# PLATO, NATURE AND JEAN DE MEUN

Ever since Langlois's great work on the sources of the Roman de la Rose [1] it has been clear that Jean de Meun must be considered an important purveyor in the vernacular of the traditional culture of the medieval 'artsman'. Paré showed that he reflects some of the most orthodox religious and philosophical thinking of his day. [2] In this as well as in the formal framework of the latter part of his poem he owes a large debt to Plato, to those influenced by Plato (Macrobius and Boethius) and to the poets and philosophers of the so-called School of Chartres. In particular, the question of God's creative activity and that of his relationship with the created world, problems which are central to the first part of the Timaeus (the only Platonic writing known to the Middle Ages) are rehearsed by Jean de Meun and put within reach of the laity possibly for the first time. I should like to suggest here that, while he is a conscious vulgariser of Plato as he is of Boethius, Jean de Meun at the same time uses Plato's 'myth' and its interpreters to suit his own fictional purpose in the discourses of Nature and Genius. Another look in context at the use to which he put his sources may help us to decide what he is about in the Roman, whether he deserves to fall under the axe of Bishop Tempier for propounding a rediscovered pagan hedonism inspired by Aristotle and his deterministic Arab commentators or whether, at any rate, one must admit with Paré that, while orthodox on the whole, he yet harbours a few dubious statements on sexual morality. [3] The trouble with Paré's position is that these 'dubious' matters not only lie at the heart of the discourses of Nature and Genius but are also intimately bound up with the author's 'orthodox' exposition of Platonic ideas about creation and the equally orthodox discussion on free will put in the mouth of Nature.

We first meet Nature in her forge hammering away ceaselessly, producing individual 'pieces' that the species might never die. Her last words to Genius are to promise paradise to all those who use their 'tools' to multiply their progeny - and it is this message that Genius expounds to the troops of Amor with an eloquence worthy of the friar Faus Semblant himself. The arresting image of Nature at her anvil, coining individual pieces faithful to their model, bringing forth like from like, is taken over from the description of Nature's activity in Alain de Lille's De Planctu Naturae, as is well known. [4] This in turn may be inspired by a passage in the cosmological poem by Bernard Silvestris where he meditates on nature's power of renewal in the face of death and even praises the sexual organs for perpetually repairing the threads sundered at the hands of the Fates. [5] However, from the very outset Jean's treatment of Nature in this remarkable passage is rather different from that of his models, though it is perhaps more a question of style and emphasis than content. With Bernard, praise of sexuality forms part of a meditation on the

paradoxical destiny of man and on his fleeting bodily existence, in spite of Nature's magnificent endeavour, for 'a day reduces him to nothing'.[6] With Alain, the paradox is expressed in philosophical, abstract, rhetorical language: 'through the round of birth and death ... perishable things [are] given stability through instability, infinity through impermanence, eternity through transience'.[7] What is more, Nature 'the coiner' comes late in the poem, after she has been shown as a regal heavenly being at whose approach the earth bursts forth into joyful fecundity, as author of man's nobler faculties and after she has been addressed rapturously by the poet as something very close to the anima mundi.[8] By presenting Nature first, in action, as generative force, Jean de Meun certainly meant to startle and to put the emphasis on this aspect above all others. Moreover, this is no mere exemplification of Alain's harmonious if inevitable process of nature in the 'mutual relation of birth and death', but a terrifying picture of Death the slayer, the bloodthirsty fiend, relentlessly pursuing every man, woman and child, sparing no-one, not even Galen and Hippocrates! The individual is doomed, Nature's sole answer is the life of the species. The resurrection she can give is that of the phoenix, not here, as was usual, a symbol of Christian resurrection, but of that of the species. There is at least as much emphasis on Nature's impotence to save her individual 'pieces' as there is exaltation of her as a force of renewal.[9] And yet she produces new living forms with her seal, unlike man whose works perish utterly. In discussing the work of man the artist immediately after depicting Nature's activity[10] Jean de Meun follows the pattern of twelfth-century commentators of Plato who follow Chalcidius' devisions. It is in these commentaries on the Timaeus that Nature herself was conceived as a philosophical entity and in this limited sense too. In the words of the then well known commentary of Guillaume de Conches, 'Sciendum est enim quod omne opus vel est opus creatoris vel est opus nature vel artificis imitantis naturam. Et est opus creatoris prima creatio sine prejacente materia ... Opus nature est quod similia nascantur ex similibus ex semine vel ex germine, quia est natura vis rebus insita similia de similibus operans. Opus artificis est opus hominis ... opus enim creatoris perpetuum est carens dissolutione ... opus vero nature etsi in se esse desinat tamen in semine remanet. Opus vero artificis imitantis naturam nec in se remanet nec aliquid ex se gignit'.[11] Man tries in vain to imitate nature, by imitating her processes (15999) - an Aristotelian notion, not further developed here by Jean de Meun. But very much later, when Nature and Genius have done their work, we are shown Pygmalion, man-the-artist par excellence, being promoted by Venus from the role of impotent (man) artist to that of lover, of successful 'creator' by the performing of Nature's 'work'.[12]

However materialistic a view of Nature some of the Christian Platonists may have held, she is always merely God's instrument. And here Jean de Meun conforms to this pattern of orthodoxy. The only liberty he takes is

to show Nature at her forge before giving us her pedigree. So, having shown us the opus naturae, the generative force at work in all creatures, Jean de Meun now proceeds to give this force the allegorical treatment it receives in the De Planctu in which poetry and religion mingle and the goddess Natura becomes fused with the Christian meditation on the Platonic creation myth; though again there are differences. In the allegorical portrait of Alain de Lille, she appears clothed in the whole of creation, she is the 'summa' of the created world. Jean de Meun, after claiming that he could not possibly do justice to his subject and devoting seventy lines to a hyperbolic 'non-portrait', then has six lines in which he states that her beauty, the image of God's own beauty, lies in her overflowing fecundity (16203 ff.). This is still Nature the mistress of the mint but with the introduction of this esthetic dimension, with the link with God source of all beauty and life we are entering the poetic world of platonic cosmology where creation is seen as an overflowing of God's goodness and all created forms as true reflections of the divine exemplars.

But all is not well and like Alain's Natura, Nature weeps and repents that she made man, her masterpiece, for, as she goes on to show later, he has dared raise his hand against her. The introduction at this point, of Genius (16247 ff.) and his long anti-feminist tirade (16293-16676) contrast drastically with the elevated Platonic exposition which precedes and follows it. The sudden shift to another level of reality is one of many in this debate on love. For example, the philosophical consideration of Nature as opus naturae was immediately preceded by the narrative passage relating the coming of Venus to the army of Amor which lies in the realm of psychological psychomachia. Though the tone and spirit could not be more different, it is the same reality that is being examined, but in the first instance it is seen as enacted on earth and in the particular narrative situation, and in the second in 'heaven' and in general. So here, too, the shift is from the heavenly being of beauty to her earthly instruments, men and women, though this time the effect is comic, even burlesque, as Genius (god of generation, perhaps a personification of the male genitals - the genii of Bernardus), Nature's 'priest' assumes the persona of 'homo clericalis' which is pretty close to that of the 'jalos' or jealous husband of fabliau fame whose misery Ami already showed to be the inevitable concommitant of doing Nature's 'work', while Nature herself becomes woman 'semper mutabilis' Eve the deceiver. A parody to be sure of Alain's Nature, bound to Genius 'by the knot of most ardent love' [13] who greets him with a kiss 'which signified those embraces of the mystic love which show the harmony of spiritual affection'. [14] Jean de Meun not only exposes the seamy under-side of Alain's idealism, but we have here perhaps the most successful and funniest of his attempts to explode the tensions inherent in the 'clerical' pessimism about sex. For that paradoxical creature Genius-the-priest proceeds, most

inapproriately, to preach to all men that women are to be shunned, for to associate with them is like lying with the serpent ... yet lie with them they must, for the sake of progeny. This most 'naturalistic', least sublimated statement of the 'sweet malady' entirely consistent with the personage though it is, is as psychologically absurd as it is unpoetic, for the vital link, eros is missing in this confrontation of two intellectual positions. This whole antifeminist tirade if it does not discredit Genius as an advocate of procreation altogether, has at least the effect of making the reader (and the lover) somewhat doubtful about the seriousness of his final speech to the barons of Love's army.

After Genius has finished 'comforting' her, by his assurance that she is better than other women (16671-6), Nature begins her 'confession' or repentance, which is in fact largely a statement of her place in the universe. Nature begins her discourse by describing the nature of God's creative activity as a prelude to explaining her own. The same sequence is to be found in Jean's model, the De Planctu. In some of the most beautiful lines of the Roman, Jean gives a summary of the Platonic theory of Ideas in its christianised form current since St. Augustine, who first equated the Ideas with Divine Wisdom, and which was transmitted more particularly in the formulation of Boethius (De consol. iii, m.9) which was commented on many times during the middle ages. [15]

Cil Diex, qui de biautez habonde,
quant il tres biaus fist ce biau monde
don il portoit en sa pansee
la bele fourme porpansee
tourjorz en perdurableté
ainz qu'ele eüst dehors eté
- car la prist il son examplaire
et quan que li fu necessaire; [16]

In his brief synthesis, the problems the Timaeus had raised for Christian thinkers down the ages are explicitly dealt with and in the most orthodox manner. The eternal exemplar does not exist independently of God but is from all time in the mind of God and according to this perfect, beautiful model ('pulchrum pulcherrimus ipse mundum mente gerens' says Boethius) he fashioned the beautiful universe. Guillaume de Conches, well known for his commentary, on both the Timaeus and Boethius, had explained this process by an analogy with the human craftsman: Divine Wisdom is the formal cause of the universe; as the craftsman first has an idea in his mind before he fashions the material in its image, so it is with God; this idea in the mind of God or Divine Wisdom is the Platonic archetype. [17]

The argument then immediately tackles the problem of the material

the divine craftsman uses in fashioning the world. The ambiguities in the Timaeus suggesting the pre-existence of matter in chaos had presented a problem to all commentators. An interesting reconciliation of Plato with the notion of the world's absolute dependence on God was attempted by Chalcidius: the origin of the world is in God by way of causality, not of time; so that, although God indeed made the world, yet it is eternal. [18] In Jean's own day the discussion continued and the proposition that the world is eternal, condemned in Paris in 1277, was thought acceptable by Thomas Aquinas who saw no contradiction between the notion of creation and that of eternity of the world. [19] Guillaume de Conches commenting on terrarum celique sator in the poem by Boethius just mentioned, assimilates the sator with the God of the opening of Genesis who created heaven and earth, who is creator of the elements because he created them without any pre-existing matter. [20] This is the orthodox Christian neoplatonist view also held by Augustine, Bernard de Chartres — and Nature in the Roman:

> car s'il ailleurs le vossist querre,
> il n'i travast ne ciel ne terre
> ne riens don aidier se peüst
> con nule riens dehors n'eüst,
> car de neant fist tout saillir
> cil en cui riens ne peut faillir, [21]

This was not to say that one could not conceive of a twofold act of creation, as Jean de Meun does: God first created chaos and then organised it:

> Et le fist au commencement
> une masse tant seulement,
> qui toute iert an confusion,
> sanz ordre et sanz distinction;
> puis le devisa par parties,
> qui puis ne furent departies, [22]

Although Guillaume de Conches is not happy with the suggestion that God first created the elements in a state of confusion, as this seems to him to be questioning divine goodness, yet he also thinks it possible to consider God as one drawing all things forth out of the elements he creates. [23] And the idea of the creation of chaos or formlessness is supported by the account of Genesis and is discussed by Thomas Aquinas. [24]

The greatest problem connected with creation is why God created the world at all. The neoplatonists had interpreted the view, found in the Timaeus, that God created the world out of goodness. ('He was good and what is good has no particle of envy in it', Timaeus 29) as implying a certain necessity. The act of creation was a necessary overflowing of divine good-

ness: as the sun must shine, so God must communicate himself. Against such speculations Jean de Meun, quoting the Timaeus, proclaims both God's untrammelled will and His overflowing goodness to be the cause of creation.

> n'onc riens ne l'esmut a ce fere
> fors sa volanté debonere,
> large, courtaise, sanz envie,
> qui fontaine est de toute vie (16713-16) [25]

By the accumulation of adjectives qualifying volanté, Jean de Meun produces a poetic synthesis as effective as Guillaume de Conches' philosophical statement ('Cum Deus sola voluntate omnia fecit, si quis dicat illius voluntatem esse rerum originem, illi consentiam, nec est contrarium divinam voluntatem et bonitatem esse causam rerum'). [26]

The mystery of God's creative act as it was expounded by the Christian Platonists of the twelfth century is here brilliantly summarised in the vernacular for the use of the laity, probably for the first time. It is clear that Jean de Meun was fully conversant with Platonic commentaries and that his solution to the problems raised in them is strictly orthodox. Whilst he seems clearly anxious to make available such theological discussion in the vernacular (his reference to the desirability of translating Boethius (II.5007-10) might well be advance publicity for his own translation of the De Consolatione), this is no digression on the part of Nature for it is necessary to understand God's activity, if one is to have a proper understanding of Nature's; for on Nature God bestowed his own beauty and generosity and, most important of all, she it is who now rules as his deputy and creates in his stead, or procreates. Inferior, subordinate to the God who created all out of nothing and shaped the world and put each element in its due place she certainly is: God placed her in the universe as 'chamberiere' (I.16742), as servant or chambermaid. But after some protestations of humility, rather general and quite unlike the rhetorical passage where Alain outlines the theological and philosophical differences between her and the Creator's operation, [27] Nature qualifies the humble 'chamberiere'. She is 'connetable' and 'vicaire' (I.16752): in other words, first dignitary of the realm and, as such, in charge of the whole 'golden chain' that binds the four elements, that is, the whole material universe which bows down before her. She is keeper of all things and continues their 'forms' (II.16755-62).

This whole preamble describing God's creative activity, satisfactory though it is both from the orthodox and esthetic point of view, seems to serve primarily to enhance the stature and the authority of Nature. Her operations are God-like, in fact they are God's own, continued in time. By continuing the forms true to their model she does what God did when he

created according to the examplars, the only true forms. By keeping the elements in harmony, which is what the golden chain implies, she maintains the universe in existence, she expresses God's providence. [28] The notion of Nature as divinely established order, or, as a system of secondary causes with its own (God given) autonomy was, of course, neither new nor heretical in Jean de Meun's day. That man and the universe could and should be studied for themselves, that they had their own integrity and mode of operation governed by laws which could be discovered, was accepted by twelfth-century Platonists. Thierry of Chartres, for example, went so far as to suggest that the creation in six days was due solely to the interplay of the natural properties with which the creator had endowed the elements. [29] This more scientific outlook with the 'desacralisation' of nature it entailed was, of course, given a new coherence by the rediscovery of Aristotle's works on nature which influenced Jean de Meun and his contemporaries. Moreover, the danger which lurked in this scientific outlook, at best of some kind of deism, at worst of a system of 'double truth', was latent in the dualism of the Platonic myth itself where the creator could not enter into direct contact with the physical world but had to create divine intermediaries to whom he delegated this secondary creation. Jean's Nature is the direct descendent of these gods as becomes apparent towards the end of her discourse. [30]

Having shown that in her activity as 'coiner' she is God's deputy and providence, Nature proceeds to describe how the whole of creation keeps her 'laws' except man who is thus out of tune with cosmic harmony. This, as so much else in this part of the Roman, is modelled on the De Planctu. Both are heirs to a long tradition of cosmological literature based on the Timaeus and commenting on it in various ways. Jean knew well the most famous of these, Macrobius' commentary of The Dream of Scipio. In fact, by starting his poem by a reference to The Dream, Guillaume de Lorris may well have suggested to his continuator the use he could make of Alain's Nature and her cosmological complaint within the framework of Guillaume's allegorical dream. Jean seems to be closer to Macrobius than to Alain in that his poem has a wider scope and contains various levels of instruction analogous to those of Macrobius, namely: i) scientific teaching - Jean's dissemination of Plato and popularised Aristotle corresponds to what Macrobius calls 'instruction in physical philosophy'; ii) teaching on morals or 'moral philosophy' - with Jean, the notion of service of nature replaces that of service of the state found in Macrobius and Cicero before him; iii) possibly a teaching on 'rational philosophy' which, both in Jean and in Macrobius consists of a statement about the nature of man as a body-soul complex and his relationship with the universe. However, as in Alain's poem, all these other considerations are, at any rate structurally, subordinate to the moral (or possibly immoral!) teaching. In this both Alain and Jean are heirs to the twelfth-

century interpreters of Plato. For them the study of the physical world was a prelude to the understanding of man and his place in it. For the Christian Platonist it was also a way of finding and obeying God. To study the order or necessity which rules the world, the rerum omnium concordia apparent in creation was to discover the wisdom of God who established these natural laws. Having discovered them, man can then live according to that order which is unquestionably good. [31] In this way cosmology and politics (or morality) were linked by Guillaume de Conches as they were by Cicero and probably Macrobius. And on this fundamental assumption, too, rests the widely held belief of an underlying natural harmony, moral as well as physical between the macrocosm of the world and the microcosm of man. [32]

It is the context of such Platonic speculation as well as that of the intellectual ferment prevailing at the time that one must try to evaluate Jean de Meun's intention in the last 4000 lines of the poem. Ostensibly the same high-minded purpose animates Nature: she invites man to insert himself into the universal harmony by following her laws, as the rest of creation does. For Nature, now firmly established as 'coiner' by divine decree, goes on to show that she is not only mistress over the sublunary world of corruption and generation, but that she rules over the heavens, that it is her law that guides the perpetual and faultless motion of the incorruptible stars (16771 ff.). She is thus given a new cosmic grandeur. One could argue that the stress on clockwork precision in the revolution of the stars - more Aristotelian than Platonic - brings her closer to a force inherent in things than to a cosmic rational principle, but then it is difficult to make such distinctions especially where poetic allegory is the language used, for the same could be said of Boethius' 'Love ruling heaven and earth and seas, [which] them in this course doth bind' (Consol. Phil. II, m.viii). Nevertheless, Jean's interest in phenomena as such does put a rather different emphasis on the allegory.

But more is to come, and we soon descend from the starry heavens, for the stars not only turn but by their motion are the cause of change in the sublunary world, of change in matter; they are the authors, according to Aristotelian theory, of generation and corruption, of all that is mutable, of death (16925 ff.). [33] But this was precisely the role conferred by God on Nature. Nature has some difficulty in fitting herself in at this point: it is the stars that cause the elements to come together in harmony to constitute substantive forms 'which I form' says Nature (16924-16942). Is Nature's role to make sure that like comes from like, to maintain the 'true' forms ? Not that either, for later (17485-6) this, too, is seen as a necessary influence of the stars. Similarly, death is influenced by the stars, yet 'natural' death comes 'par mon droit etablissement' (16951; also 16996). Nature's rule thus comes very close to the rule of the stars. So, quite naturally, there follows a discussion of the nature of the influence of the stars on men. As in his

belief in the influence of the stars as efficient cause of the mutability in the sublunary world, so, too, in his argument on the extent of that influence on man, Jean de Meun follows the Christian thinkers of his day, especially Albert the Great: man's 'nature' (i.e., temperament) is ruled by the stars, but by his will and wisdom he can escape from the stars (or his 'nature'). Has Nature become the nature ruled by the stars ? Or are we meant to understand that it is through the stars that Nature rules the corporeal world ? This is certainly what Genius suggests at the beginning of his speech:

> De l'auctorité de Nature,
> qui de tout le monde a la cure
> conme vicaire et connestable
> a l'ampereeur pardurable
> qui siet en la tour souveraine
> de la noble cité mondaine,
> don il fist Nature ministre,
> qui touz les bien i amenistre
> par l'influence des esteles,
> car tout est ordené par eles
> selonc les droiz anperiaus
> don Nature est officiaus,
> qui toutes choses a fet nestre
> puis que cist mondes vint an estre,
> et leur dona terme ansemant
> de grandeur et d'acroissemant, ... [34]

Whatever the case, the point that Nature is making here is that man, by virtue of his reason and free will, not only can but must resist the stars and/or Nature when their promptings are opposed to what is good and right (17057-8). That there is a possibility that Nature could be at odds with moral goodness and rectitude shows how far we are from a Platonic or a Boethian perspective.

Yet, if for Nature we read what Boethius calls Fate, we are precisely in a Boethian perspective. In the discussion of astral or 'natural' determinism so vital in the thirteenth century, Jean de Meun (as is well known) turned to Boethius for a solution. There is a passage dealing with Fate and Providence where Fate is easily recognisable as the Nature of the passage under discussion:

> That course [of moveable Fate] moveth the heaven and stars, tempereth the elements one with another and transformeth them by mutual changing. The same reneweth all rising and dying things by like proceeding of fruit and seeds. This comprehendeth also the actions and fortunes of men by an unloosable connextion

> of causes, which since it proceeds from the principles of unmovable Providence, the causes also must be immutable. For in this manner things are best governed, if the simplicity which remaineth in the Divine mind produceth an inflexible order of causes and this order restraineth with its own immutability things otherwise mutable, and which would have a confused course. (De Consolat. IV.pr.vi, 82-93).

Just before, Boethius establishes the relationship between Fate and Providence, much as Nature established hers with God at the beginning of her confession:

> For Providence is the very Divine reason itself, seated in the highest Prince, which disposeth all things. But Fate is a disposition inherent in changeable things by which Providence connecteth all things in their due order ... For fatal order proceedeth from the simplicity of Providence. (IV.pr.iv, 32-44).

Fate here indeed seems an all powerful, inescapable 'deputy' of Providence. If Lady Philosophy manages to find a place for free will in such a rigid formulation, perhaps Nature can be forgiven her contradictions. In this passage Boethius does it by placing some things under Providence but above the course of Fate. 'And they are those things which nigh to the first Divinity, being stable and fixed, exceed the order of fatal mobility' (IV, pr.vi, ll.60-65). That Jean de Meun proposes both Nature's (or Fate's) 'necessary' dominion and man's freedom from it is perfectly consistent with the thought of Boethius. The difficulty lies in the fact that he puts both arguments in the mouth of Nature/Fate: Fate complaining of man's disobedience to its dictates while proclaiming him to be above Fate by virtue of his reason and free will!

Having shown that man rules the stars or at any rate can do so in his moral life, Nature goes on to show that man can even rule over those very forces of nature over which the stars or Fate are thought to have absolute dominion. By his intelligence and knowledge, man can at any rate control the effects of the 'fated' course of natural phenomena. He can use the stars instead of being used by them, for example, to forecast the weather, floods, famines, etc., and thus escape from them (17549-17672). [35] Finally, he can subdue nature by studying and understanding its 'marvels', which are none for those who apply themselves to the study of Aristotle. Not only astrology but those other awesome ways in which 'fate' manifests itself like rainbows and magic mirrors are nothing more nor less than 'ceste merveilleuse sciance' called optics and can therefore be put to man's use.

Why, even Venus and Mars could have escaped exposure to the ridicule of the gods had they had a good magnifying glass (a delightful thought: gods or stars, controlling Fate by scientific knowhow!) (18031 ff.). This Nature who is well pleased with the heavens for doing her bidding is an enthusiastically Aristotelian Nature who glories in that her 'laws' are, at any rate potentially, subject to man's scrutiny and manipulation. And this part of her praise of nature ends with a commendation of the obedience shown by creatures in the sublunary world of birth and death by reproducing their kind. This is modelled on the De Planctu though expressed in somewhat more specific terms. [36] Nature emphasises the obedience of the dumb beasts while restricting it to the question of reproduction: they are all fruitful, they mate whenever they please, freely, without dowries or contracts (if that is the meaning of 'nul marchié'), out of generous 'courtoisie' (18960-18990). This remarkable eulogy of animal sexuality which Nature proposes as an example to man and which amusingly echoes the happy state of affairs in the golden age (II.8401 ff.) is, however, seriously weakened by Nature's earlier statement about the natural ignorance of animals which makes them slaves to their nature and to man, a natural ignorance which Nature declares to be a vice in man whose nature it is to be free (17763-17840). Then for a moment Nature is invested with something of the moral stature of Alain's Nature as she claims a part in the fashioning of the whole man including his reason in the image of his creator, his face looking heavenward (18994-96) unlike the beast (18970-72). But this she immediately retracts by resuming her former role of mistress over the corruptible world of elements alone; and this role she supports with the highest authority, Plato himself.

At the beginning of her discourse, Nature had shown the supreme nobility of her role to reside in her close connection with the operations of the Divine mind itself whose very activity she continues in the world of time. She rules by divine decree over the physical world of becoming, over the perpetual movement of the heavens and, through them, over the sublunary world. She is the Nature the medieval Platonists had fashioned out of the World Soul but in her 'lowest', most 'scientific' definition. For although occasionally she sounds like the love of Boethius, that divine and benign concord which Guillaume de Conches even tried to identify with the Holy Spirit (see below, p.95), she conforms most often to the 'scientific' definition these Platonists had given to her as 'vigor naturalis'. [37] As she insists herself, she is not so much the immanent rational principle of order of Platonic physics as a force which perpetuates generation through the stars, which colouring owes more to Arab physics and astrology than to Plato. [38]

Curiously, in support of this narrow definition of herself, Nature is able to call as witness the great Plato himself. She has an unimpeachable pedigree for Plato himself, 'qui mieuz de Dieu parler osa' (19085), he who

explained God's creation by the Divine Exemplars, also spoke of her and her role. To prove her subservient role compared with God's, as maker of corruptible things (a point made at the beginning of her discourse), she refers to the speech of the demiurge (equated with God by most commentators) to the lesser gods, and in particular, the passage which insists on the mortality of these gods themselves, but for the will of their creator. Before quoting the speech itself, Nature claims that it was addressed (also) to her, though she is nowhere to be found either in the Timaeus or, as such in Chalcidius' translation from which Jean de Meun rendered it.

> Platon meismes le tesmoigne
> quant il pale de ma besoigne
> et des deux, qui de mort n'ont garde. (19033-5)

The gods to whom the speech is addressed are the stars and the earth, according to Plato, 'stellas et spiritus' in the gloss by William of Conches. They are eternal though potentially mortal by the fact that they are created beings, made, it seems, from some superior matter (?) which the demiurge will not allow to be dissolved. They are chosen intermediaries, we are told later in the speech, between the divine creation (which includes the soul of man) and that of mortal creatures. Then, in the passage where Jean de Meun actually quotes the Timaeus, Nature is deftly introduced as maker of the world of change and corruption. To render Plato's thought Chalcidius has used the word 'natura' to mean 'by nature, naturally'. Addressing the lesser gods, the demiurge describes them as 'opera ... mea, dissolubilia natura, me tamen volente indissolubilia'. To this, quite properly corresponds Jean's translation in ll.19057-8:

> par nature estes corrumpable,
> par ma volanté pardurable,

The next two lines of Jean's text are particularly interesting. For Chalcidius goes on: 'omne siquidem quod junctum est natura dissolubile ...' (everything which is joined together [or: made up of parts] can by its nature be dissolved); and this is rendered by Jean as

> car ja riens n'iert fet par Nature,
> .....
> qui ne faille en quelque seson. (19059-61)

(for nothing was [ever] made by Nature ... which does not come to naught sooner or later). So, either by a slight mistranslation (taking natura as an ablative depending on junctum) or - more probably - by a sleight of hand, Nature is born full grown into the Platonic text where she takes over from the lesser gods as maker of all that is mortal. At the same time, Jean keeps

the stress on the original point made here, namely, the (potential) mortality of the gods [and Nature]. The pun, 'by nature', 'by Nature', if it is deliberate, serves to underline that Nature, far from being permanence and life is 'by nature' corruptibility. [39] It seems that the whole purpose of the quotation is to invest Nature with the identity of these platonic gods whom she supplants as the amusing enjambement of II.19034-5 quoted above playfully suggests. As for the ostensible purpose for which Nature uses her 'authority', to show that her works are all perishable, her quotation seems not wholly apposite since the passage insists largely on the (potential) mortality of the gods themselves. On the whole the equation with these strange gods who are the stars does not add anything new to our understanding of her. The belief both Platonic and Aristotelian that they were endowed with intelligence was rejected by medieval thinkers. Their role in the Timaeus is not so much a link with the demiurge as a buffer between the divine and the perishable material world. The stress Nature puts on mortality and corruption if anything reinforces the deterministic aspect of her rule: the soul of man it does not lie within the gods' or her power to make. It is noteworthy that this whole Platonic passage comes just after Nature has spoken like the anima mundi, the spirit of love and harmony at work in the macrocosm and the microcosm alike. The choice of her 'text' is most unfortunate in spite of the great 'name' if it is designed to support her cosmic pretensions.

Presently she returns to this theme and this time speaks exactly like Alain's Natura when she complains of man's moral vices seen as an affront to Nature, now seen, it seems, as moral law giver no less than as author of fertility (II.19192 ff.). This rather inappropriate bow to the De Planctu is, however, preceded by an amusing self-depreciating anti-feminist outburst on Nature's part which may be designed to prepare us for this excursion into foreign territory (19188-90), for after describing the punishment that awaits sinful man in (pagan) hell, she decides to let God punish him for those vices which are, after all, in his department, and concentrate entirely on men's sins against her as procreator, as generative force (II.19293 ff.). For unlike Alain's Natura, the only evil she knows is primaeval chaos. The closeness to the model here, makes the difference of emphasis all the more startling. Whereas Alain's Natura excommunicates from 'the harmonious assembly of the things of Nature' and 'separates from the kiss of heavenly love' all those who are steeped in all manner of vices which include the perversion of the lawful course of love, [40] Nature here excommunicates those who fail to follow the dictates of fruitful love. In this respect Nature's command does not seem at variance with the De Planctu. Venus and Amor or Cupid are her friends in both, though it is doubtful whether the merry Venus who greets Genius on his arrival at the army of Amor is the one married to Hymen. A consideration of the context reveals the full extent of the

difference between these two superficially similar pronouncements. Alain's praise of fruitful marriage may well have been directed against the Cathars (against whom he also wrote in his Contra haereticos), their 'unnatural' condemnation of marriage and reproduction and their reputed preference, in the case of those who could not abstain, for sexual perversion. Jean de Meun's Nature speaks out against those who neglect her 'work'. What evidence has she that her work is being so neglected ? As Christine de Pisan was to say later with her unerring common sense, there is no sign that mankind is giving up the work of generation'. [41] Although Genius does refer to the question of clerical celibacy debated at the time (of which more later), Nature's intervention in the narrative of the Roman is in response to Amor's cry for help. Her role is to precipitate by a philosophical and moral justification what Venus will precipitate by means of her fiery dart, namely, the successful picking of the rose by the young lover. The shock of this realisation as we come down from the philosophical heights of Nature's discourse to the amorous psychomachia which it was all in aid of is as startling as it is funny. But it is not inconsistent for throughout the discourse Nature defines herself as a determined force which must of necessity work for her survival. The moral life of man lies outside her ken. She is amoral: provided they serve her purpose she'll take all on board, gatherers of rose buds, Faus Semblant (if she must) perhaps even Hymen if she knew about him. For she is also ignorant or perhaps blind: she gives Amor (whom she no doubt defines with Andreas Capellanus and Raison as simple sexual desire) [42] the benefit of every doubt; she is sure he works for her (19310) in spite of his dubious alliance with Faus Semblant and has none of the reservations about him of Alain's Natura. Of course she is right on her own terms, for it matters little to her whether the Amor whom the young lover serves is in fact Jocus, if, as has been suggested, lines 21699-700 are to be interpreted to mean that a child is conceived.

Let us now turn to Genius, Nature's priest who assists her in her office of renewing the species in the De Planctu [43] (although he seems also to have other functions according to the difficult passage of prose ix), Nature's other self, the god of generation. Like Natura he is invested by Alain with jurisdiction over the moral life of man and excommunicates the wicked. The same narrowing occurs in Jean de Meun as in the case of Nature: though Genius mentions the other vices Nature complained of, he dismisses them 'in order not to weary his public' ! : (19847-52) and concentrates on the crime of 'not using the tools' fashioned by God Himself and by which 'Nature est soutenue'; and he goes on to promise paradise to those who work 'loyally' at the works of nature, who 'plough' tirelessly to repair their lineage.

In Genius, Nature is even more precisely defined, as sexual instinct.

For in a sense Genius, if he is, say, the male sexual appetite or even perhaps, as suggested earlier (p.82) the personification of the genitals whose praise he takes up as Raison had done earlier [44] is simply a statement about an observable fact of nature: that man is endowed with sexual appetite which urges him to 'plough'. Thus, he could be said to represent the point of view of the 'genii' in this debate.

Yet Genius, narrowly defined as he may be, is a priest, a theologian, one who speaks with spiritual authority; and it is a choice sermon that he preaches to the barons of Love's army: use your tools tirelessly and not only will the species live for ever but you will be saved, for you will have obeyed Nature who is God's servant and the instrument of His will (19867-76). Sexual indulgence unbridled, lust would seem to become man's passport to paradise.

How has Jean de Meun arrived at this very plausible piece of moral subversion ? In this debate on love three positions are being confronted.

1. The 'spiritual' or manichean position of the clerk-philosopher for whom sex, women and marriage are bad, being incompatible with man's higher calling, and therefore best left alone. This is the position rehearsed by Guillaume de Lorris's Raison and the anti-feminist passages sprinkled throughout the Roman. It is the position of Abelard and even Heloise. For although the anti-marriage arguments Heloise produces from the clerical collection are not directed against sexual love, yet she clearly saw normal fruitful domesticity as spelling the end of Abelard as a philosopher and churchman. [45] Abelard not only agreed with her implicitly by keeping the marriage secret but describes his love as lust in his Historia. [46]

2. On the other hand, there is the renewed interest in the physical world and the belief in its intrinsic value, derived from meditating on the Timaeus and a study of Aristotle's 'natural books'. The focusing of attention on the creation myth in particular and its Christian interpretations gave rise to an optimistic view of sexuality as ordained by providence and therefore both necessary and good. This is the view of Christian Aristotelians like Thomas Aquinas, or 'Platonists' like Alain de Lille. Although Aquinas replies to Genius' argument against clerical celibacy by distinguishing between the good of the individual and the good of the species [or of Nature ?], his attitude is nevertheless entirely positive and he gives a higher place to pleasure in sex than either Jean de Meun's Raison or Alain de Lille. [47] As for Alain, he not only proclaims ordered, fruitful sexuality to have its rightful place in the moral life of man, but even seems to use it as a symbol of all virtues, of the right use of Nature's gifts to man. [48]

3. At the other end of the spectrum we have the position of Nature and Genius in the Roman. As we saw, both are taken over from the De Planctu, divested of their moral role and reduced to the force of instinct. Though they speak with the moral authority of their prototypes, though they are clothed with the robe of Plato and the garment of a priest, they cannot speak of 'rightful' or 'ordered' use of instinct for these are moral categories. As in Alain, 'rightful' use of sexuality had become the epitome of the moral life, so 'use' (and as Genius gets carried away 'abuse' - though never perversion) becomes in the mouth of Genius the sine qua non of moral goodness'.

This parody of Alain's message, which forms the basis of Genius' subversive sermon, was made plausible by the Platonic framework of thought in which Nature had placed her discourse, and which was grounded in the notion of an all pervasive harmony at work both in the nature of the cosmos and the nature of man. And so, Alain's Natura in so far as she is a conflation of the Lucretian Venus and the anima mundi is exploded in this parody. Nor is Alain the only culprit. The deception practised by Nature and Genius was made possible by the ambiguities attached to the notion of Nature by many a commentator of the Timaeus.

Guillaume de Conches, we saw, defines Nature strictly in terms of the 'opus naturae' as the process of reproduction: the order of Nature by which God governs the world which is that like should be born of like.[49] Elsewhere a broader definition of 'Nature' emerges, both in Guillaume de Conches and other twelfth-century commentators when they write on the world soul as well as the famous passage of Boethius' Consolation 'O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas' (III, m.9). The world soul is defined as the nature of things, the 'natural vigour' in things by which some have the discernment of angels, others the discernment, feelings and rationality proper to men, others the irrational feelings of animals, others the growth and feeling of plants and trees, and others the static being of stones.[50] This 'Nature' Guillaume de Conches equated with the divine love and concord of Boethius and even tried to identify with the Holy Spirit, though he later gave up this theory.[51] Here the commentators are much closer to Alain's Natura and the Nature of Jean de Meun as she very occasionally shows herself when she claims to have made man in God's image (ll.18995-6) or to have endowed him with 'naturelle franchise' (l. 18843).

But on the whole, the commentators on the Timaeus seem to have been very confused about this 'natural order', a confusion which is alarming if, as they saw it, it was to be the pattern and exemplar of moral order. So, for example, an anonymous commentator of the De Trinitate relates the various opinions current in the twelfth century regarding the order by which God rules the world: 'which some call natural law, others nature, others the

world soul, others natural justice. And, indeed, some call it fate, others the Fates, others the intelligence of God. [52]

This confusion is reflected in Nature's discourse and used by her and Genius for subversive purposes. Though there is, of course, a profound and obvious connection between the Creator, Providence and the 'opus naturae' which gives the speech of Genius some undeniable validity, it is the equation of the christianized anima mundi ('ille creatoris amor eternus quo cuncta creavit et cuncta concorditer regit ea concordia que, si deficiat, statim mundi machinam dissolvet')[53] with, not only the principle of fertility, but its instrument, sexual instinct, which constitutes the reductio ad absurdum of these neo-platonic speculations about nature which the message of Genius is.

Moreover, it is in the light of the newly-rediscovered thinking of Aristotle on nature that the 'Platonic' synthesis is exploded. For both Nature and Genius - and the fusion is typical of the period - are Aristotelians. Nature we saw is an enthusiastic follower of his rational scientific thought as well as being tinged with the determinism of some thirteenth-century Aristotelians. As for Genius, his views on sexuality are those of the thinkers condemned by Tempier in 1277 for a number of propositions such as n.168 ('Quod continentia non est essentialiter virtus'.'), or n.183 which states that fornication between unmarried people is not a sin. [54] And Genius takes up specifically the argument, evidently still current in Jean de Meun's day, about the difficulty of reconciling the Christian injunction to perfect abstinence with the will of God for the continuation of the species, a difficulty which Thomas Aquinas dealt with but evidently not to Genius's and possibly Jean de Meun's satisfaction. For while Aquinas argues quite reasonably that if some people replenish the earth while others dedicate their lives to God in the celibate life, God's will is respected as far as the species is concerned, Jean de Meun drives the argument into an impasse by pointing out that the religious life being more pleasing to God, God must therefore will it for everyone'. [55] And he ends the argument with a challenge to the 'divines' to find an answer to that one:

> Qui voudra respondre respoigne
> je ne sai plus de la besoigne.
> Viegnent devin qui en devinent
> qui de ce deviner ne finent. [56]

Now to challenge the supreme value of the monastic ideal is one thing, but to advocate general hedonism is quite another. This Genius then proceeds to do. To introduce the theme (that it is both imperative and meritorious to use Nature's 'tools') Genius cites the Aristotelian commonplace that 'nature does nothing in vain' ('n'onques ne fist riens por noiant'(l.19491).

More precisely translated, Aristotle says that 'nature does everything for the sake of something' or 'for the sake of ends', that movement in nature is not random, but is organised in a determined direction. As Nature does throughout, Genius, by implication, makes of this scientific statement based on observation, a moral statement on Natural Law: the Purposes of Nature must not be thwarted, in this case by misuse or non-use of the sexual organs. In this he is quite un-Aristotelian, for Aristotle seems to guard against the dangers of this kind of language which suggest that nature is a deliberating intelligence or a craftsman 'fashioning' things rather than a force within the material or the craft itself. [57]

However, this merely serves as an introduction to the main point that man's highest good, his salvation even, lies in reproduction, in other words that, according to Natural Law, the individual exists for the sake of the species. The immoral consequences Genius draws from this so-called Aristotelian principle seem similar to those condemned in 1277, as we saw. [58]

That Genius is a burlesque figure of fun no longer needs to be demonstrated at length. Nor, consequently, can his message be taken seriously as putting forward Jean de Meun's views. For this latter-day Aristotle is a paradoxical persona, Genius-the-priest, as well as a self-confessed fake. Both god of generation and professional celibate, he leaves off his sacerdotal garments to fly all the faster to the army of Love, there to be invested with Love's insignia. The satire here as elsewhere in the Roman is double edged and neither as a priest nor as an Aristotelian can he be taken at face value. As a philosophical statement, his eulogy of ceaseless sexual activity as a moral imperative is suspect, since this bogus theologian is the personification of the 'twin genii'. As a spiritual teacher he is a fraud as ll.19855-66 testify:

> Pansez de mener bone vie,
> aut chascuns anbracier s'amie,
> et son ami chascune anbrace
> et bese et festoie et solace.
> Se leaumant vos antr'amez,
> ja n'an devroiz estre blamez.
> Et quant assez avrez joué
> si con je vos ai ci loué,
> pansez de vos bien confessier,
> por bien fere et por mal lessier,
> et reclamez le dieu celestre
> que Nature reclaime a mestre. [59]

The return to a more 'courtly' tone after the long harangue admonishing the barons to plough frantically for lineage's sake, the ambiguous use of

'loyalty' by which he understands something far from courtly, the tacit acknowledgement of orthodox morality which of course does cause some difficulty, but nothing that 'confession' and a return to 'good' works (of Nature?) and a prayer to Nature, God's servant cannot 'fix'. Then, after an assurance that his words, like those of Wisdom, are more precious than jewels, [60] he launches into the long description of a convincingly spiritual paradise (for at many points it seems more than a paradise of the perenneity of Nature or species). And finally, after a general moral appeal on the model of the De Planctu (ll. 20607 ff.), he ends his speech by setting fire to the castle of Jalousie with his candle while the barons, who had never heard such a good sermon, all cry 'amen' and proceed to help with the assault on the rose.

In spite of inconsistencies, I do not think this sermon could have been understood as other than burlesque. The modern parallel which springs to mind is the subversive sermon preached by a bogus preacher from Rome to the parishioners of Ambert in Jules Romain's Les Copains. [61] The text is 'love one another' and 'increase and multiply' and similar exhortations to 'use the tools' in accordance with God's will follow and the sermon ends with a mass orgy in church!

So, to summarise: the attempt on the part of some medieval Platonists to give a more 'scientific' definition of cosmic love or harmony is ridiculed by adopting the narrowest of these definitions whilst conducting the argument in terms of some broader view. This would seem to be the philosophical counterpart of the prank Andreas Capellanus plays on the literary plane. He too, having defined love as sexual instinct, then develops 'courtly' themes based on a more sublimated vision, thus exploding (or, as Denomy thought propounding) the 'heresy of courtly love'. [62] So, for Jean de Meun, Nature, while no doubt God's servant, is neither law-giver nor mistress for man. If he is tarred it is with the same Aristotelian brush as Albert the Great or Thomas Aquinas. Observation of the working of nature can lead the mystical man to a belief in the existence of God and the scientific man to an understanding and even a control of natural forces, but it cannot teach man how he should behave.

LUCIE POLAK
BIRKBECK COLLEGE, LONDON

## FOOTNOTES

1. Langlois, E., Origines et sources du Roman de la Rose, Paris, 1890.
2. Paré, G., Le Roman de la Rose et la scolastique courtoise, Paris and Ottawa, 1941, Publ. de L'Institut d'Etudes médiévales d'Ottawa.
3. Cf. Paré, pp.163-4, 202.
4. de Lille, Alain, De Planctu Naturae, ed. T. Wright in Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets of the Twelfth Century, London, 1872, Vol.2. The references are to the translation by D.M. Moffat, Archon Books, Shoe String Press, Hamden, Conn., 1972; tr. Moffat, pp.43-45.
5. Silvestris, B., De mundi universitate, ed. C.S. Barach and J. Wrobel, Innsbruck, 1876, 2.14, II.157-64, p.70; the passage is quoted in W. Wetherbee, Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century, Princeton, 1972, pp.181-2.
6. See Wetherbee, pp.182-3.
7. Tr. Moffat, pp.29-31.
8. ibid., pp.32-33.
9. Le Roman de la Rose, II. 15861-15974. The edition used is that by F. Lecoy, C.F.M.A., Paris, 3 vols., 1965-70, the translation is by C. Dahlberg, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1971.
10. Roman, II. 15985 ff.
11. Parent, J.M., La doctrine de la création dans l'école de Chartres, Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales d'Ottawa viii, Paris and Ottawa, 1938, pp.147-8.
('It should be known that everything is either the work of the creator or the work of nature or the work of the artist imitating nature. The work of the creator is the first creation without any pre-existing matter ... The work of nature is that like should be born of like, from a seed or an embryo, because nature is a force within things producing like from like. The work of the artist is the work of man ... the work of the creator endures in perpetuity, being incapable of dissolution ... the work of nature, although ceasing to exist in itself, yet endures in the seed. And the work of the artist imitating nature neither endures in itself nor does it bring forth anything.')
12. Roman, II. 20787-21154.
13. Tr. Moffat, p.85.
14. ibid., p.93.

15. See Parent, pp.44-58; Courcelle, P., 'Etude critique sur les commentaires de la Consolation de Boèce,' Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge, 1939, Vol.XII, pp. 78ff.

16. Roman, ll.16699-16706. 'When that most fair God who abounds in beauty created the world of beauty whose fair form, pondered upon forever in eternity, He carried within His thought before it ever existed outside. He took His exemplar and whatever was necessary from his thought, ...'

17. See Parent, pp.48-50.

18. For the medieval commentators generally, see Parent, pp.95-106; the reference to Chalcidius' commentary is on pp.100-101.

19. Coppleston, F.C., Aquinas, Penguin Books, 1955, p.138.

20. Parent, p.125.

21. Roman, ll.16707-16712. 'for if He had wished to seek elsewhere, He would have found neither heaven nor earth nor anything with which He might help Himself, since nothing existed outside. He in whom there can be no lack made everything spring from nothing.'

22. Roman, ll.16717-16722. 'In the beginning He created only a mass that was in confusion, without order or distinction, and then divided it into parts that afterward were not split up.'

23. Parent: cf. pp.129, 125, 132.

24. S.T. I, Q. 66, art. i.

25. 'nothing ever moved Him to do so except His own sweet-tempered will, broad, courteous, free of envy, the fountain of all life;'

26. de Conches, Guillaume, Glosae Super Platonem, ed. E. Jeanneau, Paris, 1965, XLIX, p.117. 'As God made everything by his will alone, if anyone says that His will is the origin of things, I agree; nor is it a contradiction [to say] that both divine will and divine goodness are the cause of [all] things.'

27. Tr. Moffat, pp.29-30.

28. For a recent discussion of the golden chain see Lyons, F., 'Some notes on the Roman de la Rose,' in Studies in medieval literature and language in memory of F. Whitehead, Manchester U.P., Manchester, 1973, pp.201-203.

29. Parent, p.93.

30. See pp.90 ff.

31. T. Gregory, Platonismo medievale, Inst. Storico Italiano per il medio evo, studi storici, fas. 26-27, pp.59-73.

32. The notion of Nature as both ruler of the universe and moral law giver found in Boethius as well as in the twelfth-century Platonists is found early in Greek thought and even in ancient Mesopatamia. Some refs. are listed in Piehler, P., The visionary landscape, London, 1971, p.54, n.9.

33. This was a widely held belief among medieval Aristotelians. See Thorndike, L., A History of Magic and Experimental Science, vol.2, London, 1923, p.253 (Aristotle); pp.252-3 (Albert the Great); p.670 (Roger Bacon), etc.

34. Roman, II.19475-19490: 'By the authority of Nature, who has the care of the whole world, as vicar and constable of the eternal emperor, who sits in the sovereign tower of the noble city of the world, of which he made Nature the minister; Nature who administers all good things through the influence of the stars, for they ordain everything according to the imperial justice that Nature executes; Nature, who has given birth to all things since this world came into being, who gives them their allotted time for growth and increase, ...'

35. A possibility envisaged by Ptolemy as quoted by Albert the Great. See Thorndike, vol.2, p.585.

36. Tr. Moffat, pp.35-36.

37. Gregory, p.127.

38. ibid., pp.138-141.

39. Chalcidius, Commentarius in Timaeum Platonis, ed. J.H. Waszink, London, 1962, p.35.

40. Tr. Moffat, p.94.

41. Ward, C.F., The Epistles of the Romance of the Rose and other Documents in the Debate, University of Chicago Press, 1911, document iv.

42. Roman, II.4347-54; Andreas Capellanus, De amore, ed. E. Trojel, Munich, 1964, pp.3, 7.

43. Tr. Moffat, p.91. For two important discussions of the changing role and significance of Genius, see Tuve, R., Allegorical Imagery, Princeton, 1966, pp.269 ff., and Baker, D.N., 'The priesthood of Genius: a study of the Medieval tradition,' Speculum 51, 1976, pp.277-91.

44. Roman, II. 19547 ff.; cf. II.7076 ff.

45. Abelard, Historia Calamitatum, ed. J.T.Muckle, Medieval Studies vol.xii, 1950, pp.185-9.

46. See R.W. Southern's pertinent remarks on Abelard and on the absence of a coherent ethic for the secular life in marriage as well as other spheres, in Medieval Humanism, Oxford, 1970, pp.94-5.

47. Contra Gentiles lib. iii, cap. cxxxvi-cxxxvii; see Paré, p.163.

48. 'Not so optimistic however is Alain's view of human sexuality in the Anticlaudianus, it seems, for the new man, the virtuous man whom Nature makes with the help of God and the virtues would appear to indulge in the very sin that Nature and Genius complain of for 'he imitates in his discipline the time of life of an old man ... declines the sweet poison of Venus ... Dione (is) conquered by flight'.' [Alain de Lille, Anticlaudiuanus, ed. R. Bossuat, Paris, 1955, bk. vii, ll.96 ff., pp.159-60.]

49. Parent, pp.128, 131, 147.

50. An anonymous gloss quoted by Gregory, p.127; cf. Guillaume de Conches' gloss on Boethius, Gregory, p.127, n.1.

51. Parent, p.75; Gregory pp.122 ff., esp. 126-9.

52. See Gregory, p.59, n.2.

53. Anonymous gloss on Timaeus, Bib. Nat. MS. Lat. 8624, fol. 71 r, quoted by Gregory, p.126; cf. Boethius, Consolation, I m.5, II m.8 etc.

54. Denifle, H. and Chatelain, A., Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis, Bruxelles, 1964, Vol.I, p.553 (quoted in Lecoy's edition of the Roman de la Rose, vol.3, p.180).

55. The identical argument was already known to Aquinas. See note 47 above and Paré, pp.152-3.

56. Roman, ll.19595-8. Dahlberg's translation of the last two lines is wrong: 'Let him reply who wants to; I know nothing more of the matter. May they who divine it become divine and not cease their divining.' The repetition of divin and deviner is probably intended as a pun on the various meanings of deviner and cognate words. Deviner can mean 'to teach', 'to tell', but also 'to prophecy', 'prognosticate', and 'mislead'. The translation for the end of the quotation should read: 'Let divines (theologians) come, who tell (or prognosticate) about it and who do so endlessly.'

57. For references and a discussion of this point, see De Part. Anim. I, 641 b, ll. 10 ff. and the notes of the translation by D.M. Balme, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972, pp. 93 ff.

58. Paré, for example, does not question that this is an Aristotelian principle (see pp.149, 164). Aristotle does not say anything of the sort, even for animals, but his theory of the preservation of the species appears to have been interpretated in this way by some commentators whose ideas Genius propounds. The Nature we see in her forge is in fact much closer to the spirit of Aristotle's theory. (See De Part. Anim., tr. Balme, pp.96-7.)

59. 'Think of leading a good life; let each man embrace his sweetheart and each woman her lover and kiss and feast and comfort him. If you love each other loyally you should never be blamed for doing so. And when you have played enough, as I have recommended here, think of confessing yourselves well, in order to do good and avoid evil, and call upon the heavenly God whom Nature calls her master.'

60. II.19893-5; cf. Wisdom vii, 8-9, Prov. iii, 14-15; Job xxviii, 15-19, etc.

61. Romain, Jules, Les Copains, Gallimard, 1922, pp.176-198.

62. Denomy, A.J., The Heresy of Courtly Love, New York, 1947.