rose is fully open shows considerable psychological sensitivity on the part of the author. This seems to indicate that the lady, who holds what the Rose represent "leef and dere," would be willing to eventually grant it to the man. She wants to let the relationship grow and develop to maturity rather than giving it away too soon.

The musings of the narrator as he sits disconsolately outside the hedge refers back to the descriptions of the love-sorrow in the didactic section. He reveals that he now knows what it means to be in Love's service.

The reader's sympathies shift, depending on whether the focus is on the events on the story or on what the allegory represents. If we look at the allegory from outside at what it represents, our sympathies are likely to lie with the lady, who responds coldly to a young suitor who is requesting greater intimacies than she feels ready to give. However, if we focus on the story rather than its significance, the reader is more likely to sympathize with the narrator as the terrifying giant drives him from the rose garden and his subsequent sorrow. We also feel some sympathy with Bialacoil as he is reprimanded by the giant before hiding.

Lines 3190-3334

Lines 3190-3334 Summary

As the narrator sits lamenting outside the hedge, he sees Lady Reason looking down at him from her high tower. Reason descends to him and reprimands him from entering the Garden of Mirth where Idleness holds the key and leads the dancing. She counsels him to forget the God of Love and to beware of Daunger and the other guardians of the Rose, including her daughter Shame. She points out the folly of Courtly Love but the narrator angrily tells her to be silent.

Lines 3190-3334 Analysis

A debate between Love and Reason was a commonplace incident in Courtly Love literature and, indeed, is found in much later post-Renaissance works. This passage stands in opposition to the section where Love outlines the demands of his followers.

It is unclear whether the author (as opposed to the twenty-year-old persona) sympathizes with Reason or not. Several of the earlier passages where the author comments wryly about his actions (e.g. when he looks in the mirror) suggest that he may be. The description of Lady Reason is lyrical, which makes her a sympathetic character.

Reason is described as being almost divine, and this description is highly likely to be modeled on the Biblical Lady Wisdom, a personification appearing in the Book of Proverbs. This Lady Wisdom is also known as Santa Sophia, after whom the most important cathedral in Constantinople, which is the heart of the Holy Roman Empire and the "home" of Christendom until its fall to the Muslim forces in the 1400s is named. The description of Reason as being neither tall not short, fat or thin, old or young, with clear eyes and crowned with a circlet seems to indicate her perfect balance and regularity. Her description may also be influenced by the Medieval picture of the Virgin Mary where she has given birth to Shame even though she never sleeps with Trespass, Shame's father.

Reason speaks ill of the pains of unrequited love, and argues that love brings folly and disgrace. People grow distracted by these emotions, leading them to neglect their work and their studies. She stresses the need to control the emotions. She also mentions that the narrator did not consult her before vowing fealty to Cupid, with the suggestion that Cupid is a poor master who treats his servants badly.

Reason's arguments are very convincing. The angry and defiant reaction of the narrator puts him in his most unsympathetic light. However, the reader may approve of the narrator's dogged faithfulness to Love's service and intention not to break his vows.

Lines 3335-3786

Lines 3335-3786 Summary

The Freend encourages the narrator to approach the hedge again. The narrator meets Daunger again and humbly asks permission to love the Rose. Daunger grudgingly grants the request but warns the narrator to keep his distance. Fraunchyse and Pite (Pity) also begin to plead with Daunger to stop being cruel to the narrator. Bialacoil comes out of hiding and welcomes the narrator into the rose garden again. Seeing the Rose and longing for it once more, the narrator requests to kiss the Rose. Bialacoil says that Chastity prevents him from granting the narrator's request. Venus appears in all her glory to help the narrator and touches Bialacoil with her torch. Bialacoil then allows the narrator to kiss the Rose.

Lines 3335-3786 Analysis

This passage marks a major turning point in the plot of the romance.

This section contains a substantial amount of psychological insight into the way a romantic relationship develops. Nearly all the characters represent different aspects of the narrator's and the lady's personalities.

Freend (Friend) can be interpreted allegorically in three possible ways. Firstly, Freend could represent the young man's friends who are more experienced in the ways of love and suggest ways that the narrator can approach the lady in spite of her previous prickliness. Secondly, Freend could plausibly represent the woman's friends who sympathize with the young man. Thirdly, the Freend could be an aspect of the narrator's personality and could be an embodiment of the comforters promised by Cupid: Good Hope, Sweet Thought, Sweet Speaking, and Sweet Looking, especially the first two of these four.

Allegorically, the relationship enters a new phase. The young man is heartbroken, following the full conventions of Courtly Love, pleading with his lady not to be so cruel to someone who loves her so much and is suffering for her sake. Two aspects of the lady's personality, her pity for the young man's misery and her "fraunchise" (a combination of generosity and general goodwill) make her relent and become less cold, so she becomes friendly to the young man once more. This time, the young man is not so forward, but still asks to become more intimate. However, the lady at this point does not want to "go too far." In the modern phrase, she wants to remain "just good friends." Then she suddenly becomes attracted to the young man and becomes more intimate with him.

Venus represents sexuality and she is described as the mother of Cupid (romantic love) and the one who is continually at war with Chastity. Earlier, she has been described as the one who perpetually raids roses from the garden. Allegorically, the arrival of Venus

represents the lady's attraction to the man, rather than the reverse. She is "chemistry" between the two. It is significant that she draws Bialacoil's attention to the physical appearance and attractiveness of the narrator before she touches Bialacoil with her torch and it may also be significant that Venus mentions that other women would find the narrator attractive. The significance of her torch with its burning flame needs little explanation - the metaphor of fire or heat or sexual passion is timeless (consider the modern colloquialism of calling a sexually attractive person "hot."

Venus was another character that appears frequently in Courtly literature. Her behavior here is typical: she sets the lady (or at least one aspect of her personality) on fire and helps the lady. The fact that Venus touches Bialacoil with the torch may be responsible for Jean de Meun's confusion in his continuation about what Bialacoil represents.

The description of the bliss felt by the narrator as he kisses the rose is lyrical and has more traces of nature-poetry.

Lines 3787-3957

Lines 3787-3957 Summary

Wikked-Tunge sees Bialacoil and the narrator and wakes Jealousy. Jealousy reprimands Bialacoil for negligence and for keeping Shame away, and vows to lock him in a tower. Shame appears dressed like a nun and argues on Bialacoil's behalf. Jealousy wins the argument.

Lines 3787-3957 Analysis

After a brief introduction, this section quickens the pace of the narrative, and introduces new characters. Allegorically, forces and aspects outside the narrator and his lady are having an effect on the progress of the relationship.

Allegorically, gossip begins about the young man and the woman. This provokes a reaction from her family. It is possible that Jealousy represents the woman's husband, if she is the wife of the young man's overlord, but it is equally possible that Jealousy could represent the woman's protective (or possessive) father and/or brothers. The woman becomes ashamed and embarrassed. These family members instruct the woman to send the young man away and not to be so friendly towards him.

This section develops the personification of Shame most fully. Shame has much in common with her mother Reason, with hints of genuine religious piety (similar to Reason's divine aspects) about her character and appearance. Shame seems neither in favor of nor against the narrator, but defends Bialacoil. Allegorically speaking, the woman, in response to gossip and her family's reaction, acts modestly but defends her friendliness towards the narrator. As Shame explains, Bialacoil does what his mother Courtesy taught him. In other words, she claims that being friendly is nothing more than politeness and a desire to be nice to people.

This debate between Jealousy and Shame could be interpreted as an external debate between the woman and her family members, or it could be an inner debate. However, the former is most likely, as Jealousy is shown as being distinct from Dread.

This section also begins to develop the character of Wikked-Tunge. Wikked-Tunge (Gossip or Scandal) is explicitly shown as being less than honest and always putting the worst interpretation on what he sees, followed by exaggeration and lies. The description of Wikked-Tunge's physical appearance is a classic piece of allegory used to good effect. In a realistic tale, it would be impossible to have a character with a square, cutting tongue; however, this is plausible in an allegorical dream.

Jealousy expresses a fear that Lechery, who makes war on Chastity, will become all powerful. This could be interpreted as showing another aspect of Venus. When Venus is

out of control and allowed to be omnipotent, she becomes Lechery. Jealousy also wants Bialacoil locked away out of fear that he will betray the other guardians of the roses.

Lines 3957-4100

Lines 3957-4100 Summary

Dread appears. Dread and Shame wake Daunger, who drives Bialacoil away, vowing to lock him up. Daunger forbids all comers from the rosebed and begins to close up all gaps he finds in the hedge.

Lines 3957-4100 Analysis

In this section, is is important to keep the allegorical significance of the characters in mind, and to remember that Shame, Dread, Bialacoil and Daunger are all aspects of the lady's personality, and to remember that Bialacoil is not the lady. A common mistake in interpreting this passage - which seems to have been made by Jean de Meun, who continued Guillaume De Lorris's work is to confuse Bialacoil with the lady, on the grounds that he/she is driven away and later locked up. However, it must be remembered that only Jealousy and Wikked-Tunge (at least so far) are external forces. While the lady is influenced by her family's requests (or demands) and she is partly motivated by fear of punishment (Dread), she voluntarily becomes cold towards the young man and stops being friendly. The lady is not being kept under lock and key against her will.

It is possible to summarize the significance of this part of the allegory by imagining a father talking to his daughter and telling her "I don't like that young man and I don't trust his intentions. People are starting to talk. You had better stop seeing him," with the young woman agreeing (and not just out of fear of punishment), with the result that she stops seeing the man. The young woman is not a Juliet who defies her family for the sake of love, even though she has feelings for the man.

In this light it is significant that it is Shame who wakes Daunger from his sleep rather than Dread. The woman's own morals, combined with her fear of punishment, cause her to shut the young man out.

Lines 4101-4276

Lines 4101-4276 Summary

The narrator bewails the loss of Bialacoil. Jealousy begins to build a strong impregnable castle, fitting it out with every defensive weapon. Daunger guards the eastern gate, Shame the south, Dread the north and Wikked-Tunge the west, each guardian reinforced by men-at-arms.

Lines 4101-4276 Analysis

Allegorically, the combination of internal and external factors shut the narrator out of the lady's favour completely.

The description of the castle is historically interesting, as it gives an insight into some aspects of late Medieval warfare. Points to notice include the materials used to make the extra-strong mortar for building the tower and the mention of firearms (although the "gunnes" mentioned were likely to be a cannon rather than a hand-held weapon).

The character of Dread is described further, and raises one inconsistency in this text. When Dread first appears, the character is personified as masculine. However, in this passage, Dread is feminine. This may be in keeping with the description of Dread as being frightened of her own shadow - in a more male-dominated culture where bravery was prized in men, timidity would have been more acceptable in a female figure; in a male, it would be more comic or even despicable. Even so, the character of Dread is something of a caricature and is slightly comic.

Wikked-Tunge is developed further in this section, and this development alternates between the despicable and the comic. The depiction of Wikked-Tunge blowing his instruments (flutes and Cornish hornpipes - or bagpipes) unnecessarily and out of tune - and in the middle of the night - is an excellent blend of humour and allegory. While it is not necessary for Wikked-Tunge to be developed in this way for plot purposes, it has been done, and the noise-loving aspect of this character is perfect for a personification of Gossip (this description is highly likely to be the inspiration for Spenser's Blatant Beast in his <i>Faerie Queene</i>. Wikked-Tonge's habit of continually visiting the other guardians and snooping all about the castle is also both appropriate and comic. The despicable aspect of Wikked-Tunge is his habit of vilification, especially the vilification of women. This reminds the reader of the didactic portion of the romance, especially the injunction to reprimand anyone who speaks ill of ladies. The section ends with the focus on the despicable aspects of Wikked-Tunge, pronouncing curses on this character - and the vice the character represents allegorically.

The use of a dream as a mechanism again proves useful for the allegory. We are told that Daunger grows more terrible "day by day" but there is no sense of the passing of time. For example, there is no hint that the Rose opens any further, as a natural rose

would, and Jealousy is able to build a huge castle with curtain walls, a moat, central keep, cannons and an army on top of a crag. This replaces what once was a hedged rose-plot inside a walled garden. Space as well as time are able to distort and change to suit the significance of the allegory, and this is possible within a dream in a way that would not be acceptable within a narrative reported as "fact".

Lines 4277-4432

Lines 4277-4432 Summary

Jealousy builds a round tower and imprisons Bialacoil inside, making him do penance. An old hag (the Vekke) is made to keep watch over Bialacoil continually. The narrator continues to mourn his bad luck and the loss of Bialacoil, pleading with Bialacoil to remain true in heart and favourable towards him.

Lines 4277-4432 Analysis

This section was the final one written by Guillaume De Lorris, and his original work finishes at the end of this section.

This part introduces another character: the Vekke. Oddly, this character is not a personification of an abstract concept. This old woman does not merely represent but actually is the beloved's chaperone, sent by her family (Jealousy) to ensure her good behavior, if the younger woman's own "daunger" and sexual morals are not enough to guard her. The Vekke is another stock character of courtly love. She is described as an expert in the arts of love and knowing all possible strategies a lover might use to win his way past a lady's guardians (both internal and external) and obtain the intimacy with her he desires. However, from the narrator's perspective, she is an ambiguous character. While it is true that she is impossible to fool and will prevent the lady from showing "fair welcome" (Bialacoil) to her lover, the Vekke obviously took part in "the olde daunce" of love in her youth and may be sympathetic to the young lovers.

The introduction of this non-allegorical character highlights one of the weaknesses of the one-sided nature of this allegorical description of a romantic relationship. We learn that the presence of the Vekke helps to keep Bialacoil in prison. We do not, however, see how the other aspects of the beloved lady's character respond to the Vekke. The question remains open as to whether the lady welcomes her chaperone as a friend or mentor who will give her good advice on how to handle an unwanted suitor (remember that Daunger, who closed the gaps in the hedge and originally banished Bialacoil, is part of the beloved lady, not an outside force), or whether she resents the Vekke's presence.

It is important to remember that Bialacoil is not the lady herself, in spite of the narrator calling him (recall that Bialacoil is a masculine personification and Courtly Love was always heterosexual) "myn owne dere" and asking that he keeps his heart free and true to the narrator, along with the hope. However, Bialacoil is a personification of the lady's friendliness, and the narrator is lamenting that the woman is no longer welcoming and warm toward him, but has turned cold and forbidding. The plea for faithfulness, therefore, is likely to indicate a wish on the narrator's part that the lady will not show her welcome towards another suitor, as well as expressing the hope that one day, her good nature and warmth will win the day and become dominant. Allegorically, Bialacoil's

imprisonment suggests that the woman has not tried to keep her suitor at a distance with the usual line of "let's just be good friends" but is freezing him out - possibly because she distrusts herself and her own emotions. Venus could reappear and inspire Bialacoil to give the narrator the Rose itself.

This passage puts a lot of emphasis on the sorrow of the narrator. This is completely in keeping with the Courtly Love tradition, which required this sort of action in the lover in response to the lady's coldness and "cruelty". The narrator is following the instructions given by Cupid and is making a "compleynte" in the hope of softening her and winning her favor. This also takes us outside the romance - we see the romance itself as a "compleynte" made by the author as well as the narrator, and we are reminded of the dedication and the wish expressed within it that the lady it was written for would receive it well.

If viewed as a "compleynte" about a lady's "cruelty" to her lover who she was once friendly towards, then it is plausible to believe that Guillaume de Lorris intended to finish at this point, leaving the next step in the development of the relationship up to the lady. Will she relent and release Bialacoil from prison, or will Daunger remain vigilant at the gates of the castle of her heart?

Allegorically, finishing here makes sense and is plausible. From the point of view of a narrative, it is not satisfying and feels incomplete. Jean de Meun is not the only poet to write a continuation of the Romance of the Rose. He is merely the best known and most successful. Even when this story is considered as a love story is incomplete. Even modern genre romances of the Mills and Boon type (whose logo is a single red rose partly open, which is unlikely to be coincidence) present situations where the heroine knows that she is attracted to the hero, who is nice enough, but her pride, stubbornness, low-self esteem, and bad previous experiences or mistrust, along with external factors such as a family feud or a huge gap in social status, forbid her from falling in love completely with him. The genre romances present plausible ways these obstacles are overcome, and it would be perfectly possible for an allegory to do the same. However, the task is somewhat more difficult within the bounds of allegory: the castle has been built and the guards are vigilant. How are the walls to be breached and the guardians slain?

The narrator's lamentations also contain imagery from nature to express his state of mind; this is another place where the <i>Romance of the Rose</i> becomes nature-poetry.

Lines 4433-4480

Lines 4433-4480 Summary

The narrator resolves to be of good hope and not to give up in despair.

Lines 4433-4480 Analysis

The change in style with the change of author is immediately obvious. Jean de Meun is much more long-winded than de Lorris, and already seems to have abandoned the full allegory. Here, the narrator talks to himself, and although Hope is talked of as a comforter and is spoken about as if this abstract was a person, Hope is not described properly in allegorical fashion. In a true allegory, Hope would appear to the narrator and talk to him, in much the same was as Freend and Reason did in earlier parts.

The other thing notable in the shift in style is the length of space given to pondering the working of hope and how hope can sometimes "bigyle" (beguile) a lover. De Meun's section of The Romance of the Rose tends to give more space to discussing philosophical points and less to narrative and description.

Lines 4481-4614

Lines 4481-4614 Summary

The narrator summarizes the status quo: Bialacoil is imprisoned in the castle, with the Vekke, Daunger, Shame, Wikked-Tunge, Drede, and Jealosy on guard, and the narrator has no way in. He wonders how he can enter the castle, aware of his vows of love and his obligation towards Bialacoil.

Lines 4481-4614 Analysis

Little needs to be said about the summary, although it should be noted that the narrator is now agreeing with the points raised by Reason and is regretting entering the Garden of Mirth, which has introduced him to the pains of love.

The Vekke is developed a little further, with a physical description given to flesh out the description of her character and background in lines 4277 to 4432. The physical description reminds the reader somewhat of how Eld and Time are portrayed on the walls of the garden, thus excluding these factors from the garden. The presence of the Vekke is the factor that the narrator regrets most. This seems to indicate that de Meun has forgotten that several of the guardians are inner aspects of the lady (Daunger, Shame and Drede) and she is not withholding her "fair welcome" from her lover completely against her will.

This also marks a major shift in the romance. Here, the author seems to have abandoned the allegorical meaning behind the narrative, and concentrates mostly on the narrative. De Meun's continuation is less of an allegorical interpretation of the psychological progress of a romantic relationship and becomes more a tale of gallantry and forbidden love, with a few allegorical figures appearing to give philosophical lectures. Most importantly, de Meun seems to have forgotten that Bialacoil is part of the lady and instead seems to indicate that "he" is the lady herself. The result therefore is rather incongruous.

Allegorically speaking, at this point in the developing relationship, as far as it exists in the continuation, the young man has tried his best to win his way with Sweet Speech and Sweet Looking in an attempt to soften the lady. Merely having pleasant thoughts (Sweet Thought) is not enough to content him any more.

The rallying of hope, the mention of Sweet Though, Sweet Looking and Sweet Speech, alongside his mention that he has done homage to the God of Love remind the reader of the didactic passage written by De Lorris. Several times, the narrator mentions his vows and rejects the idea of renouncing them and "turning traitor" to Love. This ought to remind the reader of an important point, especially as the mention of the vows comes directly after a series of questions from the narrator as to how he can storm the castle that is beyond his capacity: his homage to Love was a feudal contract, and this sort of

relationship was two way: the vassal (the narrator) would serve the overlord (Love) faithfully, and the overlord would protect and assist his vassals. This builds expectation in the reader that Cupid will reappear.

Lines 4615-4765

Lines 4615-4765 Summary

Reason descends again from her tower to speak with the narrator. She tells the narrator that Love is a cruel overlord. The narrator begins to debate with her, rejecting her arguments that courtly love only brings folly and pain.

Lines 4615-4765 Analysis

This is the first of de Meun's discourses. Less space is given to describing or developing the character of Reason, and she serves mainly as a mouthpiece for one point of view presented by the author.

Reason's description of Love as a cruel master highlights a new aspect of the fuedal system. While the system at its best is one of mutual love, support, and trust between the overlord and the vassal, it can also be exploitative, which invites rebellion and probably subsequent reprisals. Reason encourages the narrator to break his vows and to rebel.

Reason's description of what kind of unrequited love of the Courtly uses oxymoron extensively (lines 4721 to 4750) to highlight both the pleasure and the pain. This passage is a little of a "purple passage," and the poet seems to be indulging in finding as many oxymorons as possible, without developing the ideas much further.

In the second section, Reason bemoans the fact that all men are prone to falling in love, no matter how wise, strong, rich, or powerful they seem to be. They are all fools for Love if they enter into his service.

Lines 4766-4481

Lines 4766-4481 Summary

Reason continues making her point, discussing the immorality of Courtly Love.

Lines 4766-4481 Analysis

This passage presents some ideas that are very odd to modern readers. Here, Reason argues that sexual activity just for fun is a sin and is against the dictates of Nature (called Genius or Kinde), as both nature and the church of that day stressed that sexual activity should be for the purpose of procreation rather than pure pleasure. This point stresses one of the important differences between Courtly Love and the moral traditions of the day. While Medieval clerics debated whether experiencing pleasure as part of sex within marriage (and marriage was considered holy and honourable) was a sin or not, the Courtly Love tradition often idealized adultery. Courtly Love did not often consider the possibility of children when discussing love and sex, and love was entirely about pleasure.

Reason also argues that Courtly Love leads to unfaithfulness and exploitation: it is implied that some men use the conventions of Courtly Love to persuade women into sexual activity, even though the men are not truly in love and are only out for their own pleasure. The points raised by Reason about how women suffer the consequences of uncommitted sexual activity (while men do not) are still relevant today, even with modern birth control methods. This highlights the chauvinistic side of the Courtly Love tradition: a woman who refused to give any favors to a suitor was disapproved of as cold and cruel, and the whole idea of Courtly "compleyntes" was to make a woman give sexual (or other) favors out of pity for the man's suffering. Courtly Love at this stage never aimed at marriage, even if the young woman was single, and was often adulterous (however, much later, the Courtly tradition promoted the idea that marriage could be the goal of the lover, although marriage reversed the power relationship between the man and the woman; this loss of female power was explored by Chaucer, translator of The Romance of the Rose in The Wife of Bath's Tale. It should be remembered here that adultery was considered a form of treason, and a woman caught in adultery could be punished by burning at the stake (this nearly happened to the fictional Guinevere when she was caught with Lancelot). This consequence for the woman does not even seem to be mentioned by the God of Love, although he stresses the need for secrecy. Even with an unmarried woman, bearing a child outside wedlock was extremely shameful.

Some of these points raised by Reason could have been put in the mouths of Shame and Drede, which could have stayed truer to the original allegory by De Lorris.

Reason then continues her discussion of the relationship between sexual pleasure and morality by raising the point that the pleasure of the sexual act is intended to encourage procreation so that the human race (or a particular family) will be continued. This was one point often raised both by allegorical writers and by clerics and philosophers. C.S. Lewis' story titled The Allegory of Love outlines the various viewpoints held on this topic in the Middle Ages, and should be read by those who want further detail and understanding.

A quasi-allegorical figure appears in the form of Nature (also called Genius or Kinde.) "Genius" is roughly the equivalent of "the life force" and "Kinde" means roughly "the species" or "the family." In the original French version of The Romance of the Rose, which has been lost in the English version, a personification of Genius appears.

Little needs to be said about the narrator's comments. Quite possibly, the narrator is acting as a "devil's advocate" so Reason has an excuse for putting her points more thoroughly.

Lines 4482-5026

Lines 4482-5026 Summary

Reason continues her discussion on morality, and this time, she explores the contrast between Youth and Age, dwelling on the folly and recklessness of youth followed by later repentance in old age.

Lines 4482-5026 Analysis

Reason (as the author's mouthpiece for this essay) here cites Tullius, who is better known as the Roman author, statesman and philosopher Cicero, whose works were held in great authority during the Middle Ages. The "boke he made of Age" mentioned is most likely to be Cato Maior de Senectute. However, the ideas presented in this passage compare well with the concepts outlined in the Biblical book of Ecclesiastes (particularly Ecclesiastes 12:1-7) and other passages in the Biblical Book of Proverbs.

The main idea put forward by Reason is that youth is a time of recklessness and wildness and also great freedom. It is a time of living for pleasure. However, it is a dangerous time, as youthful follies can lead to regrets and misery in later life. The picture portrayed is rather bleak, and it is implied that youth, while pleasant enough, is a time of extreme stupidity and danger; old age is always accompanied by sorrow, misery and pain, with the shadow of death hanging over it. It is suggested that the sorrow, etc. of old age is a result of youthful follies and misdeeds. The picture, however, is not totally hopeless. Reason mentions repentance leading to eternal salvation and joy. The underlying suggestion is that youthful follies, which here mean promiscuity and sexual immorality can be avoided, as they lead to everlasting regrets. The underlying message for the narrator and thereby the reader is that one should consider the consequences of one's actions and take heed of the future.

Incidentally, this depiction of old age as a time of misery is completely contrary to Cicero's ideas, which lists many of the good points about being old, with not being ruled by the wild appetites and urges of youth (in modern terms, the raging hormones) being one of the advantages.

Several quasi-allegorical figures appear here, most notably Elde, who is somewhat personified, as Labour, Travail, Sorrow and Woe are described as living in her courts, as if Old Age was a great lady or queen, with "Groning and Grucching" warning her that Death is waiting outside. Youth is similarly presented in a quasi-allegorical way, being described as being lead by the bridle of Delight and living in Delight's mansion.

The fleeting nature of youth is also mentioned several times.

Lines 5027-5155

Lines 5027-5155 Summary

Reason continues her moral debate, this time touching on the morals of giving and receiving gifts as love-tokens. She concludes with a stern warning to the narrator, which he rejects.

Lines 5027-5155 Analysis

Reason first returns to her discussion of the role of sexual pleasure and procreation, commending those who enjoy bearing and begetting children as part of the "joye and mirthe" of love. Reason then condemns those (especially women) who consider children a burden and pregnancy something to be hidden. This presumably refers to those taking part in an adulterous affair or who have premarital sex.

Reason's arguments about giving gifts as love-tokens has two main parts. In the first part, she condemns prostitution, and damns both the men and the women involved in this transaction. Reason mentions that such women may refer to the men who give them gifts in exchange for sexual favors as their "paramours." This raises an interesting point in the discussion of Courtly Love, where a man could send gifts to a lady in hopes of softening her heart towards him and winning her favor. Is Reason suggesting that women who soften and give sexual favors because of the gifts sent are little better than whores.

In the second part of her discussion of gifts, Reason raises the issue of covetousness. The "rules" governing the sorts of gift a woman could and could not accept from a suitor were discussed in the fashionable Courts of Love in an attempt to distinguish grateful and polite acceptance from greed. Here, de Meun via Reason presents one possible solution to this problem: a lady can accept "a jewel or any other thing" from a lover as long as she did not ask for the gift and if she plans to gift the item away. Reason's tone here seems approving, and it seems to imply that this giving and receiving of rings and other tokens is innocent and morally acceptable.

Reason then focuses on the narrator's desire for the Rose. De Lorris leaves the exact significance of the Rose open to interpretation, where it could signify the Lady's heart, implying true love or it could signify sexual intercourse or even the woman's virginity, if the woman is unmarried. Here, however de Meun makes the significance more easy to comprehend. He has settled for the sexual interpretation of the symbol.

Reason finishes this first part of her debate by sternly warning the narrator against striving to pick the Rose or allegorically speaking, being sexually intimate with the woman he loves, saying that he will deeply regret it when he is older and wiser.

The narrator states why he rejects Reason's arguments: Love's decrees are firmly fixed in his mind and he remains "trew as any stele" to his sworn liege-lord. The narrator's description of how Reason's arguments affected him may easily be one of the earliest appearances in literature of the cliche "in one ear and out the other."

Lines 5156-5310

Lines 5156-5310 Summary

The narrator turns angrily on Reason. Instead of loving, asks the narrator, does Reason expect him to hate instead? Reason denies this, and begins a lengthy description of the benefits of friendship.

Lines 5156-5310 Analysis

The narrator is again acting as a "devil's advocate" and his response to Reason seems designed as an introduction to the next discourse. The transition from Reason's first discussion of the evils of sexual immorality to the discussion of the virtues of friendship is not particularly subtle, with the narrator literally asking for the subsequent "essay" on friendship.

However, it is interesting to note that the narrator states that Reason has already mentioned "another love" in her earlier discourse. This seems rather puzzling at first glance, as the previous discussion has mostly touched on sexual morality, where the only love approved of seems to be a fruitful union - in other words, marriage. This may be mere oversight on the author's part, but it may be implying that the relationship between a husband and wife is not Courtly Love (romantic love and sexual appetite) but a form of friendship, albeit a friendship that includes sex for procreative purposes. The concept that married love was a form of friendship is not unique to this poem. It dates back to the Greek philosopher Aristotle. This raises a question about exactly how the thinkers of de Meun and de Lorris's time viewed equality in marriage. Does what Reason say about the equality that exists in friendship apply to a marriage, albeit an ideal one)?

Reason begins with a definition of friendship, explaining how true friends support each other continually and loyally. Friends always help each other, giving financial assistance or any other sort of assistance when needed. Reason also describes a common situation. If one person is in need but to reveal that need would be disgraceful, dishonorable or embarrassing, a true friend will help them discreetly as soon as they find out about the need. One can only reveal this sort of need to a close friend.

Reason ends this section of the discussion on friendship with the claim that two is the best number for a friendship, as two are better able to keep a secret than three. Again, she cites Tullius (Cicero) as an authority. This time, the work cited is Laelius de Amicitia, which was also originally presented as a discussion between an authority and two young men, similar to how Reason's argument is presented in the form of a discussion with a narrator.

Lines 5311-5809

Lines 5311-5809 Summary

Reason now presents a discussion that combines ideas on poverty, covetousness, and fortune.

Lines 5311-5809 Analysis

This discussion is very oddly structured and is difficult to follow the logic of Reason's arguments. The main theme of this discussion could be the love of money or covetousness in general. It is nominally another type of love, although it is another form that is shunned by reason.

Reason makes the following points:

* Wealth is a result of good fortune (for example: Dame Fortune, another quasi-allegorical figure), and fortune is notoriously fickle, waxing and waning like the moon. The main point of interest here for a modern reader is the description of the phases of the moon. It is obvious that the reader understood that the phases of the moon or "eclipses" are caused by the earth standing between the sun and the moon.

* Rich people can be popular in spite of having the vice of covetousness. However, this popularity will only last as long as good fortune does (in contrast to friendship, which is loyal in all circumstances.) Rich people will never be popular if they are stingy. It is wise to be generous.

* Fortune is discussed again, this time in more detail. Good fortune is compared to a kindly mother who nourishes her child. People favored by Fortune tend to feel content and secure in these riches, but this is false security, as Fortune is fickle. Bad fortune is compared to an abusive stepmother. The old image of Fortune spinning a wheel that lifts people up and casts them down (the Wheel of Fortune) is used.

* Rich people may be popular. However, this popularity will be lost if (or when) the wealth is lost.

* Poverty has its good points. Any friends a poor person has will be true friends, not the false friends of a popular wealthy man since the poor person is liked for his or her own sake, rather than being liked for what they own. Wealthy people are always worrying about how safe their money is while poor people are only concerned with having the basic necessities of life. Even sickness has no fear for the poor person, although the reasons given for this are difficult to understand. Possibly this is because poor people could get free health care at a hospital, which is usually part of a religious organization.) These ideas are linked to the concept of "Holy Poverty" that was often held as an ideal by the church, especially the monastic orders, and the Biblical idea that the earth is not

our final home, so we should not be overly concerned with gaining material possessions in this life but should look forward to the joys of Heaven and be content with the basic necessities of life. The importance of contentment with the basic needs is stresses, saying that contentment with one's lot in life is an attitude, and a poor but honest laborer is as happy as a wealthy merchant, if not happier. The laborer has nothing to lose.

* Usury and covetousness lead to perpetual discontent and dissatisfaction. This perpetual discontent of materialism is compared to an unquenchable thirst.

* Several classes of people are condemned in particular for covetousness, and this list has a strangely modern ring: both doctors and lawyers are condemned for pursuing knowledge for the sake of money. Doctors in particular are singled out for condemnation, because they are happy during times of wide-spread disease, as this means that they have more chances to earn money. The next class of people to be singled out are hypocritical preachers who act as though they are religious but are motivated by profit and material gain rather than true calling. Lastly, Reason condemns misers who hoard up huge sums of money and refuse to part with any of it.

These points shed a new light on some of the ideas raised by the de Lorris's personifications of Richesse, Largesse, Povertye ,and Avarice. The allegorical portrayal of Avarice in de Lorris's section is much more vivid and memorable than Reason's realistic description. This highlights one of the strengths of a good allegorical personification.

Viewing this discussion from a different perspective, the rambling structure of this discourse, with its continual side-tracks, makes a good example of how not to write an essay arguing a point.

Lacuna 1

Lacuna 1 Summary

The narrator answers Reason by saying that the ideal friendship she describes must be very rare. Reason concedes this point but encourages the narrator to have a general love for humanity (charity), even if he is incapable of finding true friendship. At the narrator's request, she then discusses the relative importance of love and justice, arguing in favor of love. Reason also discusses natural love. She then suggests that the narrator should take her as his beloved - after all, as the daughter of God, she is of very noble lineage indeed. She will also keep the narrator safe from the fickleness of Fortune. She returns to her description of Fortune, describing the residence of Fortune as a floating island buffeted by ocean currents where everything, including Fortune's house, is half beautiful or healthy and half ugly and harmful. She draws on many historical examples to illustrate the fickleness of Fortune. The discussion ends with the narrator rejecting Reason.

Frend (Amis in French) returns to the narrator and the narrator explains the state of affairs to Frend. Frend encourages the narrator by telling him that Bialacoil cannot be imprisoned forever now that the narrator has kissed the Rose. Frend advises on the best way of gaining entrance to the castle by using cunning and soft words to the guardians of the gates, and encourages the narrator to use generosity (largesse) to gain entrance, saying that this has long been a way to soften a woman's heart.

Frend then begins to discuss the possibility of equality in marriage, but breaks off to give an impersonation of a jealous husband (possibly Jealousy) berating his wife for infidelity and paying too much attention to young men. Jealousy, via Frend's report, argues that all women are fickle and promiscuous, especially beautiful ones or those who enhance their beauty with artificial aids (e.g. fine clothes and makeup.) Jealousy also draws on a number of historical, mythological and Biblical examples. However, after describing Jealousy's abuse of his wife and its lack of effect, Frend gives a description of his ideal of equality in marriage, where women are allowed to commit adultery as freely as men, along with a description of the long-lost Golden Age.

The narrator approaches the castle and meets Richesse guarding the path. Richesse warns that those who approach the castle her way will become poor. The narrator back off, but resolves to find a way to gain entrance to the castle by stealth.

Cupid returns and questions the narrator about his loyalty to his oath. He then summons his barons to help him assault the castle. He is surprised to discover Fals-Semblant among them. He then laments that many who could have helped his cause, such as Ovid, are no more. He then prophesies the role that both de Lorris and de Meun will play in recording the adventures and exploits of love, including how de Meun will reveal the secret arts of love.

Lacuna 1 Analysis

These lines have been lost in the Middle English translation attributed to Chaucer but exist in the Medieval French in some manuscripts. The section that has been lost in the Middle English version is about 5000 lines. As is characteristic of de Meun's continuation, this very length section contains very little in the way of narrative and plenty in the way of discussion.

The sections about general love for humanity and "natural love" in many ways round out any discussion of love, as the word "love" in English (both modern and Middle English) has four equivalents in Greek, each signifying a different type of love (French, the original language of The Romance of the Rose also had only one word for these four Greek words.) The different types of love are eros (romantic love), storge ("natural love" or love within a family), phileo (friendship) and agape (disinterested love for all humanity, which is often called "divine love" or "charity.") Although this allegory is nominally about eros, de Meun has managed to make an excuse for a discussion of the other types of love.

It is a pity that the section describing Fortune's island is missing in the English text, as this is an excellent example of a very common allegorical device: the description of the residence of an allegorical personification (e.g. War or Love.) The concept that Fortune is highly changeable and can be either good or bad is the main idea portrayed. The device of a floating island draws on popular legend and is appropriate to the shifting nature of Fortune. The island of Fortune is irrigated by two rivers, one sweet and refreshing and the other foul and muddy. The description of the House of Fortune is also well thought out, as it is described as tottering and unstable, as well as half ugly and half beautiful.

The discussion of Reason's use of "vulgar" language raises a number of interesting points relating to the discussions of morality and decency. Reason, who advocates chastity and strict sexual morals, does not use euphemism when referring to biological aspects of sex. The narrator, who is dedicated to the service of Courtly Love, which often endorsed adultery, is embarrassed by this frankness. This refinement of the narrator possibly is intended to point out hypocrisy within Courtly Love: Courtly Love may use fine language and seem very sophisticated, but refuses to face the basic facts.

Frend's advice about generosity make an interesting parallel to Reason's earlier discussion of poverty and the giving of love-tokens, although Frend repeats what Reason says about poverty revealing one's true friends. Frend here is rather cynical about women, and is suggesting that fundamentally, women are greedy and willing to give intimacy in exchange for gifts: he practically is calling all women whores. This section is one that has drawn considerable criticism for de Meun's continuation of the romance, both in the 14th century and today.

Jealousy's reported tirade against women is another section that has drawn much criticism for the misogyny expressed. However, it is possible that this passage is exaggerated for comic effect and is intended to lampoon and mock jealous, suspicious

husbands by showing how ridiculous their accusations are. It must be remembered that de Meun's audience would have included women and that cuckolds were often viewed as comical buffoons to be mocked. The reported abuse of Jealousy should be set against Frend's argument for equality in marriage. Frend's ideas of equality would be called an "open marriage", apart from how Frend takes domestic violence for granted and excuses it if violence is followed by lovemaking. However, this passage drew criticism from de Meun's contemporaries for its immorality.

Richesse' rebuffal and warning to the narrator echo Reason's earlier arguments about the fickleness of fortune.

The narrator's intention to gain secret entrance to the castle again brings up the idea of the importance of secrecy and discretion in Courtly Love.

The reappearance of Cupid has already been foreshadowed by the narrator's questions on how the castle can be stormed. The arrival of the liege-lord with his armies to aid the narrator his vassal is what would be expected in a feudal society. It is Love, the overlord, who has inspired (or ordered) the narrator to lay siege to the castle and overcome it. Now he is giving the necessary military aid needed to achieve this aim.

The mention of both de Lorris and de Meun within the poem makes the reader view the poem from outside again, and we are reminded that this is not a single narrative that is complete in itself but an original and a sequel by different authors. De Meun's self-praise within the poem is a little off-putting to modern readers (and could have been off-putting to his contemporaries) and the promise of revealing the secret arts of love is somewhat suggestive of a "blurb" or a promotional stand-alone piece.

Lines 5811-5876

Lines 5811-5876 Summary

Cupid's barons agree to assault the castle and draw up their battle plan, after explaining that Richesse has refused to help the narrator after his attempt to gain entrance to the castle by the way of To-moche-Yeving (Too Much Giving). False-Semblant and Abstinaunce will assault the gate held by Wikked-Tunge, while Curtesie and Largesse will approach the Vekke, Delyte. Wel-Helinge will assault Shame, while Hardinesse will assault Drede, and finally, Fraunchyse and Pite will attack Daunger. The barons then ask Cupid to call his mother Venus to help them as her help is essential.

Lines 5811-5876 Analysis

This battle-plan is a brief summary of how a courtly lover can overcome the barriers to winning a woman's heart.

The withdrawal of Richesse from the battle and her refusal to help the narrator to win the Rose may be slightly cynical or tongue in cheek - it implies that over-generosity with presents will lead to poverty. This is similar to some of the more cynical advice given by Ovid in his original Ars Amatoria about not visiting one's girlfriend on her birthday as it costs too much. However, Largesse (generosity) is still part of the assault on the castle, so clearly the author does not mean to imply that generosity and gift-giving are of no use during a courtship.

It is unclear which allegorical personages that appear in this army are internal aspects of the woman and which are aspects of the narrator. It is possible that Fraunchise and Pite are internal to the woman (we have earlier seen these characters negotiating with Daunger when the narrator was absent). Other possible aspects are Delyte, Wel-Helinge (which most probably means "Good Health") and Hardinesse (Courage.)

The other barons are probably aspects of the narrator. De Meun seems to have forgotten the relationship between Curtesie and Bialacoil (mother and son, paralleling Venus and Cupid), which could have been interesting if developed as part of the narrative.

The role of Wel-Helinge in attacking Shame seems to give the reverse point of view to that made by Reason arguing for traditional sexual morality. This seems to imply that those who are healthy will not be too strict about chastity; this seems to imply that those who are chaste are not healthy. The presence Delyte (Pleasure) also is in complete contradiction to the points raised by Reason. Delyte is not identical with Venus. Delyte seems to indicate hedonism or pleasure-seeking in general, whereas Venus indicates the sex drive.

The wording of Chaucer's translation make it rather ambiguous as to whether Sikernesse is on the same side as Hardinesse or whether Sikernesse helps Drede keep one of the gates to the castle. The presence of Sikernesse is rather odd if Wel-Helinge is also present. Is the woman ill or well? If she is in poor health (which Hardinesse can help her overcome), where does Wel-Helinge come from? If she in good health, what is Sikernesse doing? One plausible solution to this inconsistency is to interpret Sikernesse as fake sickness, which would remove suspicions and possibly give an excuse for the narrator to visit the lady possibly in her bedroom.

Lines 5877-6016

Lines 5877-6016 Summary

Cupid informs the barons that he cannot command Venus, even though he comments that Venus is able to subdue a castle without his help. He also scolds Richesse for her retreat, and vows to have his revenge by making the next rich man who he takes into his service poor for the sake of love.

Lines 5877-6016 Analysis

Cupid tries to explain the difference between himself and his mother (i.e. the difference between stylized and romanticized Courtly Love and plain sexual instinct. Cupid seems to be refuting the argument put forward by Reason that Courtly Love is little different from prostitution, saying that he has nothing to do with the buying and selling of sexual favors. Buying and selling do not require gratitude, generosity or the reward of merit. The giving of favors and gifts in a Courtly relationship does require these. Cupid then goes on to contrast prostitution with horse-selling, saying that those who enter into a normal transaction (buying a horse) get outright title to the thing bought and sold, whereas the one who pays a prostitute does not get outright title to her. Another person can buy her favors or even flatter her into getting them for free. Cupid even implies that even Venus has little to do with this type of relationship. This leads back into yet another discussion of how falling in love can make one poor. De Meun is writing in a cynical vein again.

Cupid swears an oath to take the castle, albeit an oath filled with the very characteristic digressions of de Meun. The digressions are a reference to the birth of Venus, Cupid's mention that none of the children of Venus can say who their father is, and his discussion of riches, poverty, and love. He seals his oath by saying that he will not drink "clarree" for a year, with the addition that this is the traditional oath of the gods.

Cupid's discussion of riches and poverty also clarifies one interesting point. It is not impossible for poor men to fall in love and prosper in their love affairs. This also seems to negate some of the earlier points raised by Reason.

Lines 6017-6357

Lines 6017-6357 Summary

The barons assure Cupid that he will not break his oath. The barons then introduce Fals-Semblance and his lover Abstinence. Cupid takes Fals-Semblance into his service, although he knows that Fals-Semblance can be treacherous. Fals-Semblance then introduces himself as the son of Gyle and Ipocrisy. Cupid and Fals-Semblance then have a conversation where Fals-Semblance talks about himself as the personification of religious hypocrisy and the master of all disguises. Fals-Semblance also introduces his girlfriend, Abstinence (or Abstinence-Streyned.)

Lines 6017-6357 Analysis

It is interesting to compare Fals-Semblance's description of himself with the depiction of Pope-Holy on the exterior wall of the garden; de Meun seems to have forgotten that fake piety and religious hypocrisy are supposed to be banished from the Garden of Mirth.

Cupid's comments to Fals-Semblance inviting him to introduce himself are interesting. Cupid asks for a full description so that people can recognise Fals-Semblance, which in many ways is an extension of the description of Pope-Holy.

As a character, Fals-Semblance is interesting. He appears to be somewhat reluctant and a little tentative, knowing that he is a rogue and a traitor who deserves to be punished for his crimes. However, he also seems to brag about his ability to disguise himself and to be able to deceive completely. This combination may be intended for comic purposes.

Allegorically speaking, it seems as if the author is suggesting that putting on a false show of piety and moral rectitude is an important part of courtship (or perhaps seduction would be a better term). However, it is hard to determine the author's exact attitude towards Fals-Semblance, as even though Fals-Semblance plays a critical role in the taking of the castle, both Cupid and even Fals-Semblance himself seem somewhat disapproving of deception and hypocrisy. The introduction of Fals-Semblance is yet another example of the cynicism of de Meun. When the allegory is viewed from the outside, de Meun seems to be saying that Courtly Love, in order to maintain secrecy and to prevent scandal, requires deceit, hypocrisy and lying.

Fals-Semblance's lengthy speech begins by a brief "disclaimer" by saying that true religious piety and holiness does exist and is very praiseworthy. He then claims that not all those wearing a monk's habit are truly holy and that it is possible for a secular person to live a holy life, and gives examples of saints and martyrs who were ordinary maidens and wives rather than nuns. He then goes on to say how false religion - introduced by the Biblical metaphor of wolves dressed in sheep's clothing - is destroying the church

from the inside. When reading this initial disclaimer, it is important to remember the amount of power that the church held in the Middle Ages and that heresy carries a very heavy penalty. The author here seems to be covering himself before he describes some of the corruption within the church.

He finishes this part of his speech by claiming how well he can deceive others completely, and is a master of disguises who can look like anyone from any station of life. Fals-Semblance is rather smug about his ability to dupe others, in spite of his awareness that he is an utter rogue and traitor. This boldfaced lack of repentance gives Fals-Semblance a certain rakish charm as a character.

Abstinence-Streyned is similar to Fals-Semblance in that she is able to disguise herself as any woman. This "virtue" (or at least a pretended virtue) is the constant companion of Fals-Semblance or hypocrisy. Allegorically speaking, this "virtue" is a type of hypocrisy or deception that can help a lover (or seducer) succeed. Specifically, Abstinence-Streyned is faked chastity or self-imposed (and presumably temporary) chastity, and it is adopted in order to make the lover look virtuous and innocent in the eyes of the lady or society in general.

Lines 6358-6799

Lines 6358-6799 Summary

Fals-Semblance continues to describe himself, relating his work as a rapacious false priest who likes to hear the confessions of rich people (and taking their donations) while preaching the virtues of poverty and chastity. He muses on the topic of riches, sufficience, and poverty at some length after questioning by Cupid.

Lines 6358-6799 Analysis

Fals-Semblance's description of himself as a false priest who grows rich on money imposed on people as a penance for sin is very interesting historically. The description of this type of corruption - which actually happened and was not merely fictional - reminds the reader of some of the ideas put forward by the early Protestants (such as Martin Luther, Jan Hus and John Wycliffe) who spoke out against the practice of selling indulgences. These may, however, need some explanation. Monetary penalties were often imposed as a penance on a sinner in order for that person to be officially forgiven and thus able to participate in church life - considered essential for the soul's eternal well-being. A well-off person could buy an "indulgence" by paying in advance. In modern terms, this would mean that they sinned on a pre-paid plan rather than a "sin-now-pay-later" plan. However, this section was written in the mid-1200s, roughly a century before Wycliffe (considered by many to be the first "real" Protestant) was martyred.

This passage, albeit put in the mouth of a despicable character, is a graphic description of this type of corruption and can be read as a criticism of the church of the day - or at least part of it. The author, as mentioned earlier, has "covered" himself not only by stating quite plainly that true holiness does exist in the church and that corruption is what ruins the church rather than attacks from outside, but also by putting this speech in the mouth of Fals-Semblance. If the worst came to the worst and the author was accused of heresy, he could claim that Fals-Semblance is a liar and it is the character that is making the point, not the author.

The situation described by Fals-Semblance is as follows: People are required to confess all to their parish priest once a year as a minimum. However, people can tell all beforehand to Fals-Semblance, who will shrive them (i.e. officially absolve them of their sins) for a fee, so they do not have to either shame themselves or face a penance imposed by a truly holy and just priest (who will scold them and may insist on true repentance rather than taking the money and forgiving all). If the parish priest complains, Fals-Semblance has the means to ruin that priest (and he claims that he can even ruin bishops). Cynically, Fals-Semblance says that he is quite happy to leave the poor people to their parish priests, as he will get no pickings or penances out of them.

Fals-Semblance, after brazenly saying that he refuses to help the poor with their spiritual needs but will dance attendance on the rich, then begins to preach a sermon, more or less, on the definition of "sufficaunce" (sufficience), which lies mid-way between richness and poverty. This sermon should be read alongside Reason's discussion on riches and poverty, as it develops one of the ideas presented by Reason in more detail. Reason had mentioned how an honest laborer who had sufficient to live on is better off than a rich man.

The discussion on sufficience draws on a number of authorities, including the Bible (citing Proverbs 30:7-9, and giving the example of Jesus and his disciples, who were not beggars but were able to earn a living, giving away what they did not need for the basics of living), Saint Augustine and Justininan. The main point argued here is that extreme poverty leading to beggary is not desirable or holy; instead, earning an honest living by hard work is preferable. Getting something for nothing is disapproved of at both ends of the economic spectrum.

The discussion then explores whether monks and others of that nature can be said to be workers (the answer to this question, overall, is yes), and then looks at other exceptions to the law against begging: exceptions can be made in the case of those who are handicapped; unable to work because of sickness, old age or being too young; those unable to find work even though they are looking for it; and those who work but still cannot get enough to meet their basic needs. This discussion of the exceptions to the law against begging seem to be drawn from the works of William Seynt Amour.

Fals-Semblance then ends this part of his discussion by saying that he likes getting something for nothing, agreeing with Hypocrisy, his mother, for her criticism of William Seynt Amour.

Cupid here takes the same role that the narrator played during Reason's discussion: he simply asks the right questions at the right time to move the discussion along. However, Cupid's questions are less vigorous than the narrator's retorts to Reason, and serve only as "headings" within the discussion to introduce a new topic.

Lines 6800-7336

Lines 6800-7336 Summary

Fals-Semblance continues to describe himself, saying that although he is totally corrupt and an absolute hypocrite in the service of Antichrist, he has plenty of power. He breaks off part way through to describe a heretical book. Cupid laughs and welcomes him to his service, promising that he will make Fals-Semblance the king of "ribaudes" if he leads the attack.

Lines 6800-7336 Analysis

This passage does not advance any new ideas other than what Fals-Semblance has already said about religious hypocrisy and corruption, although it develops the idea of corruption having great worldly power further, to the point that Fals-Semblance claims that his parents (Guile and Hypocrisy) are the emperor and empress of the world. This indictment of corrupt churchmen and the worldly power they wield is tempered, probably wisely on the part of the author, by continual references to how vile these practices are, and how this behavior is godless and wicked.

Cupid's laughter can be interpreted as a criticism of Courtly Love rather than an endorsement of hypocrisy and deceit. The language used even by Fals-Semblance of himself stresses that this deceitful behavior is not approved of by the author. In many ways, this acceptance of Fals-Semblance by Cupid backs up the point made earlier by Reason that Courtly Love leads to shameful behavior that will be regretted.

Fals-Semblance's description of how he loves to strip any good thing from those who are against him is reminiscent of the description of Envy that was depicted on the outside of the wall. In many ways, Fals-Semblance embodies several of these vices in one character (Pope-Holy, Covetise, and Envye). It is therefore rather inconsistent of de Meun to include this character and to give him such an important role - those vices were supposedly banished from the Garden.

However, the passage is interesting because of the insights it gives into the culture in which it was written. The passage even gives a date that helps us pinpoint roughly when this continuation was written: it mentions the heretical "Gospel Perdurable" written and published in 1255. Assuming that this book actually existed - and the author gives no indication that it does not, and it is quoted from as readily as, say, Cicero or Justinian, this gives us an approximate date for when de Meun was working. The fate of this heretical work is made clear: the manuscript and the copies were burned (and not the author - obviously, the death penalty was not imposed all the time on heretics at this point in history). The Romance of the Rose is practically the only mention remaining of this "new gospel" that apparently was written by someone named John or Johan, and claimed to supersede the standard Biblical canon.

Other points of historical interest include the list of luxurious foods that Fals-Semblance dwells on as potential ways that rich folk can "defend" themselves against blame by paying them as a penance or indulgence (Lines 7038-7048.) Another is the mention of the duties performed by Fals-Semblance in his role as a (fake or corrupt) priest: he occasionally conducted inquests.

The theme of usury is touched on again, with Fals-Semblance stating how usurers (and similar folk such as bailiffs and "countours" (accountants)) have plenty of money that they have stripped from others. However, Fals-Semblance is quick to point out or to brag that he is able to cheat the cheaters.

Lines 7337-7698

Lines 7337-7698 Summary

Fals-Semblance and Streyned-Abstinence disguise themselves as pilgrims where he is a monk and she is a nun. However, he carries a concealed knife in his sleeve. They approach Wikked-Tonge and begin to negotiate for the release of Bialacoil, reassuring WIkked-Tonge of the innocence of the narrator in a pious-sounding sermon. Fals-Semblance then offers to shrive Wikked-Tonge for his sin of gossip and lies.

Lines 7337-7698 Analysis

Allegorically, the young man is complying with the code of Courtly Love by acting secretly and thus silencing scandal and rumor by pretending to be innocent and sexless.

Historically, this passage is interesting because of the description of how Fals-Semblance and Streyned-Abstinence are dressed. The romance clearly describes their disguise as being perfect, so this gives us an idea of what pilgrims and nuns wore in those days.

When the plot is considered, the focus that is placed on the role of Fals-Semblance and his negotiation with Wikked-Tonge is rather disappointing. Previously, all that Wikked-Tonge has done is to rouse Jealousy, while Daunger has been the most formidable opponent faced by the narrator in de Lorris's original part. It would have been interesting to see how Daunger was overcome, both from the allegorical and the narrative perspective.

This focus on the role of deception in a courtship or seduction again reinforces the possibility that the author is on the "side" of Reason and that Courtly Love affairs are morally reprehensible.

The English translation breaks off at a crucial point of high tension - Fals-Semblance invites Wikked-Tonge to kneel down in front of him and confess his sins. This puts Wikked-Tonge in a vulnerable position, bearing in mind that Fals-Semblance has a sharp dagger concealed. Although the next part is missing or lost in English (or was never translated), the reader can guess what will happen next.

The narrator seems to have dropped out of the action completely. However, to be consistent with the first-person narrative perspective, we can assume that the narrator accompanied or stayed within earshot of Fals-Semblance and Streyned-Abstinence.

Lacuna 2

Lacuna 2 Summary

Fals-Semblance and Streyned-Abstinence cut out Wikked-Tonge's tongue and strangle him. After they overcome Wikked-Tonge's Norman troops, Courtesie and Largesse join them inside the castle gate. They meet the Vekke, and tell them to take a crown of flowers to Bialacoil. The Vekke takes it to Bialacoil, who reluctantly accepts the gift. The Vekke then gives Bialacoil some advice on how wives can deceive their husbands and conduct an affair, drawing on her experience from younger days. This advice includes not only instructions on make-up and practical ways to intrigue and entice a lover (and how to drug a jealous husband) but also recommends that women should try to get all the presents they can (the Vekke would have been a wealthy woman if she had done this in her youth).

The Vekke then lets the narrator in through a back door. Bialacoil and the narrator meet, and Bialacoil offers the narrator anything he wants. The narrator reaches for the Rose, but then Daunger appears. Cupid summons his troops and the battle begins. Shame, Daunger and Drede almost overcome the forces of Love, but Cupid sends a messenger to Venus. Fraunchise and Sweet-Looking fetch Venus and she vows to bring down the castle. Mother Nature, on hearing this, weeps with joy and begins to make human beings at her forge (this is broken by a very lengthy discussion between Nature and Genius that covers topics such as astronomy, the Biblical story of creation, free will versus predestination, and optics) . Nature and Genius gather the barons and calls down a curse on all those who will not use the tools she gave them (with another discussion on castration, among other topics).

The attack on the castle recommences. Venus shoots an arrow into the castle and sets it on fire. The arrow enters a small window that is set between two pillars that support a statue containing a relic that is covered by curtains. Nature equips the narrator with a staff and a bag containing two hammers to help him on his quest. Courtesy frees Bialacoil, who offers the Rose to the narrator. The narrator then kneels in front of the pillars and parts the curtains, kissing the statue before using his staff to break through the window, squeeze through the narrow passage and attain the Rose.

The dreamer then awakens.

Lacuna 2 Analysis

Allegorically, this passage contains a classic psychomachia or internal battle where the various personification fight for control. This inner battle seems to take place within the lady herself, where her moral code, her fear of punishment and her self-respect (Daunger) fight against her pity and her generous nature, until her physical desires overcome her.

Bialacoi has been completely confused with the lady, as evidenced by the Vekke giving "him" advice on how women should conduct themselves. Also, he does not take part in the battle, which would have been allegorically consistent - he could easily fought beside Fraunchise and Courtesy.

The advice given to women is completely cynical and implies that all women are greedy and promiscuous. This reminds the reader not only of the points raised by Reason that women who participate in Courtly Love affairs are little better than whores, but also reminds the reader of the description by de Lorris of Wikked-Tonge, namely that Wikked-Tonge holds that all women are unchaste.

In the advice of the Vekke to Bialacoil, the author has abandoned his first-person perspective completely. A rather clumsy aside explains how this conversation was later reported to the narrator, in an attempt to reconcile the perspective with this episode.

The episode with Nature harks back to points raised by Reason and the earlier descriptions of the garden. The main point that seem to be made here is that sexuality is part of the natural order of things, and is how the human species is perpetuated. The discussions between Nature and Genius (and the later discussions) are very characteristic of de Meun where they are lengthy, rambling and philosophical, and also contain a lot of misogynistic content.

This final section contains a lot of sexual innuendo. The narrator's entrance through the narrow passage to obtain the Rose is the most obviously explicit section (and makes it clear that the woman involved in the allegory is a virgin - the narrator has to use his staff to break through a barrier, and scatters the seed of the Rose and the petals of the Rose. The last description is a reference to the blood shed by physical loss of virginity. However, Nature's list of tools are mostly phallic symbols with overtones of reproduction and fertility (e.g. a plough. The window with the relic is also a sexual metaphor that requires little explanation.

Nature also mentions another Garden in one of the discussions where the Garden of the Lamb that is similar to the Garden of Mirth but is more permanent and long-lasting. This draws on the Eden-like description of the Garden and raises another point commonly made by allegories. This is the idea that earthly physical love is an image or copy of heavenly or divine love. This idea is found in Plato (who Nature refers to, in characteristic de Meun style), where the idea is that natural love is the first step on the ladder to divine love, and in the Bible, where human marriage is considered a metaphor or sacrament representing the love of Christ for His church. The difference between Platonism or Neo-Platonism and the Biblical idea is that Platonism abandoned natural sexual love once the "higher" rungs of the ladder were reached. The Biblical idea did not require marriage to be abandoned.

Characters

Amans the Narratorappears in throughout

Amans is the narrator of the romance, and the story is told mostly from his perspective. He is a young man about twenty years old who is of noble birth. At the outset of the narrative, he is naive and inexperienced. However, as the narrative progresses, he becomes more sophisticated in the ways of courtly love. He is attractive in manner and looks as Venus describes to Bialacoil in Lines 3731-3777. Very little explicit physical description is made of him, but Venus mentions his red lips and white teeth. It is also possible that he is blond, given the ambiguity in the word "fair."

Although the narrator is on the whole a sympathetic character, especially in de Lorris's original, he has a few character flaws, especially in de Meun's continuation. He is rather foolish and he continually rejects the appeals of Reason to turn away from the sin and folly of Courtly Love. Also, as he becomes more sophisticated, he learns how to be deceptive and to put on a false show of innocence in order to seduce the woman he loves.

The narrator is not precisely the same person as the author. Amans is the author as he was five years ago. Frequently, the author comments on the narrator's behaviour, mostly ruefully. The best example of this is when the narrator approaches the Fountain and is about to look inside. The author seems to shake his head at this point about the naivety of his younger self.

The narrator becomes dedicated to the service of Courtly Love and follows the dictates of his feudal lord, Cupid the God of Love. He maintains this loyalty in the face of Reason and continual disappointment, and this loyalty can be seen as one of the narrator's good points.

In de Meun's continuation, the narrator as a character seems to step into the background somewhat, apart from at the very end where he enters the castle and reaches the Rose. However, the narrator does play the role of a devil's advocate in a discussion of Reason, asking questions that allow new points of the debate to be raised.

Bialacoilappears in Lines 2981 onward

Bialacoil is an allegorical personification of friendliness. The name is French for Fair Welcome. He is described as the son of Courtesy. As befits a personification of friendliness and good nature, he is friendly and welcoming, although somewhat naive and a little timid.

Bialacoil, allegorically, represents the aspect of the woman's character that likes her suitor. This aspect is willing to allow some intimacies (Bialacoil gives the narrator a leaf growing near the Rose) but will not grant full sexual intimacy (Bialacoil is horrified by a

request for the Rose and flees, chased out by Daunger.) Bialacoil will soften slightly under the influence of Venus.

Bialacoil is a young man (not a woman) and does not represent the lady herself in de Lorris's original. In de Meun's continuation of the romance, Bialacoil seems to have been confused with the woman herself, and "he" reluctantly accepts gifts from the narrator and is instructed on the womanly arts of love by the Vekke. This has the rather incongruous result of having a male character acting like a woman in an allegory of a heterosexual love affair, which is rather puzzling and jarring.

Bialacoil is imprisoned by Jealousy after conceding too many intimacies and allowing the narrator to kiss the Rose.

We are not given any physical descriptions of Bialacoil, apart from the fact that he is "of good stature and good height."

Cupidappears in Lines 877 onward

Cupid is the classical god of Love, specifically Courtly or Romantic Love. Cupid here is not the "baby angel" that is often portrayed in artworks, especially modern ones, but is depicted as a powerful warrior and a skilled hunter.

Cupid is armed with a bow of gold, with which he shoots golden arrows that make the young man surrender and enter his service. He also has a black bow and iron arrows, which are carried for him by his squire Sweet-Looking, although these dark arrows that make a man fall out of love are not seen in use.

Cupid is shown as a feudal liege-lord, and the relationship he has with the narrator is typical of the feudal era. The narrator, defeated by Cupid's arrows, surrenders, and promises fealty to Cupid. Cupid reads out the duties and conditions that the narrator must follow, and lists the rewards that the narrator will receive for good service. As fitting a good feudal overlord, he also brings military aid to help the narrator when the narrator is unable to take the castle.

Cupid (Romantic Courtly Love) is shown as being separate from Venus (sexuality), although Cupid is the son of Venus. Cupid cannot command Venus to help him, although he can ask for her help. Venus can also take castles without Cupid being present. Allegorically, this is a good description of the roles of Courtly Love and sexuality and how they are linked that needs little explanation. The allegory speaks for itself and makes psychological sense.

We are given a physical description of Cupid, especially of his flower-decorated clothing. It is significant that he is crowned with red roses and this crown foreshadows the later appearance of the Rose itself.

Reasonappears in Lines 3190-3332; 4615-5809; Lacuna 1

Reason is the personification of wisdom and logic. She appears to be based on the Lady Wisdom that appears (also as a personification) in the Bible in the Book of Proverbs (she is also known as Santa Sophia, patroness of the principal church of Constantinople/Byzantium). She is portrayed as a goddess or demi-goddess who stands opposed to Cupid.

Physically, Reason is described as a beautiful woman of medium height and build who is neither old nor young, as she represents balance and moderation. She is notable for her clear eyes, and she wears a crown, indicating her high rank. She lives in a tower, which she descends from to debate with the narrator.

Reason has two main roles. The first role is to try to persuade the narrator to turn away from following Courtly Love, and the second is to discuss various aspects of human love and morally upright living. All her arguments, significantly, accord with standard Christian principles, unlike some of the points of view put forward by, say, Frend or Fals-Semblance. She counsels the narrator to turn from Courtly Romantic love and to follow the ways of friendship and natural love, and to shun covetousness or desire for material wealth.

However, Reason is no prude and is matter-of-fact about the biological aspects of sex, claiming that sexual pleasure is natural and is designed so that the human race enjoys reproducing itself. She frowns on sex that does not have reproduction as one of its aims. She also shocks the narrator by her plain speaking and lack of euphemisms. Unfortunately, this section where Reason calls body parts by their proper names appears in Lacuna 1, and is not available in the English translation.

As a woman, Reason is able to put herself forward as a possible lover for the narrator or even a bride that will bring honor and respect rather than shame and regret.

Daungerappears in Line 3051 onward

Daunger is a personification of one aspect of the lady's psyche. Daunger is described as a rough giant with black spiky hair, burning red eyes, and a permanent scowl on his face. He is armed with a club, and he uses this club to drive the narrator away from the roses when the narrator becomes too forward. Bialacoil is afraid of Daunger, and the giant often chases the young squire away into hiding. However, he often falls asleep as he lied hidden in the grass behind the hedges, allowing Bialacoil to come out from hiding. He is set as one of the guardians of the castle that Bialacoil and the Rose are later imprisoned in.

What Daunger refers to allegorically is difficult to explain. Daunger is similar to pride and coldness, but has a slightly more positive overtone. Daunger is not pride or

snobbishness shown to humanity in general, but only pride in a romantic or sexual sense. A woman who is "daungerous" is one who will not be intimate with "just anyone." She has considerable self-respect and power over herself. Daunger is the power to grant or withhold favors, and is offended by a request for more than what is offered. A woman's "daunger" demands respect from her suitors.

In de Lorris's original, Daunger is the primary antagonist and the chief obstacle between the narrator and his goal of the Rose.

Wikked-Tongeappears in Lines 3799 onward

Wikked-Tonge is the personification of Gossip and Scandal. Wikked-Tonge is portrayed as an Irishman with a square tongue that has been filed sharp. He wakes Jealousy and is later set as one of the guardians of the castle. As the castle guard, he is always on the move, spying, and peering everywhere. Wikked-Tonge, is very noisy, and plays his musical instruments, including bagpipes, loudly and out of tune. He plays at inappropriate times such as the middle of the night.

Wikked-Tonge is something of a misogynist, and always twists the truth and exaggerates it to put those he speaks about in the worst possible light at least in de Lorris's original. In de Meun's continuation, Wikked-Tonge is more honest, and admits that he does not know if Bialacoil allowed the narrator to do any more than merely kiss the Rose.

Wikked-Tonge is easily fooled by Fals-Semblance and Streyened Abstinance. He believes the latter to be Abstinence, which he recognizes. After hearing a sermon against slander, he goes down on his knees to confess his sins to the pair, who cut out his tongue and strangle him.

The emphasis put on overcoming Wikked-Tongue in the continuation is in keeping with one of the tenets of Courtly Love. This is the need for secrecy when conducting a love affair.

Fals-Semblanceappears in Lines 5847

Fals-Semblance is a master of disguises, able to look like anybody he pleases. He is the son of Guile and Hypocrisy. However, he most often appears as an itinerant priest or hermit who preaches poverty and chastity. However, beneath this holy exterior, Fals-Semblance is corrupt, winking at sin in exchange for a hefty penance, refusing to give "spiritual help" to poor people and using his worldly power to bring down those who speak against him. Fals-Semblance has a certain comic air to him, thanks to his brazen acknowledgment that he is a rogue, a hypocrite, and a fraud.

Fals-Semblance bears more than a passing resemblance to the figure of Pope-Holy portrayed on the wall of the garden, indicating that this vice is supposedly excluded from the world of Courtly Love. Certainly, Cupid is astonished to find Fals-Semblance among

his warriors when they go to storm the castle. However, Cupid admits him to the service of Love. This shows some cynicism on the part of the author, who seems to imply that a Courtly Love affair required deception and fraud to succeed, as secrecy is a key tenet.

Fals-Semblance also acts as a mouthpiece for putting forward a number of ideas. The most significant of these is the expose of corruption within the church, which is preceded by a disclaimer that true holiness does exist and not all priests are corrupt. The other is the discussion of sufficiency. Fals-Semblance defines this virtue more fully, and also discusses the laws on begging.

Fals-Semblance has the most important role in the taking of the castle, as he fools Wikked-Tonge into a vulnerable position before cutting out his tongue and strangling him. The means of death is significant: both the tongue and the throat are vital for speech. Thus Wikked Tonge is both silenced as well as killed.

The Vekkeappears in Lines 4285 onward

The Vekke is a wrinkled old woman who is set as a guardian to keep Bialacoil in prison. Unlike many of the other characters, she is not an allegorical personification but is an old woman who is given as a chaperone to the lady courted by the narrator.

The Vekke was once a beauty in her youth and she knows all the wiles that a suitor can use, making her hard to fool. However, because of her experience in the ways of love, she is not totally unsympathetic towards the narrator. Once Wikked-Tonge has been overcome, she acts as a go-between between the narrator and Bialacoil, and gives Bialacoil (rather incongruously and inappropriately) advice on womanly wiles.

Shameappears in Lines 3034 onward

Shame is the personification of sexual morality within the woman courted by the narrator. She is dressed and veiled like a nun and is the daughter of Reason and Trespass, although she is conceived immaculately, as Reason would never be intimate with anyone (or anything) as hideous as Trespass.

Shame has been sent by Chastity as the keeper of the rose bed, but she is continually attacked by Venus (sexuality.)

Shame has the role of awakening Daunger when prompted to do so by Jealousy, but she also speaks on behalf of Bialacoil, claiming that he meant no harm and only does as his mother Courtesy taught him. This implies that morality does not require a woman to be completely cold and stand-offish towards a suitor; morals can allow her to be just friends with him or to allow him some intimacies but not all.

Jealousyappears in Lines 3858 onward

Jealousy is a personification of forces external to the woman courted by the narrator. This character is not described physically, but it is clear that Bialacoil is even more afraid of Jealousy than of Daunger. It is after Jealousy appears, wakened by Wikked-Tonge, that Drede appears. This character commands the tower to be built to imprison Bialacoil and the roses and appoints the guardians around and within it.

Jealousy represents the woman's family. It is possible that Jealousy is originally intended to represent the woman's husband, as Courtly Love relationships often involved adultery. However, this is not completely certain. It is arguable that Jealousy represents instead the woman's protective and possessive family, most probably her father or her guardian. De Lorris is not clear on this point, but de Meun's continuation makes the "father and family" interpretation more likely. The description of how the narrator plucked the Rose in the Lacuna makes it clear that the woman is a virgin, with the Rose representing her virginity.

Objects/Places

The Roseappears in Lines 1691 onwards

The Rose is the ultimate goal of the narrator and he desires to pick it. The Rose is red and stands upright on a straight stalk surrounded by four pairs of leaves. It is only just starting to open and as Bialacoil says, it is not quite ready to be plucked. It has an intense sweet perfume that is ravishing.

De Lorris is ambiguous about what the Rose represents. The Rose could represent the woman's heart, love and favour; or it could represent her sexuality or even her virginity. De Meun is more specific, saying that the Rose represents virginity.

The link between the red Rose and romantic/erotic love is almost an archetype in Western literature. Roses, especially red ones on the point of opening, are still considered to be a highly romantic gift. There is probably a sound scientific/biological reason for this: the essential oil or attar of roses contains a chemical that is identical to that released by the brain after orgasm that is often referred to as "the essence of post-coital bliss." The shape of the petals and of a rosebud may also be a yonic symbol, which is suggestive of the female sexual organs).

The Walled Gardenappears in Line 135-146; 654-72; 1347-1468

The Walled Garden stands beside a river. It is filled with trees both exotic and familiar, as well as frolicking animals, singing birds and clear fountains (or wells). Everything within the Garden is luscious and beautiful, and nothing ugly is found in it. The wall surrounding the garden shows all the vices that are excluded from it. This Garden is ruled over by Sir Mirth, who lives there with his companions. The door through the wall into the Garden is kept by Ydlenesse.

Allegorically, the Garden represents the world of the court as seen by its younger members, who have spare time and the right social status to belong to it. It is within this world that Courtly Love can take place.

The physical description of the Garden is reminiscent of descriptions of Eden. Lacuna 2, however, stresses that the Garden is not Eden or Paradise, but is the earthly equivalent of Paradise, and shadow or copy of it.

The Hedge appears in Lines 1652-4145

The hedge surrounds the rose garden, and it is thick and thorny. The narrator, when he first begins to strive towards the Rose is very aware of and daunted by the thorns in the

hedge. The narrator cannot pass in through the hedge without invitation, and he can be driven out from it. Daunger often hides in the grass behind the hedges, springing up when woken. The hedge is later destroyed (or is overlooked) when the tower is constructed to guard the roses.

The hedge seems to represent the lady's psyche.

The Fountainappears in Lines 1455-1648

The fountain sits under the tallest tree in the garden. Its water is perfectly clear and the silver gravel at the bottom is easily seen, as can the two magical crystals within it. However, a marble slab gives warning that this is the fountain that brought about the death of Narcissus. It is the Well of Love, or Unrequited Love.

The fountain may possibly symbolize the lady courted by the narrator as she first appears to him. The fountain is not the only one in the garden, as the woman is unlikely to be the only one in the court. The symbol of a fountain for a woman may be taken from the Biblical Song of Solomon.

Cupid's Arrowsappears in 1715-1926

Cupid shoots the arrows of Beauty, Simplesse (simplicity or innocence), Courtesy, Company, and Fair-Semblant at the narrator after his first glimpse of the the Rose. These arrows strike the narrator in the heart, hurting him severely but without drawing blood. When the narrator tries to draw them out, the golden heads stick in his heart. These wounds cause the narrator to surrender to Cupid and become his vassal.

These arrows represent the qualities in the woman that cause the narrator to fall in love with her.

Cupid has other arrows in his quiver held by Sweet-Looking. These are the attributes that can make someone fall out of love: pride, shame, vilanye, wanhope, and newe-thought.

The Vicesappears in Lines 147-474

The vices do not appear as full characters but are portrayed allegorically on the wall of the garden, showing that they are excluded. Those who have these vices are not qualified to take part in the life of the court or Courtly Love.

Some of the vices are genuine vices: Hate, Felonye (crime), Vilanye (crudeness or coarsness), Coveityse (covetousness), Avarice, Envye, and Pope-Holy (hypocrisy). Others are mere bad luck or ill fortune. As Reason points out, Good Fortune is essential for Courtly Love, and Fortune is notoriously fickle. Sorrow could be either a misfortune, or could be a vice: deliberate and elaborate sorrow.

The Virtuesappears in Lines 729-1300

The virtues include Sir Mirth and his retinue. They live in the garden and spend their time dancing, playing, and singing in happiness and idleness.

The virtues are the attributes or genuine virtues that are the opposites of the vices depicted on the walls: Mirth, Gladness, Courtesy, Beauty, Richesse, Largesse, Fraunchyse, Youth, and Ydleness (the latter is also the doorkeeper). Cupid and his squire Sweet-Looking are found first with the Virtues, indicating that these attributes fit someone for Courtly Love.

The Crystalsappears in Lines 1567-1649

The two crystals are set within the fountain. They are mirrors and they are magical. Anyone who looks into these crystals will fall hopelessly in love with whatever he or she sees reflected there. When the narrator looks into these crystals, he sees the Rose.

C.S. Lewis suggests that the crystals represent the lady's eyes. When the narrator gazes into the eyes of one particular woman, among many (the crystals in one fountain among many), he is attracted to her.

The Castleappears in Lines 4150 onward

The castle is built by Jealousy to guard the roses and imprison Bialacoil. It is founded on a strong stone crag and is one hundred fathoms long (or high) on each side. Its curtain walls surround a high tower made of unbreakable mortar, and it is well equipped with defensive weaponry. It has four gates, one for every point of the compass, which are guarded by Daunger, Shame, Drede, and Wikked-Tongue. However, the castle can be entered by the way of Too-Much-Giving, which is guarded by Richesse.

The castle represents the lady's psyche, as did the hedge it replaces, but also represents the social forces that prevent the lover from having what he desires (Wikked-Tonge or Scandal keeps one of the gates.)

Fireappears in Lines 3705-3755; Lacuna 2

Fire is always brought by Venus, either on her torch or on an arrow shot from her bow. The first fire is a touch from her torch to Bialacoil, inspiring him to allow the narrator to kiss the Rose. The second fire is shot from an arrow and lands by a small window set between two pillars that support a curtained reliquary. This second fire spreads to the entire castle and forces its defenders to flee.

Fire symbolizes sexual desire or passion, and is another symbolic archetype that has a physiological reason. Sexual arousal is experienced physically as heat.

Themes

Romantic (Courtly) Love

Romantic (Courtly) love is the over-riding theme of this work, and the entire action uses allegory to describe the process of falling in love and paying court to a young woman.

Allegories of this nature were very popular when this work was written, and like other works, the Romance of the Rose contains a discourse where Cupid explains the responsibilities and duties of a lover, both in respect to the service he has to pay to Love in the abstract and to the woman he loves. This first discourse was very probably intended as a "stand-alone" passage that would be studied by those who took a fashionable interest in courtly love and its rules.

The relationship between the God of Love (Cupid) and the lover is modeled on a feudal relationship, where the lover surrenders to Cupid after being "wounded by his arrows" (i.e. after he falls in love), and pledges fealty. Cupid then takes his heart hostage and outlines the duties of a lover. This feudal aspect of Courtly Love was often played up in contemporary literature (although not in this romance), where poets would address their lady as "mi dons," which means not "my lady" but instead "my lord" and was the same title as given to a feudal overlord.

The duties of a lover, as outlined by Cupid, are as follows. The lover must make himself into a presentable person where he is well-groomed, brave, courteous, musical and generous to all. He should be courteous and chivalrous towards all women, and not just the woman he is in love with. However, alongside this general public courtesy, he should keep his feelings towards the woman he loves secret. In spite of this, he will experience a number of physical symptoms, often uncomfortable, and he will also suffer despair if/when his lady does not show him favor. He is allowed to express himself to the lady in poetry and songs known as "compleyntes," and also with eloquent looks and gifts. The lady will reward him with smiles, love-tokens, and even kisses. De Lorris does not mention full sexual intimacy as the proper reward of the lover, and it is ambiguous about what de Lorris means by "The Rose" that the lover hankers for. However, de Meun takes it almost for granted that a lover will seek to have sex with his lady.

De Lorris's view of courtly love is highly stylized and idealized. Here, Courtly Love is more of a game or ritual, even though the lover will "suffer" for love. The love is somewhat self-centered, as the lover is supposed to wallow in his suffering for unrequited love. However, it can also be innocent, as Reason seems to suggest in one of her discourses. Reason says that a lady is not being greedy if she accepts a love-token and re-gifts it.

De Meun is more cynical and bawdy in tone about Courtly Love. He seems to imply that deception is necessary, both on the part of the man and the woman. The man must pretend to be pious and chaste to allay rumors. The woman on the other hand, must

deceive her husband, even resorting to sleeping potions and use jealousy and apparent danger to pique a lover's interest. De Meun also seems to imply that women are by nature promiscuous and greedy. The Vekke goes as far as to suggest that women should try to get as many gifts from lovers as they can.

In order to understand Courtly Love properly, it is important to understand the social conditions in the upper classes in the Middle Ages when the romance was written. A typical castle would hold the married lord and a large number of unattached landless knights and squires, along with the lady and a few of her companions and maidens (which probably included unmarried daughters and wards.) Marriages were mostly arranged for political or economic reasons. In this setting, Courtly Love, in its most stylized form (such as that explained by de Lorris), was a sort of game that acknowledged the attraction that a young knight in the court would feel towards the lady and the maidens and gave it some outlet. It had the added advantage of ensuring the good behavior and good manners of the unattached young men while they were in the court. For example, good manners and the like could be rewarded by the lady. The more bawdy version of Courtly Love came from the other side of the situation: the lady was likely to be married to an older man or one she did not love, and was likely to take a young lover. In both situations, the innocent and stylized or the bawdy, the ladies could pick and choose from among the surplus males, and they had to compete for the favor of the ladies.

Richness, Poverty and Sufficience

This theme is touched on in several different ways. Aspects of wealth and poverty are depicted in the virtues and the vices and several of the discourses touch on aspects of this theme.

In de Lorris's original, Richesse and Largesse are considered virtues that stand in opposition to Avarice, Covetyse and Poverty. This implies that both material wealth and generosity are necessary qualities in a lover. De Lorris's original does not expand upon these apart from the depictions of the vices and the virtues as the appear on the walls and in the garden. Key points and definitions made by de Lorris include:

* Poverty is undesirable.

* Covetousness or greed for more and more material goods is also undesirable.

* Avarice or the reluctance to spend any money or stinginess is undesirable.

* Richness is desirable in a lover, but must be accompanied by Largesse or generosity.

De Meun explores the theme more fully, as is characteristic of this writer. Key points de Meun expands on via various mouthpieces and points of view include:

(From the perspective of Reason)

* Wealth is a result of good fortune, and fortune is uncertain.

* Wealth is necessary for a courtly lover, which means it is deceptive. A wealthy person is loved, but not for him/herself.

* Wealthy people have more worries.

* Holy Poverty is the ideal state, having enough for your needs and not worrying about material goods.

* Courtly Love, where a woman exchanges intimacies for gifts, is little better than prostitution. However, if gifts are received and given again rather than kept, this is an innocent game.

(From the perspective of Fals-Semblance)

* Churchmen can be corrupted by wealth, but they also gain great power.

* Sufficience is not the same as Poverty. It is having enough to live on and no more, rather than being reduced to beggary.

* Begging should be a crime, but there are certain exceptions to this rule (old age, weakness, illness, being handicapped, being too young, or being unable to find work).

(From the perspective of the Vekke)

* A woman should try to get as many presents as possible from her lovers in order to become rich.

(From the narrative)

* While generosity and much giving can be the way to win a woman's favor, only the wealthy can do this. Wealth can abandon a lover, so it should not be relied on.

Reason versus Emotion

In the action of the allegory, the narrator has to choose whether he wants to follow his head (common sense and wisdom, personified by Reason) or his emotions (the way of Courtly Love, personified by Cupid.) These two characters or attributes lay claims to the narrator and plead for his allegiance. In the case of Reason, who is personified as female, Reason offers herself as an alternative lady-love or even bride to the narrator.

Reason's arguments with the narrator for him to follow her rather than Courtly Love are based on common sense and on advice from the Bible and other authorities. Reason argues that Courtly Love is a cruel master and so disowning him and breaking fealty with him is not wrong or dishonorable. The narrator will suffer for love with no hope of reward. After all, Courtly Love (especially in de Lorris's original) is about unrequited love

and pleading for the favor of a cruel and cold beauty. Furthermore, Courtly Love makes fools of all men, making them neglect their work or their studies, and it can lead to sin and regret in old age. De Meun expands on Reason's arguments by arguing in favor of friendship as the ideal, and claims that all Courtly Love tends to lead to promiscuity. Reason is presented as being almost divine as she is God's daughter. This is what she bases her claims on as she pleads with the narrator.

Cupid, however, lays the claim of a conquering overlord on the narrator. Cupid has won the narrator's allegiance by wounding him and forcing him to surrender. The narrator has vowed fealty to Cupid, and breaking one's oaths of loyalty was highly dishonorable and it could lead to punishment. Cupid hints at these in his speech to the narrator. Cupid has also taken the narrator's heart as a hostage.

The narrator is forced to choose between the two rivals, and he chooses in favor of Cupid, turning angrily away from Reason after two lengthy discussions with her.

However, de Lorris's original hints at something more subtle. It is explicitly stated that the action of the narrative took place five years previously. Periodically, the narrator comments on his own actions, regretting that he took certain steps. This includes for example looking in the Fountain of Narcissus in spite of the warning. This may suggest that the narrator-as-we-see-him is ruled by his heart and follows the way of Courtly Love, but the narrator-as-he-wrote-it has turned from Courtly Love and now prefers Reason. This accounts for the way that Reason is presented as a beautiful and lovely woman and the equal of Cupid in rank.

Religious Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is one of the themes that is touched on slightly in de Lorris's original and is expanded more fully in de Meun's continuation.

Hypocrisy first appears in the figure of Pope-Holy depicted on the walls of the Garden and thus (supposedly) excluded from the world of Courtly Love. The figure of Pope-Holy (who is a female figure) is shown as being pious in public and sinful in private. She is a true hypocrite. De Lorris also mentions that Pope-Holy acts this way in order to get praise and power in this world.

De Meun explores these ideas more fully in the character of Fals-Semblance, who appears (somewhat to Cupid's surprise) among the barons who attack the castle. Fals-Semblance explains how much of a hypocrite he is, and this self-explanation on Fals-Semblance's part can be seen as an exposee of corruption within the church.

Specifically, this hypocrisy takes the form of false priests and friars (like Fals-Semblance) who hear the confessions of people in exchange for a "penance" in the form of money or some other bribe. The people who are thus shriven by Fals-Semblance and his ilk therefore do not have to confess their sins to their parish priest, who may very well be truly holy and likely to scold and shame the sinners, rather than just winking at the sin in exchange for a hefty pay-off. This way, sin is not really reduced

but is encouraged. This practice is akin to and strongly linked with the selling of indulgences that was spoken out against by the early Protestants, who were active much later than when this work was written. These false priests (called wolves in sheep's clothing, using the Biblical metaphor) only work with rich people (poor people won't be able to give them the payments they long for) and gain favor with them as well as getting money from them. This also gives them great worldly power, which means they are able to ruin the careers of those who dare to speak out against them and their ways. Fals-Semblance and his ilk have no real Christian charity, and they have nothing to do with poor people and will not even relieve their poverty.

It is important to remember that this exposition of corruption is not a blanket criticism of the church of the day. Fals-Semblance is careful to begin his lengthy speech with a statement that true holy people do exist: the ones whose actions match their appearances. The continual mention of the parish priests who Fals-Semblance "saves" sinful rich folk from also stresses that not all priests are corrupt and greedy. Fals-Semblance uses a military metaphor to describe the situation, picturing the church as a castle or walled city that is brought down and defeated by traitors from within rather than attacks from without.

However, this mention of uncorrupted churchmen could be prudence on the part of de Meun. It is to be remembered that the church had considerable political clout in his day, and heresy was punishable. One particular heretical book and its fate is mentioned by Fals-Semblance (with some glee and approval by this dubious character), and de Meun would have been unwilling to have this happen to his continuation of the Romance of the Rose.

The relationship between Courtly Love and hypocrisy is tricky to understand. On the one hand, Pope-Holy is shown as excluded from the world of love, at least by the more idealistic de Lorris, and Cupid is astonished to discover Fals-Semblance in his army. Cupid also continually refers to Fals-Semblance as a devil. However, Cupid, after hearing about Fals-Semblance's skills, promises to make him the king of bawds. Also, Fals-Semblance has a critical role in the taking of the castle. This may be taken to imply that even though deception and hypocrisy are despicable, they are necessary for a lover to succeed with his lady. This could be seen as a criticism of Courtly Love, demonstrating that it is morally wrong for more than one reason.

Style

Point of View

The tale is told mostly in the first person from the perspective of Amans (the Lover or the narrator), a young man from the middle to upper classes of Medieval French society. He narrates the process of how he fell in love, using an allegorical dream as a device to explain it.

The "straight" narrative is punctuated by several long discourses, where philosophical and moral points are argued. These discourses are put into the mouths of some of the characters that Amans meets. These particular discourses are mostly found in de Meun's continuation, where the various characters (such as Reason, Fals-Semblance, and Frend) act as mouthpieces for different points of view. These discussions are often lengthy and rambling.

However, both de Meun and de Lorris break away from the first-person narrative and report conversations that Amans could not have overheard. De Lorris reports a conversations between Daunger, Shame, Fraunchise, and Pite, and between Shame and Jealousy that take place after Daunger has chased Amans outside the hedge. However, it is plausible that these conversations could have been heard from outside the hedges. De Meun's continuation also forgets the first-person narration at one point (which is not found in the English translation.) He reports a conversation between the Vekke and Bialacoil, with a clumsy explanation that although this conversation was not overheard at the time, it was reported to him later, so he can include it.

Setting

The primary setting of this poem is inside an allegorical dream, which is used to explain a psychological and emotional process or the world of the mind.

Most of the action takes place within a walled garden beside a river during springtime. Springtime is a symbol for youth, with the walled garden representing either the court or else the Kingdom of Love. The garden is filled with beautiful people dancing and is ruled over by Sir Mirth, alongside Cupid or the God of Love.

A second garden sits within this first garden, guarded by high hedges, and within this second enclosed garden grows a beautiful rose. This second garden represents a (presumably young) woman and her personality. The Rose sought by Amans the Lover represents the lady's love (at least in the original part by de Lorris; de Meun puts a different interpretation on the Rose.) The idea of a walled garden representing a woman and her emotions derives from the Biblical Song of Solomon, where the Lover describes his new bride as "a garden enclosed" that is full of delights.

Later, the second garden is replaced by a formidable castle enclosing the Rose. This castle is surrounded by a moat and a thick wall. Its four gates are heavily guarded. It is well appointed with defensive weaponry.

The gardens and the castle are set inside a dream, which allows the action to be timeless and for the "scenery" to shift freely without any jarring. Within a dream, it is plausible for a small rose garden to be replaced by a massive and impregnable castle.

Language and Meaning

The poem is originally written in Medieval French in rhyming couplets. This is the most common style for "romances." The Romance of the Rose is considered to be an excellent example of Medieval courtly literature discussing romantic love. Rhyming couplets are originally introduced by the troubadours who popularized many of the courtly romances, mostly as an aid to memory during performance. It is unlikely that the Romance of the Rose was intended to be recited orally from memory.

The poem is an allegory, using events and characters to describe the process of falling in love and winning a woman's favor. Apart from the narrator, who can be seen as an Everyman, all the characters and places are symbolic. Many of the characters represent different psychological and emotional aspects of the woman that Amans is paying court to.

In brief, the meaning of the poem can be summarized in this way as a young man goes to court and meets a woman. She shows friendship to him and he falls in love with her. However, she rebuffs him when he becomes too forward. The young man then has to overcome a number of barriers to win her love, with some of these barriers being aspects of the woman's personality and feelings, while others are the restrictions of society and proper behavior. However, the young man is also helped by various factors, some of which are external and some are part of the woman's emotions.

Only part of the poem is actually written by Guillaume de Lorris, and his original breaks off at line 4432. Jean de Meun continues the work. This break creates a marked difference in style, with de Lorris's part containing few "discourses" and focusing mostly on the action of the allegory. De Meun's contribution concentrates more on the "discourses" and the barriers that Amans has to overcome are more external aspects such as Wikked-Tonge rather than on the internal aspects such as Daunger. According to C.S. Lewis,* de Meun also seems to confuse Bialacoil with the young lady beloved by Amans rather than being an aspect of her personality. This confusion leads to rather incongruous results. Lewis describes de Meun's continuation as being "clumsy" and "heavy," as opposed to the lighter and more psychologically insightful original by de Lorris.

De Meun also seems more cynical in tone, implying that deception is necessary on the part of the man in a courtly relationship and that women are unable to remain chaste. This is in contrast to de Lorris' original, which seems to have a more idealized picture of

the lady, and the picture we get is the classic one of idealized courtly love. In this instance, the woman is "on a pedestal" acting coldly and remotely, while the lover kneels at her feet pleading for her to treat him kindly. This difference is best highlighted by the antagonists concentrated on by the authors. For example, de Lorris concentrates on the conflict between the narrator and Daunger, while de Meun concentrates on how Fals-Semblance (Hypocrisy) overcomes Wikked-Tunge (gossip and scandal).

De Lorris is more lyrical in style, and gives a lot of space to description, especially the description of beauty and how his style is more like creative writing. De Meun tends to focus more on the discussion of ideas and his style is more that of formal writing. His "essays" and sermons are rather rambling in style rather than being well structured. De Meun, in his discourses, is very rambling and leaps from topic to topic freely, with only the most tenuous of links between topics. De Meun also uses many historical, mythological, and Biblical examples to illustrate his points, in contrast to the one myth that de Lorris refers to.

*In The Allegory of Love, 1958.

Structure

The poem is originally written in rhyming couplets. This has been preserved in the Middle English translation. The chief point to note about the structure of the poem is the division between the original by de Lorris and the continuation by de Meun, which occurs at Line 4432.

De Lorris's section of the allegory concentrates mostly on the narrative and how the relationship progresses. The overall tone is romantic, lyrical, and shows considerable respect towards women in general and to the lady herself. De Meun's contribution gives more focus to the discussions, with the narrative providing several opportunities for debates and discussions to be made. Several of these discussions are quite thought-provoking, although they are rambling in style. De Meun is, however, more cynical and misogynistic in tone.

Experts and editors have noted that the English translation of the text is in three parts. The first part (up to Line 1750) is translated by Chaucer, which is why the Middle English translation is usually included as one of the works of Chaucer. The other two sections (Lines 1751-5810; Lines 5811-end) are translated by others. This does lead to some slight differences in vocabulary between the three sections, although the differences are difficult to spot by most modern readers unless they are looking closely.

Two huge gaps appear in the English translation, both within de Meun's continuation. In this study guide, they are referred to as Lacuna 1 and Lacuna 2. These passages exist in the original French text. Different manuscripts of The Romance of the Rose exist, and some include passages that are missing in others. These unique passages have been omitted from the summary given here. One example is a discussion of spiritual love by Reason that urges the narrator to give his love and devotion to the Virgin Mary.

Quotes

It is the Romance of the Rose, / In which al the art of love I close. / The mater fair is of to make; / God graunte in gree that she it take / For whom that it begonnen is! (Lines 39-43.)

Love, as him lyketh it to be. / But he can cherles daunten, he, / And maken folkes pryde fallen. / And he can wel these lordes thrallen, / And ladies putte at lowe degree, / Whan he may hem to proude see. (Lines 879-884.)

This is the mirour perilous...For who-so loke in that mirour / Ther may no-thing ben his socour/ That he ne shal ther seen som thing / That shal him lede into loving. (Lines 1601-1608.)

Whan I had smelled the savour swote, / No wille hadde I fro thens yit go, / But somdel neer it went I tho / To take it. (Lines 1706-1709.)

He took an arowe fu sharply whet, / And in his bowe whan it was set, / He streight up to his ere drough / The stronge bowe that was so tough, / And shet at me so wonder smerte, / That through myn eye unto myn heart / The takel smoot, and depe it wente... Whan I was hurt thus in that stounde, / I fel doun plat unto the grounde. (Lines 1723-1734.)

For now the Romance ginneth amende ... The crafte of love he shal now lere, / If that he wol so long abyde, / Thil I this Romance may unhyde / And undo this signifiance, / Of this dreme into Romance (Lines 2154-2170.)

Thus shalt thou morne and eek compleyn, / And get enchesoun to goon again, / Unto thy walk or to thy place, / Where thou biheld hir fleshly face. / And never, for fals suspeccioun, / Thou woldest finde occasioun, / For to gon unto her hous. / So arth thou thanne desirous / A sight of hir for to have (Lines 2503-2511.)

Bialacoil forsoth he hight, / Sone he was to Curtesy, / And he me graunted ful gladly, / The passage of the outer hay, / And seide:- "Sir, how that ye may / Passe, if it your wille be, / The fresshe roser for to see, / And ye the swete savour fele." (Lines 2984-2991.)

With that sterte out anoon Daungere, / Out of the place where he was hid. / His malice in his chere was kid; / Ful greet he was, and blak of hewe, / Sturdy and hidous, who-so him knew...He come criand as he were wood, / And seide, "Bialacoil, tel me why / Thou bringest hider so boldly / Him that so nygh is the roser? Thou worchist in a wrong maner." (Lines 3130-3142.)

The lady of the high ward, / Which from her tour lokid thiderward. / Resoun men clepe that lady, / Which from hir tour deliverly, / Come doun to me withouten more... God him-silf, that is so high, / Made hir after his image, And yaf hir sith sich avauntage, / That she hat might and seignorye, / To kepe men from al folye (Lines 3191-3214.)

BOOKRAGS

This Wikked-Tonge (god yeve him shame!) / Can putte hem everichone in blame / Withoute desert and causeles; / He lyeth, though they been giltles... That he ever so bisy is / Of any womman to seyn amis! (Lines 4267-2476.)

Ekk Jelousye god confounde, / That hath y-maad a tour so ronde / And made aboute a garisoun / To sette Bialacoil in prisoun (Lines 2477-4280.)

A fool my-silf I may wel calle, / That love asyde I had not leyde, / And trowed that dame Resoun seyde. / Resoun had both skile and right, / Whan she me blamed, with al hir might, / To medle of love, that hath me shent; / But certain now I wol repent. / And should I repent? Nay, parde! / A fals traitour than shulde I be. (Lines 4540-4548.)

Love of Frendshipe also there is, / Which makith no man doon amis, / Of wille knit bitwixe two, / That wol not breke for wele ne wo; (Lines 5201-5204.)

If he be sich that can wel live / Aftir his rente may him yive, / And not desyreth more to have, / That may fro povertee him save... All these ar riche in abundaunce, / That can thus have suffisaunce / Wel more than can an usurere. (Lines 5667-5691.)

For love is over-al vendable. / We see that no man loveth now / But for winning and for prow. (Lines 5804-5806.)

Ful wel I can my clothes chaunge/ Take oon, and make another straunge. / Now am I knight, now chasteleyn, / Now prelat and now chapeleyn... Whatever mister man I am. (Lines 6325-6332.)

F. Sem: "Soth is, but I am an ypocryte."
Amour: "Thou gost and prechest povertee?"
F. Sem: "Ye, sir; but richesse hath poustee." (Lines 6482-6484.)

Had Bialacoil with hete smete / Anoon he bad, withouten lette, / Graunte to me the rose kisse/ Than of my peyne I gan to lisse, / And to the rose anoon wente I, / And kissid it ful feithfully. / T Har no man aske if I was blythe, / Whan the savour soft and lythe / Strook to myn herte withoute more / An me alegged of my sore, / So was i ful of joye and blisse. / It is fair such a flour to kisse. (Lines 3755-3766.)

Topics for Discussion

The Romance of the Rose explores the process of how a romantic relationship develops in allegory. Has this process changed between now and the Middle Ages? Comment on any differences and similarities you notice.

Explain, in your own words, the conventions of Courtly Love and how this "game" was played.

Literature often gives an insight into the culture it was written in. What can we learn about daily life in Medieval times by studying the details within The Romance of the Rose?

Scholar C.S. Lewis believed that Guillaume de Lorris intended to finish the work with the narrator turning from the ways of Courtly Love and following the ways of reason. Argue either in favor of or against this suggestion and consider only de Lorris's part.

Using the details in the text, explain how the relationship described in de Lorris's original allegory progresses from the point of view of the lady rather than the narrator. This should be written as a literal account rather than an allegory.

What does the Rose represent? Use the text to support your answer but do not use the summary of Lacuna 2.

Explain the concept of Daunger and what it personifies, using your own words and quotes from the text to support your ideas.

De Meun's contribution to The Romance of the Rose translated into English contains many discussions about wealth, covetousness, poverty, and sufficiency. Taking all the discussions presented by the various characters and using your own words supported by the text, describe the ideal put forward.