

Inclusion and exclusion in Guillaume de Lorris' *Roman de la Rose*

Leslie C. Brook

In all narrative literature the reader or listener is necessarily an outsider, who is then admitted by the narrator as a spectator of the events described. The reader's emotions, intellect, or moral sense will be affected by the unfolding of the tale and the plight of the characters presented, but a reader can never be part of their fictional lives or engage with them in a two-way sense. It is common, though, for the narrator, or through the narrator one or other of the characters, to address the reader at specific moments, as, for instance, in the case of the well-known intervention and reassurance in *Jane Eyre*: "Reader, I married him." The narrator's role within the creation of a fictional text has been much explored, as has the autonomy of the created characters who, since they represent a projection of a form of lived reality, will find themselves at times the centre of the action related, and at others on the margins or absent, depending on the narrative focus. This can be true, too, of a principal character or eponymous hero even in a first-person narrative, if the narrator is playing the omniscient role or benefiting from knowledge subsequent to the events being described, as happens in the case of Guillaume de Lorris' *Roman de la Rose*.

In the field of Medieval French romances generally, the hero naturally experiences moments of inclusion and exclusion from a situation or place, and as a basic ingredient of story-telling, the *motif* is something of a commonplace, particularly if it is interpreted broadly. To take a simple example, Chrétien de Troyes's first romance, *Erec et Enide*, shows the value to the hero (and heroine) of recognising an overriding need to leave the cosy world of the court in order to rediscover their personal and social roles, integrating themselves afresh as king and queen in Erec's own kingdom after their trials; while within this quest there is the move from initial harmony between themselves, through rift, to a more solidly-based relationship which allows them to

assume their final social roles. In the same romance, Yder begins by being an independent knight, keeping the world at bay with his aggressive dwarf, but through defeat at the hand of Erec he becomes integrated into the Arthurian world; while Maboagrain and his *amie*, symbols of the former selves of Erec and Enide, become re-absorbed into the society from which the girl's *don contraignant* had alienated them.

Other romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries would show comparable patterns of exclusion and inclusion. This is largely because, as Sarah Kay has recently reminded us, the dominant narrative theme of romance is the journey.¹ When we turn to Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose*, a particularly complex pattern of inclusions and exclusions can be observed, affecting both narrator and reader, and forming part of the narrative strategy. The story is explicitly didactic, a poem in which *l'art d'Amors est tote enclose* "the whole art of love is to be found" (l. 38).² This in itself signals a separation of text and reader, who is intended to benefit from the instructive element within the story, but because it consists of a first-person narration of a dream, the reader's exclusion or separateness is additionally underscored. The reader is outside the narrator, who in turn is now outside the supposed dream, but the narrator takes himself and the reader inside by reliving through the narrative the dream-experience he claims to have had five years previously.³ This inward movement is reinforced by the narrator's beguiling assurance that the reader is being introduced not to something false or illusory, but to an experience which subsequently became true, and thereby real, as the covert events of the dream transformed themselves into a parallel reality:

15 quar endroit moi ai ge fiance
 que songes est senefiance
 des biens as genz et des anuiz,
 que li plusor songent de nuiz
 maintes choses covertement
 20 que l'en voit puis apertement [...]
 28 mes en ce songe onques riens n'ot
 qui tretot avenu ne soit
 30 si con li songes recensoit

[For myself I am confident that dreams signify either good or bad things to come, and that most people dream many things in a disguised form that later reveal themselves openly ... but in this dream nothing occurred that did not subsequently take place, as the dream related.]

The narrator/dreamer alludes, then, to an extra-diegetical moment of inclusion when he became absorbed by the dream's translation into a recognised reality, a situation which is bound to intrigue the educated reader, whose attention has already been drawn to the authority of Macrobius on the relationship between dream and reality in the case of the dream of Scipio (ll. 7-10).

In modern terms, the dream represents the narrator's first encounter with the Other; it is an experience of initiation which transforms him into a being in love, a self-defining moment in the construction of the self, which he now celebrates with hindsight. The dreamer's initial movements within the narration of his dream follow a rapidly-changing, complex pattern of inclusion and exclusion. He sees himself firstly abandoning his bed, a symbolic movement that represents the transfer from dream (bed) to later reality, which within the strict narrative frame will be portrayed only allegorically; yet paradoxically, as he dreams that he goes for a walk alone, he also becomes a self-excluding figure from a known reality within the fiction, that is, his own society, which is never in fact alluded to apart from through the reference to the bed. Meanwhile he exists momentarily in a kind of limbo, and in this respect he is no different from any knight errant of romance, moving from place to place.

When he comes upon the privileged walled garden, he finds himself initially shut out. The lengthy account of the series of portraits outside this garden sets a firm stamp on exclusion and exclusivity, the rejection by its owner, Deduit [Pleasure], of undesirable and undeserving states of being for any courtly lover. Thus courtliness is first defined by what it is not. The dreamer is attracted nevertheless by the singing of the birds that he hears coming from within (ll. 478-94), and his appreciation of the song intensifies as soon as he is inside (ll. 641-80). The birdsong represents both integration among the different creatures and their overall oneness with Nature, but this unity automatically forms a further barrier to the dreamer, though their joy does strike a chord in his heart:

De lor chant, n'estoit mie gas,
 705 la douçor et la melodie
 me mist el cuer grant reverdie

[I am not joking in saying that the sweetness and the melody of their song filled my heart with great joy.]

This corporate joy anticipates the singing and dancing of the allegorical figures in the

garden that he will shortly meet, once he finds the entrance. The ready admittance and welcome by Oiseuse [Idleness] does not, however, bring about any immediate inclusion or integration for him. In fact, he is content initially merely to listen and witness, and in particular he wishes to see the garden's owner, Deduit:

707 Mes quant j'oi escouté un poi
 les oisiaus, tenir ne me poi
 qu'adonc Deduit voair n'alase,

710 car a voair mout desirasse
 son contenment et son estre

[But when I had listened to the birds for a while, I could not restrain myself from going to see Deduit, for I was most anxious to witness his manner and being].

Even when he is invited by Cortoise [Courtesy] to participate in the dancing, which he does with pleasure (*car de queroler, se j'ousasse, / estoie envieus et surpris* "for I was eager and keen to dance, if I had dared," ll. 792-93), he still remains more observer and describer than true participant. Unlike all the other figures in the dance, he has no specific partner, for he is not yet a lover, but the invitation to join in has the narrative advantage of allowing him to observe them all at closer range. When the tableau ceases, the figures and their partners retire in couples to disport themselves, and the dreamer's exclusion from their love-making elicits from him the wistful comment: *Dex! com menoient bone vie! / Fox est qui n'a de tel envie!* "God! What a delightful life they led! Only a fool would not envy them!" (ll. 1293-94). At this point he leaves to go off on his own to explore and admire the rest of the garden.

As he departs, the stalking presence of Amor, the god of Love, accompanied by Dolz Regart [Sweet Looks], forms a continuous link with the metaphorical portrayal of love and its joy that was expressed by the singing and dancing in the preceding scene. The whole display, of course, tropologically represents future theoretical possibilities for him, of which in his uninitiated state he is as yet unaware, and which lie beyond the scope of the narrative quest. However, the contrast between the dance and his own eventual clumsy and frustrating efforts at persuading and conquering the object of his love may be intentionally ironic. Certainly the reader will have already recognised the irony of the timelessness of the portrayal of idealised bliss, which is likely to correspond in real life to moments which are more transient. The lover himself will later feel the keenness of the fleeting nature of such intense moments, when he

eventually obtains the fateful kiss from his rose.

The future lover's adventure in the garden does not, then, signal an integration into the tightly-knit activity already seen, but establishes a semi-parallel, an incomplete involvement with the symbolic, static decor, which is separate from the physical events and sense of movement of the dance. The falling in love takes place away from the throng, and is witnessed only by the god of Love and his assistant, refugees from the initial tableau. As if further to underline the irony of contrast and as a background to this event, there is a lengthy concentration on the delights of the whole of the garden and its desirable sense of harmony (ll. 1321-1422). The reader is presented not only with the description of an earthly paradise, but also, perhaps, on a metaphorical yet more mundane level, with an idealised state of social integration and peacefulness which the lover will not be able to match within the confines of the poem.

The fountain of Narcissus, which the dreamer soon comes upon as he is allowed to roam freely, forms a pivotal moment in the narrative and it, too, plays a complex role in the question of integration and exclusion. As part of the garden it is in complete harmony with its surroundings, which the crystals in the water reflect and thereby even absorb. For the lover, though, it spells danger: the message above the fountain, *ilec desus / estoit morz li biau Narcissus* "upon here died the fair Narcissus" (ll. 1435-36), introduces a note of impermanence and suffering. The narration which then follows of the story of Narcissus forms a prelude to the dreamer's own experience of self-projecting love and suffering, and stands in direct contrast to the untroubled relationships of the couples met in the dance. At the same time the telling of the story of Narcissus, presented as an exemplum and with an explanatory gloss by the narrator, sets both dreamer and reader outside the progress of the dream as well as outside the experience of the mythological victim of love. Yet the details of the story form an anticipatory *mise en abyme* of the situation in which the lover will later find himself: Echo is shut out from the love she craves, while Narcissus is excluded from the fulfilment of an impossible love. Moreover the link between the dreamer and the myth is made textually straight away, as the narrator explains that he hesitated when he saw the fountain, *que de Narcissus me sovint* "for I recalled Narcissus" (l. 1513), although his reaction was immediately followed by one of confidence:

1517 Mes me pensai que a seür,
 sanz peor de mauvés eür,
 a la fontaine aler pooie;

1520 por folie m'en esloignoie
 [but I thought that I could approach the fountain confidently, without fear
 of ill-fortune; it would be folly to leave it.]

Here he not only underestimates the power of love, or self-love, but draws also the wonderfully ironic conclusion that it would be folly to avoid looking in it! Once the dreamer has looked into this *miroërs perilleus* "perilous mirror" (l. 1569), the narrator makes the more mature observation that it is always a risk to gaze into it:

1573 Qui en ce miroër se mire
 ne puet avoir garant ne mire
 1575 que il tel chose as ieuz ne voie
 qui d'amors l'a mis tost en voie
 [Whoever looks at himself in this mirror can have no protection or remedy
 against seeing something which sets him on the path of love.]

This remark is followed by an allusion to the many who have suffered for love (ll. 1577-92), so that *mutatis mutandis*, the sufferings of Narcissus soon become generalised to represent the common experience of all lovers—something of the myth exists in all love relationships. In addition, the dreamer informs the reader that he, too, was deceived by the mirror and suffered as a consequence (ll. 1607-12). Paradoxically, then, absorption into the sphere of love is both inclusive and exclusive, by reason of the inevitable suffering and isolation it causes.

As the dreamer becomes the lover, a further set of inclusions and exclusions occurs. He first spies the clump of roses reflected in the water, the implication being that unlike the rest of the garden, which he had admired before gazing into the fountain, the roses represent an area which is more private and concealed:

1613 El miroër entre mil choses
 choisi rosiers chargez de roses
 1615 qui estoient en un destor,
 d'une haie bien clos entor
 [In the mirror, among a thousand other things, I picked out rose bushes,
 laden with roses, in a secluded place surrounded by a hedge.]

Their privacy arouses his curiosity, and as he approaches them they seem to him both

to attract and repel: they give off a heady scent, and he would like to pick one, but he hesitates for fear of offending the garden's owner:

1632 Mes peor oi dou repentir,
 que il en peüst de legier
 desplaire au seignor dou vergier
 [But I feared regret, for it might easily have displeased the lord of the garden.]

He is drawn to them by their scent, their beauty, their abundance, and their variety, but when he selects his prize rose-bud, it is colour, shape, and scent which attract him particularly to it, and he is deterred from plucking it now by the daunting protection of thorns and nettles:

1673 Mes chardon agu et poignant
 m'en aloient trop esloignant;
 1675 espines tranchanz et aguës,
 orties et ronces cornues
 ne me lessaient avant trere,
 car je me cremoie mal feire
 [But sharp, pointed thistles forced me to keep away; and sharp, piercing thorns, nettles, and prickly brambles prevented me from going any further, for I feared injury.]

This physical protective shield will later transform itself into or be replaced by the personifications which will resist the lover's advances.

The image of the god of Love's symbolic wounding arrows marks a link between lover and love-object as he is captivated by its appearance—*Biauté* [Beauty]—and anticipated qualities—*Simpleice*, *Cortoisie*, *Compaignie*, and *Biau Samblant* [Simplicity, Courtesy, Companionship, and Fair Seeming]—while the feudalised surrender to the figure of Amor incorporates the new lover into an organised structure, though not as an equal, only as a servant. Love becomes an imposed discipline and a service, but the god's commandments will help the lover in the pursuit of his beloved by making him socially agreeable and thereby hopefully lovable: the avoidance of villainy, slander, coarse speech, pride, or avarice, and the cultivation of courtesy, politeness to women, elegance of dress, cleanliness, and cheerfulness, together with

the display of pleasing talents. It is this part of the poem which, through generalisation, connects most directly with the reader, but for the lover, the dedication and hard work implicit in these commandments are a far cry from the atmosphere of shared and relaxed joy represented in the dance. At best that stage could presumably only be reached, if ever, after living through the state of anxiety and suffering. Amor describes in comic vein, in passages inspired by Ovid, the day-to-day, unpoetic activities and reactions of any lover. In all of them the lover is implicitly excluded from his beloved, with whom he is endeavouring to make effective contact.

As the lover is overawed at the prospect before him, the stage is set for bringing into play the personifications which will either help him in his amorous quest or signify the forces of caution or resistance on the part of the rose. He is told by Amor that he will always retain Esperance [Hope], and that he will grant him in addition the gift of Douz Penses, Douz Parlers, and Douz Regart [Sweet Thoughts, Sweet Speech, and Sweet Looks]. They will represent both his calmer moments of reflection or contemplation and his positive actions as a lover, for Douz Parlers will later be transformed into the figure of Ami [Friend]. Meanwhile, another aspect of exclusion manifests itself when Amor dramatically vanishes, having fulfilled his task for the moment, and the lover immediately feels the loneliness of dependency:

2752 et lors je fui mout esbahiz
 quant je ne vi lez moi nului.
 De mes plaies mout me dolui
 2755 et soi que guerir ne pooie
 fors par le bouton ou j'avoie
 tot mon cuer mis et ma beance;
 si n'avoie en nului fiance
 fors ou diex d'Amors de l'avoir,
 2760 ainçois savoie bien de voir
 que de l'avoir neant estoit,
 s'Amors ne s'en entremetoit

[Then I was very surprised to see no-one beside me. I suffered greatly from my wounds, and knew that I could be cured only by the bud on which I had set my heart and desire; and I could trust no-one except the god of Love to obtain it for me. I knew for certain that there was no question of obtaining it unless Love lent a hand.]

He is left contemplating the hedge around the roses, not daring to pass it for fear of trespassing and appearing to want to steal them.

This projection of his inner desires seems to stimulate a spontaneous response from the roses, for Bel Acueil [Fair Welcome] promptly appears and invites him to pass the hedge and enjoy the scent of the roses. He now experiences his first social contact with an aspect of the love-object, her genuine but cautious welcome of his attentions and offer to respond to any of his reasonable demands; but he also meets the defensive figures of Dangier, Male Bouche, Honte and Peor [Refusal, Evil Tongue/Gossip, Shame and Fear]. In this way he is introduced early on to the range of reactions within the girl-rose's psyche, and has to learn what place he can occupy within her shifting feelings. Through clumsiness and inexperience he soon realises that there are boundaries, for he unintentionally creates a barrier through his use of language: his premature request to have the rose leads to the activation of Dangier and exclusion from the rose's presence. However, encouraged by Ami, he returns to Dangier in the hope of softening his antagonism, but will not be allowed to pass the hedge again until further aspects of the girl-rose's character come into play. It is Franchise and Pitié who succeed in persuading Dangier to allow Bel Acueil to return to the lover, and it is Franchise herself—"generosity of spirit" in Frances Horgan's translation⁴—who brings back Bel Acueil and unwittingly lays the foundation of the next disaster for the lover by urging Bel Acueil to do the lover's wishes:

3317 Or pensez de lui conjoir.
se de m'amour volez joir,
et de fere sa volenté

[Now if you wish to enjoy my love, take care to be pleasant to him, and to do as he wishes.]

Accordingly Bel Acueil greets the lover, who as narrator adds a comment to the reader: *et me mostra plus bel samblant / que onques n'avoit fet devant* "and behaved more pleasantly towards me than he had ever done before" (ll. 3329-30). The lover misreads the freedom of access seemingly allowed to him, and asks for a kiss of the rose. Although Bel Acueil is initially hesitant, fearing where a kiss might lead and thereby defining another boundary, Venus, representing female sexuality, prompts Bel Acueil to grant the kiss. There follows a blissful moment of fusion with the rose.

Immediately, the mood changes and there is a psychological withdrawal on the rose's part, Bel Acueil having already expressed the fear that a kiss could lead to further intimacy. Male Bouche is activated, Jalousie alerted, and Bel Acueil chided and threatened with being locked up. The turmoil in the girl-rose's feelings is pursued and analysed allegorically, and the result is that Jalousie declares her intention of strengthening the defences and building a wall around the roses, imprisoning Bel Acueil in a tower, while Dangier becomes more determined to be firm in the future (ll. 3713-36), which does not augur well for the lover:

3743 Des or est changiez mout li vers,
 quar Dangier devient plus divers
 3745 et plus fel qu'il ne souloit estre.
 Mort m'a qui si l'a fet irestre,
 car je n'avré ja mes loisir
 de veoir ce que je desir

[Thereupon the situation changed, for Dangier became more disagreeable and cruel than usual. The one who has made him rage has killed me, for I shall never again be able to see what I desire.]

The lover is left with the mere memory of the kiss, and exclusion mortifies him:

3761 et sachiez, quant il me sovient
 que a consirrer m'en covient,
 mieuz voudroie estre morz que vis

[And know that when I recall that I must do without (the rose), I would rather be dead than alive.]

The detailed account of the building by Jalousie of the wall and tower (ll. 3779-3848) underlines the resolute exclusion of the lover from the presence of the beloved. A wide, deep trench is dug around the roses; a strong wall is built on solid foundation, and well-entrenched; turrets are constructed which would be difficult to demolish (*fors a abatre*, l. 3804); the walls, forming a square, are *espés et haus* "thick and high" (l. 3806) and impregnable (*ne dotent cop de perriere* "they fear no stone from a catapult," l. 3810); the doors are protected by portcullises. The round tower in the middle of the new enclosure is *grant et lee et haute* "large and broad and high" (l. 3819), and like the walls, cannot be knocked down, the stonework being *dure come aimant* "hard as adamant" (l. 3826). It is further protected by a bailey, with roses between it and the

tower, while within the defences there are various war engines. The four entrances are to be guarded by Dangier, Honte, Peor, and Male Bouche, all with detachments of men-at-arms. Bel Accueil will be in a tower from which he will not be able to escape, and will be guarded by an old woman, the traditional symbol of protection for young women, for an old woman knows from experience the tricks that young men play to gain access to the object of their desire and the ways young women admit them (*el set toute la vielle dance* "she knows all about the old tricks," l. 3908j).

Faced with such formidable moves, the lover abandons himself to feelings of hopelessness and exclusion, the keener for his having tasted joy:

3928 que je sui a plus grant meschief
 por la joie que j'ai perdue
 3930 que s'onques ne l'eüse eue
 [for I feel sorrow all the more keenly for having experienced the joy now
 lost.]

The text of Guillaume de Lorris then ends with the uncompleted monologue, beginning at l. 3975, in which the lover addresses Bel Accueil in the hope that he will resist Jalousie's efforts and continue to be well-disposed towards him. In this way he endeavours to salvage some kind of emotional contact *in absentia*, while fearing that Bel Accueil might in fact bear some resentment towards him for his imprisonment. He is like the rejected lover of the lyric *chanson*:

4010 Par un poi que je ne fons d'ire
 quant il me membre de ma perte
 qui est si grant et si aperte;
 si ai poor et desconfort,
 qui me donront, ce croi, la mort.
 4015 N'en doi ge bien avoir poor,
 quant je sai que losengeor
 et traïtor et envieus
 sont de moi nuire curieus?

[I almost boil with rage when I recall my loss, which is so great and so apparent, and I experience fear and distress which, I think, will kill me. Am I not right to be afraid, when I know that slanderers and envious traitors are bent on doing me harm?]

By *losegngeor* he implies all the attributes opposed to the success of his love-quest, and he worries that they might already have succeeded in winning Bel Acueil over. His attachment to his rose echoes his earlier feelings of dependency on Amor. The last three lines composed by Guillaume de Lorris are:

4026 Ja mes n'iert rien qui me confort
 se je pert vostre bienveillance,
 car je n'ai mes ailleurs fiance

[Nothing will ever comfort me if I lose your good will, for there is no-one else I can rely on.]

The sentiment recalls his sense of abandonment when the god of Love vanished: *si n'avoie en nului fiance / fors ou diex d'Amors de l'avoir* "I could trust no-one except the god of Love to obtain it" (ll. 2758-59).

The dreamer/lover never becomes totally integrated in any situation within Guillaume's poem, and his movement between partial inclusion and exclusion embraces at different moments the physical and visual, the social, the psychological or emotional, and the mythological. It is true that he is incorporated into Love's service, but insofar as the god of Love stands for his emotional attachment to the beloved, his contact is never more than partial. The narrative scope does not allow him to reach the relaxed joy and sense of real togetherness represented by the dancing couples he first encounters in the garden. They are all symbols of the unattained goal. In fact the very nature of the allegory makes it impossible to attain any deep fusion with his rose, since all her attributes and moods are fragmented into separate allegorical figures, which he tends to encounter individually, and they never fuse into a whole being. Also, whereas there is a figure representing her resolute refusal, Dangier, there is no corresponding one to signify her surrendering acceptance of his love, for Bel Acueil, although rather ill-defined, is not meant to go that far—hence his alarm at the question of the granting of the kiss. It is nevertheless Bel Acueil who is persuaded by the heat of Venus's fire-brand to grant the kiss, signifying that a girl's compliance can be pushed or even forced:

3455 Bel Acueil, qui senti l'eer
 du brandon, sanz plus deloer,
 m'otroia un bessier en dons,
 tant fist Venus et ses brandons

[Bel Acueil, who felt the heat of the torch, without further delay granted me the gift of a kiss, such was the effect of Venus and her torch.]

As for Venus, she is merely the impulse to surrender, and not surrender itself. She is in any case an external generality and parallel to the god of Love, the male stimulus.

When Jean de Meun rewrites the lover's quest in his own way and describes the deflowering of the rose, he builds on Guillaume de Lorris in stretching the role of Bel Acueil. He first has Venus toss her burning brand into the castle, so that all the forces opposed to the lover take flight, notably Dangier, Honte, and Peor, since Male Bouche is already dead (ll. 21220-46). Meanwhile Cortoisie, in company with Franchise and Pitié, persuades her son Bel Acueil not to remain there and be burnt, but to receive the love offered (*Recevez li et quant qu'il a* "Receive him and all he has," l. 21290), and grant the lover the rose (*Otroiez li la rose an dons* "Give him the rose as a gift," l. 21309). Thus Bel Acueil is now seen as the potential recipient of the love as well as the granter of it:

21310 —Dames, je la li habandons,
fet Bel Acueill, mout volantiers.
Cueillir la peut andemantiers
que nous ne soumes ci que dui.
Pieça que recevoir le dui,

21315 car bien voi qu'il aime san guile
[Lady, I will yield it up to him, says Bel Acueil, most willingly. He may pluck it while just the two of us are here. I should have received him long ago, for I see clearly that he loves truly.]

Jean de Meun then introduces his own elaborate imagery of the pilgrim and the penetration of the sanctuary, but Bel Acueil is still allegorically involved, beseeching the lover not to do anything not agreed on by both parties:

Bel Acueill por Dieu me priait
21670 que nul outrage fet n'i ait;
et je li mis mout en couvant,
por ce qu'il m'an priait souvant,
que ja nule riens ne feroie
for sa volanté et la moie

[Bel Acueil begged me in God's name not to do anything violent, and I promised him, because he begged me repeatedly, that I would do nothing that was not both his will and mine.]

Bel Acueil now, in effect, becomes the consenting girl, merely expressing nervous surprise at the lover's unforeseen boldness:

21702 Mes de tant fui je bien lor fis
c'onques nul mau gré ne m'an sot

li douz, qui nul mal n'i pansot,
21705 ainz me consant et seuffre a fere
quan qu'il set qui me doie plere.

Si m'apele il de couvenant,
et li faz grant desavenant,
et suis trop outrageus, ce dit.

21710 Mes il n'i met nul contredit
que ne preigne et debaille et cueille
rosier et rains et fleur et fueille

[But I was certain that the gentle one bore me no ill will, seeing nothing wrong in it; rather he consented and allowed me to do whatever he knew would please me. He reminded me of the promise, and that I behaved most improperly, saying that I was outrageous; but he did nothing to stop me from taking, caressing, and plucking the rose-bud, with its branches, flowers and leaves.]

Jean de Meun's account of the taking of the rose highlights the more restricted nature of the rose's responses in Guillaume's poem, and brings us to the question, so fully explored by David Hult,⁵ of the incompleteness of this first part of the *Roman de la Rose*. The lover is left in suspension at the end, sharing with the troubadour and his northern imitators the exclusion implicit in the lyric chanson. In this respect the narrator's relationship to external reality could be seen to be performing a double task. The dream connects to a past five years previously, and the author claims at the beginning of the poem that it subsequently came true, in a transferred way, in real life. However, what he does not tell us, no doubt for good reason, is how far the flesh-and-blood relationship actually developed. Did it, too, end in suspension? Did it lead to sexual union, or is the Rose referred to in l. 44 part of an ongoing quest? A later reference, tucked away in an aside in the section of text between the granting of the

kiss and the adverse reactions started by Male Bouche, adds a further complication, for it seems to indicate that the narrator is, in his own present time, hoping to obtain a reward from an unspecified beloved:

3487 Tote l'estoire veil parsuivre,
 ja ne m'est parece d'escrire,
 por quoi je cuit qu'il abelise
 3490 a la bele, que Dex guerisse,
 qui le guerredon m'en rendra
 mieuz que nule, quant el voudra⁶

[I wish to pursue the whole story. I shall never be lazy in writing it down, because I believe that it will please the fair one, whom God protect, who will reward me better than anyone, when it pleases her.]

If the original dream-quest of the narrator later translated itself into a real-life success, as the tone of the introduction hints (ll. 28-32), this could account for the optimism expressed in his desire to please a current lady, confident that eventual inclusion by the crossing of a temporary barrier will reverse the despair expressed by the dreamer at the point at which the poem breaks off. If the dream functions as a metaphor for a current pursuit, the narrator's apparent good intentions marred by clumsiness in the story he tells might serve as an explanation for his behaviour outside the text, perhaps as an indirect apology and appeal, as in a *salut d'amour*.⁷

Guillaume's poem relates a young man's first experience of love. It is therefore a fundamentally male-centred story of one individual. This is highlighted by the fact that the poem ends with the excluded lover's lament and a total concentration on his own feelings, a self-absorption prefigured in the story of Narcissus. There is no thought for Bel Acueil apart from in relation to the lover's own hopes, nor is there ever any stated intention to form the kind of permanent union which is characterised by a deep, mutual love and matrimony. Amor's commandments turn the lover's feelings to good account by making them an uplifting, self-improving discipline, characterised by fidelity and suffering. It is nevertheless a service which looks to reward and fulfilment, and although it is not expressly stated, the logical goal would be sexual union. Fear of that goal is a constant part of the rose's resistant personifications. It is Jean de Meun who will render this desire explicit, to the exclusion of true feeling.⁸

In a text which purports to contain the whole art of love, we have finally to consider the position of the reader. There are, in fact, two separate teachers in the poem. One is the god of Love, with his commands and advice, representing a simple pedagogical exercise; the other is the narrator, from whose related experience the reader is evidently meant to learn something. Yet either by design or through some unknowable cause, the reader is excluded from knowing the outcome of the story. Since the non-closure is likely to be deliberate, it may simply be that, as with any love relationship, advice and the experience of others can assist and books can describe. In the execution, however, every potential male lover, insofar as he has control, is on his own in his conduct and reactions, and therefore must supply his own conclusion. But beyond this possible personal transfer of the experience of another to that of the self, which is really a question of personality, moral scruple, or tactics, how does the fluctuating pattern of the lover's semi-inclusion and firm exclusions affect the reader in light of the text's didactic purpose? And what kind of reader is aimed at? An uninitiated reader is hardly likely to be encouraged, and Guillaume de Lorris relies for reaction to his poem more, I think, on the complicity of the experienced reader, who, like Guillaume, is looking back in recognition, and sharing a feeling of distance. It is for this reader, no doubt, that it is stated at the beginning that the story of the dream will be related partly *por vos cuers plus feire aqueer* "to make your hearts more merry" (l. 32). This reader, along with the narrator, will know that the harmony of the dance is more dream than reality, and will be aware of the precariousness and elusiveness of the pursuit of a sexual goal. Such a pursuit tends to take one away from the corporate into the intensity of the private. The more intense such a relationship, the more it isolates the lovers, which is the lesson of Tristan and Yseut.

To return for a moment to the example of *Erec et Enide*, the hero and heroine initially isolate themselves within their social circle. They abandon other considerations and indulge their sexual passion in the early days of their marriage, but then leave court at Erec's insistence and develop their relationship away from it. In their case it is thanks to this period of self-imposed exile that they are able to mature and reintegrate themselves into society. On the other hand the situation of Maboagrain and his *amie* symbolises the wilful isolation of lovers from the world at large, in this case the courtly world. Similarly, Guillaume's lover ends in limbo, because he has allowed love to separate him from the society he was originally part of at the beginning of the dream, without either becoming integrated into the dance (i.e. the courtly world) or being fulfilled in the relationship he craves. He is left with only the solitary consolation of Esperance and Douz Penseurs.

For Guillaume's reader of maturer years, the kind of love which thus spurs on but separates and marks an initiation is perhaps no longer an ambition. In any case the love portrayed is for youth; *Vielleice* [Old Age] is explicitly excluded as one of the portraits outside the garden. Paradoxically, then, and, it would seem, with Guillaume's ironic connivance, the didacticism collapses, for it is otiose for those who already know or who have abandoned the chase. For them, the poem can represent merely a nostalgic or painful revisiting of youth, while the constant failure to integrate or fulfil the self is less than convincingly reassuring for any uninitiated young man about to embark on the pursuit, or already involved in one—unless he shares the reckless confidence of the dreamer and ignores the warnings of Narcissus, which are reinforced by the narrator's own comments.⁹

University of Birmingham

Endnotes

1 Sarah Kay, *The 'Chansons de geste' in the Age of Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 49.

2 All quotations from the text of the *Roman de la Rose* are taken from the edition by F. Lecoy, 3 vols, CFMA (Paris: Champion, 1965-70). The English translations are my own.

3 It has recently been claimed that Guillaume de Lorris's text is in reality a thematic and narratological rewriting of part of Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain*. See D.D.R. Owen, "Calogrenant and the Dreamer: the inspiration for the *Roman de la Rose*," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 33 (1997), pp. 328-40.

4 Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. and ed. Frances Horgan (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994), p. 50 and passim.

5 David Hult, *Self-fulfilling Prophecies: Readership and Authority in the first 'Roman de la Rose'* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986).

6 See my comments on this in my article "Learning, experience and narrative stance in Guillaume de Lorris's *Rose*," *French Studies* 49 (1995), pp. 129-41, p. 141, note 3. I there argued that the passage could be seen as a present anticipation within the narrative, and not an expression of the external narrator's present as he looks for future reward, and that the stage could be assumed to have already been reached given the present time of the text. The Rose referred to in ll. 42-44 could therefore

be the realisation of his love which is still continuing in the narrator's present.

7 See my "Allegorical narrative in Philippe de Beaumanoir's *Salu d'Amour*," in *Literary Aspects of Courtly Culture*, eds Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Cambridge: Brewer, 1994), pp. 171-78.

8 The duality whereby courtly sentiment masks an ultimate intention to obtain sexual union is bluntly expressed in the *Lai du Lecheor*. See my "The creative process in the *Lai du Lecheor*," *French Studies Bulletin* 36 (1990), pp. 3-5.

9 An earlier version of this article was read as a paper at the meeting of the Canadian Society of Medievalists, Memorial University, St John's, Newfoundland, June 4-6, 1997.