

# The Paradoxes of Fortune in the Romance of the Rose

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## I. The evolution of the goddess of Fortune

In order to understand the role of Fortune in the Romance of the Rose it is necessary to understand the origins of the pagan Fortune, possible reasons for her development and the personal attributes associated with her that appear in Roman literature and continue through the literature of the Middle Ages.

The history of Fortuna in Rome had an early beginning. As early as 167 B.C. there is evidence of victory sacrifices made to Fortune, but it was at the beginning of the Empire that Fortuna enjoyed her greatest popularity. So her cult was strongest at the time of Rome's greatest vigor. It will be shown time and time again that men turn to Fortune in times of greatest strength and in times of greatest weakness so that her beginning is consistent with her tradition as it develops into the Middle Ages.

Her specific origin is unknown, although many possibilities have been suggested. Some evidence points to her origin as a moon-goddess or sun-goddess. Both of these roles relate to cyclical events, to the flux of time and to some of the basic paradoxes surrounding Fortune that will be discussed later. It might also be of interest to point out here that the sun was often represented throughout mythology as a wheel. Fortuna may also be a relative of Isis, the corn goddess who gives "birth to the fruits of the earth."<sup>1</sup> She also may have derived from a goddess of horticulture, of women, of childbirth or of a protecting goddess. In any case,

the idea is that she originally bestowed--bestowed anything. She was a creative goddess and thus it was easy to attribute to Fortuna what were commonly accepted as feminine traits such as inconstancy and capriciousness. Actually the origin of the idea of fickleness is unknown. It may have been Greed influence. Howard Patch simply suggests that "Fortuna found a place in Rome because the Romans already had an idea equivalent to this personification."<sup>2</sup> However, the tradition of Fortuna that developed in Rome and the literary descriptions of the goddess changed little throughout the Middle Ages.

Some of the same expressions used in ancient Rome can be traced as far as the literature and art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. For example, Fortune is often described as being blind, as standing unsteadily on a globe, as remaining in no one place for long. Her face is sometimes joyful, sometimes bitter. She is stubborn and subject to envy. She plays games and men are the figures in the games. She is a frail, untrustworthy acquaintance. The most common literary themes are identical to those used by Alanus de Insulis, Boethius and Jean de Meun. It was said that she bestowed things with a capricious nature. The paradoxical theme that adversity was most advantageous and good fortune was least advantageous was very popular. For example, it is adversity that exposes our true friends. Likewise those who are most exalted must soon fall and those who wallow under the wheel will soon be elevated. This also implies an element of hope in that he who is at the bottom will certainly have to rise to the top by the nature of the movement of the wheel. (The "wheel" is merely a figure of speech here since the Roman concept of Fortune was not that of a lady turning a wheel but of the goddess perched on an immovable globe.) Fortune also bestows gifts on the poor and punishes the rich. Thus one can easily project this well-established tradition of the pagan

Fortuna into the Middle Ages. The themes do not change although some of the symbols associated with her do change.

## II. Symbols associated with Fortune in the Romance of the Rose

As Fortune makes her transition into the Middle Ages and is assimilated by the church, the changes which occur are mainly the result of the writings of Boethius and Alanus de Insulis. Boethius offers the idea of a Wheel of Fortune which Fortune spins at random to determine how and to whom she will offer worldly treasures. Alanus offers a description of the dwelling place of Fortune. Both of these symbols are borrowed by Jean de Meun and they are extremely important in establishing Fortune's paradoxical nature in the Romance of the Rose.

First of all, to consider the Wheel of Fortune one must consider the possibilities of the wheel or the circle as a symbol. The ancient goddess Fortuna was usually represented, not with a wheel, but, as mentioned above, perched precariously on an immovable globe to show her inconstancy. The globe seemed to have no meaning other than that is was difficult to maintain one's balance when standing on a globe. In the Middle Ages however, the idea of the wheel could be related to medieval man's conception of the cosmos. According to Ptolemy the universe was geocentric. The earth was surrounded by seven concentric spheres. As each sphere moved, it communicated its motion to the sphere contiguous to it. It is God, of course, who directs the movement. A flat earth lies in the center with Heaven above and a conical Hell which descends downward from earth. Nature in the Romance of the Rose, in fact, speaks of the spherical sky "qui tourjorz tourne san soi feindre" (16772).<sup>3</sup> In an analagous hypothetical cross-section, one can see Fortune directing the movement of the wheel that also never stops. In

the upper region is good fortune. In the lower region is bad fortune. And just as Fortune causes Regno to be crushed under the wheel for his sin of pride, so does God condemn those such as Lucifer to Hell for the self-same sin. The sin of pride and the fall from glory is mentioned on several occasions in reference to Fortune. For instance Reason uses Nero as an example of the workings of Fortune and her wheel:

Mes ses orguiez, sa felonie  
si forment l'orent envaï  
que de si haut si bas chaï  
con tu m'as oï raconter;  
tant l'ot fet Fortune monter,  
qui tant le fist enprés descendre,  
con tu peuz oïr et entendre.

(6452-6458)

Lucifer, the fallen angel, and Nero both get their just rewards, a situation that is not always consistent with the capricious workings of Fortune. However, the example set by Nero and the analogy to Lucifer both serve the didactic goal of the Romance of the Rose.

The wheel also represents any cyclical process: the passage of a day, of a lunar month, of a lifetime, of a year and its seasons. The Wheel of Fortune was, in fact, usually divided into four sections by the spokes leading to each one of the principal figures on the wheel. These sections suggest the four seasons or the cardinal points. It is Nature in the Romance of the Rose who constantly reiterates the cyclical character of her own works in terms of the seasons and in terms of the life cycles of various species. It is the poet himself, however, who first describes Nature's means of thwarting Death. The constant procreation of man makes it impossible for Death ever to have dominion over all of mankind:



quant toutes les cuide estreper,  
nes peut ensamble conceper;  
quar, quant l'une par deça hape,  
l'autre par dela li eschape;  
car, quant ele a tué le pere,  
remaid il filz ou fille ou mere . . .  
(15881-15886)

The poet goes on to talk about the Phoenix as representative of all creatures. The cycle of the Phoenix is perhaps the prime example of Nature's workings in the universe. It represents the life cycle of a single person, of mankind in general, of all the lower animals and it even hints of church doctrine which taught that ashes return to ashes, dust to dust. This description of the struggle between the Phoenix and Death in the Romance of the Rose is beautifully done and the rhyme itself imitates the cyclical process:

si que, se Mort phenix deveure,  
phenix toutevois vis demeure.  
S'el an avoit .m. devourez,  
si seroit phenix demourez.  
(15961-15964)

The movement of the moon and stars was also a very real phenomenon for medieval man. He was very aware of a circular movement even if he did have things a little backwards. The evolution from new moon to full moon and back again was extremely important to him. The eclipse of the moon, on the other hand, was a real threat to his established order and the number of superstitions that surround the event reinforces the idea that this must have been a real trauma for him. Fortune is often connected with the workings of the moon and especially with its apparent dual nature. These references are probably only coincidental with her possible origin as a moon goddess. However, in

Nature's speech she speaks at length about the moon and nearly any of the descriptive passages could just as easily be applied to Fortune:

mes c'est par sa nature double  
qu'el pert par leus espesse et trouble:  
d'une part luit, d'autre part cesse  
(16809-16811)

This "double nature" on the part of Fortune or the moon is not static, of course, but occurs in both cases as a result of the cyclical movement. Fortune's nature is no longer ambiguous when her wheel ceases to revolve. C. G. Jung has suggested that primitive man tended to see phenomena around him in terms of cycles. I think that medieval man also had not yet developed the idea of, or rather the feeling for, progressive time beyond the concept of cycle. He, too, tended to see everyday events in terms of a cycle whether it was something as simple as the planting and harvesting of crops or something as incomprehensible to him as his own fate.

The possibilities of the significance of the wheel for medieval man are infinite, but what is more important to the present discussion is the expression of the basic paradoxes of Fortune inherent in the wheel and its movement. The wheel is always changing and ever the same. As Boethius says of Fortune, "In the very act of changing she has preserved her own kind of constancy towards you."<sup>4</sup> The wheel has no beginning and no end. It moves and it does not move, that is, it spins but it makes no linear progress. The least advantageous and vice versa. Thus the workings of the wheel of Dame Fortune are representative of the lady's paradoxical and capricious nature which will be important later in determining her role in the Romance of the Rose.

As has already been stated, the description of

the dwelling place of Fortune was no more original with Jean de Meun than was the Wheel of Fortune. And again, the Isle of Fortune will serve primarily to reinforce the nature of Fortune and her workings in the universe. But it is interesting to note that the Isle of Fortune as described by Jean de Meun falls in line with an ancient tradition of what Howard Patch calls description of "the other world."<sup>5</sup> The accounts date as far back as ancient oriental literature. In the descriptions of other-world geography, there is usually a water barrier of some kind. If there is a building, it usually stands in a garden or on a mountain. There are usually many rivers, often of opposing aspects. This place is usually a fantasy, a mysterious country to which the author longs to go. In the case of Fortune, however, the description causes ambiguous feelings. One longs for the side of good Fortune but is repulsed by the side of bad Fortune. Most of the elements found in the Romance of the Rose were drawn from Alanus' Anticlaudianus, but there are other descriptions that resemble the ambiguous isle. In the Epithalamium of Claudian, from whom Alanus may have drawn his material, is the following description of the home of Venus: "a craggy mountain . . . unapproachable by human foot . . . Here spring two fountains, the one of sweet water, the other of bitter, honey is mingled with the first, poison with the second, and in these streams 'tis said that Cupid dips his arrows."<sup>6</sup> The point about Cupid is interesting to note here, since in the Romance of the Rose the Dieu d'Amour has two sets of arrows and two bows, one bow of bitter wood, the other of sweet wood. One set of arrows is made of gold, the other of iron. It is easily possible that the black arrows have been dipped in the poisonous river of Fortune. It will later be shown, in fact, that Fortune bears many resemblances to love and to those who advocate carnal love.

The paradoxes of the ambiguous Isle of Fortune are evident: a forest where some trees bear fruit and others are barren; two streams, one honeylike, the other sulphurous, flow into each other; precariously balanced on a hilltop is a palace, one half of which glitters with gold and precious stones while the other half lies in ruin. And in the tradition of Alanus, Fortune herself is found within, subject to her own caprice. Unlike the Wheel of Fortune which represents the inconstancy of prosperity, the Isle represents in a very visual manner the extremes of Fortune's influence.

The description of the Isle of Fortune in the Romance of the Rose is strangely reminiscent of the Jardin de Delices where the dreamer first entered to find Deduit. Genius points this out in his discourse on the shepherd's park. The poet himself has called the fountain the "miroërs perilleus" (1569) in recounting the story of Narcissus. The fountain was so clear and pure that it reflected perfectly Narcissus' image and he died as a result of falling in love with his own image. Genius goes on to describe the waters in the Jardin de Delices:

El sort, ce dit il, a grantz ondes  
par deus doiz creuses et parfondes;  
(20395-20396)

The fact that there are two conduits shows a resemblance to the two rivers in the Isle of Fortune. He also points out that the crystals reflect only half the garden. The lover sees only one side of the garden at a time, just as he sees only one side of Fortune at a time. The carbuncle in Nature's garden reflects everything contained within the park. Thus, the paradoxes of Fortune's Isle are extremely important not only in clarifying the nature of Fortune herself, but the nature of the kind of love that Fortune deals in.

### III. The role of Fortune in the Romance of the Rose

In order to define the role of Fortune in the quest for the Rose, it might be well to define her role in terms of allegory in general. Angus Fletcher suggests that allegory, in the simplest terms "says one thing and means another . . . Allegory is the deceptive, subversive figure of Faux Semblant."<sup>7</sup> Allegory is then, too, the very mode of Fortune herself. She smiles sweetly as she spins the fortunate one to the bottom of her wheel. She elevates the unfortunate to a position of power and says that he is the most unfortunate of all.

There is, in fact, a strong resemblance between Fortune and Faux Semblant. The actions of Faux Semblant are calculated, unlike the capricious movement of Fortune's wheel; nevertheless, the end result of both is much the same. In both cases one is confronted with a dual nature; both Faux Semblant and Fortune promise one thing but quickly do another. Faux Semblant speaks of his constantly changing nature:

Trop sé bien mes habiz changier,  
prendre l'un et l'autre estrangier.  
Or sui chevaliers, or sui moines,  
or sui prelaz, or sui chanoines,  
or sui clers, autre heure sui prestres,  
or sui deciples, or sui mestres . . .

(11157-11162)

One could easily compare this description to Reason's description of Fortune on her Isle where, subject to her own caprice, she is first rich and then poor; she lives first in the golden portion of her home, then in the broken-down portion under a straw roof. She disguises herself as well as Faux Semblant so that she is seldom recognized:

Fortune a la sa mansion,  
si se tret en la part doree  
de sa meson et la sejourne:  
lors pare son cors et atorne,  
et se vest, comme une reïne,

(6088-6093)

Lors va çoupant et jus se boute  
ausinc con s'el n'i veïst goute;  
et quant iluec se voit cheüe,  
sa chiere et son habit remue,  
et si se desnue et desrobe  
qu'el est orfeline de robe  
et semble qu'el n'ait riens vaillant . . .

(6119-6125)

Faux Semblant seems to keep the same kind of company as Fortune. Fortune can appeal only to those who seek power and glory through material wealth. Those who rely on their own personal worth have no dealings with Fortune. Likewise, Faux Semblant seeks out those who exploit the material and pursue the worldly:

Je mains avec les orgueilleux,  
les veziez, les arteilleus,  
qui mondaines honeurs covoitent  
et les granz besoignes exploitent,  
et vont traçant les granz pitances  
et porchant les acointances  
des puissanz homes et les sivent ;

(11007-11013)

Although Faux Semblant's major fole is that of religious hypocrite he also represents an aspect of love. He represents those who feign love in order to gain profit whether that profit is material or otherwise. It is at this point that Fortune, Faux Semblant and the Lover all come together. Love to gain profit or profit to gain love is the specific

kind of personal gain in mind. The whole idea of wealth and carnal love, as will be discussed later, is essential to the understanding of the quest for the Rose. Both carnal love and desire for wealth, of course, fall under Fortune's influence. Jean de Meun, in fact, makes the comparison between feigned love for profit's sake and Fortune. In Reason's discourse on love, in fact, he even uses the moon image in connection with the nature of feigned love:

c'est fainte volenté d'amer  
en queurs malades du mahaing  
de couvoitise de gaaing.  
Ceste amor est en tel balance,  
si tost comme el pert l'esperance  
du profit qu'ele veult ataindre,  
faillir la convient et estaindre,  
(4742-4748)

C'est l'amor qui vient de Fortune,  
qui s'esclipse comme la lune  
que la terre obnuble et enobre.  
(4753-4755)

The Friend later urges the lover to use the guise of Faux Semblant to get past those guarding the tower. He insists that it is good practice to deceive the deceivers and to betray the traitors. Here, again, the Friend seems to be advocating the kind of carnal love valued by the God of Love. And since carnal love falls into the domain of Fortune, the use of deception in order to obtain it is in keeping with other aspects of this kind of love. The Friend advises the lover:

Male Bouche et touz ses paranz,  
a cui ja Dieu ne soit garanz,  
par barat estuet barater,  
servir, chuer, blandir, flater  
par hourt, par adulacion,

par fause simulacion,  
et encliner et saluer,  
qu'il fet trop bon le chien chuer  
tant qu'en ait la voie passee.

(7355-7363)

It might be important to note here that this very long speech on how to deceive deceivers is drawn from Ovid where he tells how to win over a lover! Consequently, "deceiver," "traitor," "rascal" become synonymous with "lover"--one of Fortune's basic paradoxes that applies to love. In any case, the Lover himself realizes what the Friend is advising and verbally rejects it; however, he later attempts to win over Wealth by the very means suggested by the Friend. He then is torn by his conscience and repents, lamenting:

comme Dex set, car je fesoie  
une chose et autre pensoie.  
Ainsinc m'entencion double oi,  
n'onc mes nul jor ne la doubloi.

(10269-10272)

One questions whether he really regrets having used such devious means or whether he regrets the fact that they got him nowhere.

Thus one may conclude that the characters of Faux Semblant and of Fortune are very similar, although Faux Semblant is active and Fortune is passive. The idea of the dual nature and changing aspect is very closely related to the carnal love theme. Carnal love is consistently represented as being materially oriented and consequently as unreliable as Fortune herself. And finally the Lover himself is duped into trying the guise of Faux Semblant to gain access to Fair Welcome. At the point where the Lover turns to wealth with the idea of using her to his own advantage, he places himself quite firmly on the Wheel of Fortune. It is from this point of view that one



can consider the relationship between love and Fortune in the Romance of the Rose.

The interrelation between Fortune and the Lover becomes evident as soon as one realizes what kind of love is being considered between the Lover and the Rose. As Fleming states, "Jean de Meung's Amant regards love as a carnal thing."<sup>8</sup> The "love object" is exactly that--an object. And it is the God of Love himself that has commanded the Lover to think constantly of physical joys offered him by the bud. The Friend, the Duenna and Wealth all speak at great length on the connection between wealth, poverty and love. In most cases they speak of riches or good fortune as an access to Fair Welcome, specifically, and thereby to love in general. Fortune here is true to her origin as a fertility symbol--she bestows, but she bestows only goods, material wealth. She has no control over the spiritual except through the physical. So the Rose is out of reach of the spiritual power of Reason and falls in the domain of Fortune. As Fleming says, "For the lover happiness is not something within his own power; it is the capricious whimsical gift of Fortune."<sup>9</sup>

Before considering the aspects of love itself, one might do well to consider the similarities between the Dieu d'Amour and Fortune. The first description of the Dieu d'Amour by Guillaume de Lorris resembles his later discussion of Fortune:

A li se tint de l'autre part  
li dex d'Amors, cil qui depart  
amoreites a sa devise.  
C'est cil qui les amanz justise  
et qui abat l'orgueil de gent,  
et si fet dou seignor sergent  
et les dames refet baesses,  
quant il les trove trop engresses.

(863-870)

He later says of Fortune:

em poi d'eure son semblant mue,  
une eure rit, autre eure est morne.  
Ele a une roe qui torne  
et, quant ele veut, ele met  
le plus bas amont ou somet,  
et celui qui est sor la roe  
reverse a un tor en la boue.

(3956-3062)

Thus both the Dieu d'Amour and Fortune act according to their own will which is not particularly consistent except that it lowers the proud to humility and the rich to servitude. Fortune accomplishes this in the end simply by turning her wheel, but, in the first place, man must be avaricious enough to climb on the wheel. The Dieu d'Amour accomplishes essentially the same thing as Fortune by offering physical love. In the didactic terms of the Middle Ages the seeking after material wealth was no less sinful than seeking after material gain. So both Fortune and the Dieu d'Amour are involved in the same kind of undertaking and the lessons to be gained from both are later explained by Reason and Nature: That which is within a person is all that he has and all that he may rely on to gain reputation or satisfaction or to succeed in being loved.

Since the theme of love is the central topic of discussion in the Romance of the Rose and since the specific kind of love being pursued is carnal love, there is an endless list of examples to illustrate the relationship between Love and Fortune. In order to deal with such a vast amount of material, I will discuss love in the terms in which Fortune has already been described. As previously established, Fortune's nature is capricious and always changing; this is true of love also. Fortune has an ambiguous and paradoxical nature; this is equally true of love. Fortune's domain is that of worldly goods;

carnal love is shown to be equally related to the theme of wealth and poverty. We shall now examine in some detail these three parallels.

First of all, the constantly changing, capricious nature of Fortune, represented by her wheel which never ceases to turn, is comparable to the nature of love. The Lover himself is aware of love's changing aspects. After he has undergone the pains of love and finally succeeds in kissing the rose, he sees love as follows:

La mer n'ert ja si apesie  
qu'el ne soit trouble a poi de vent:  
Amors se rechange sovent,  
il oint une eure, autre eure point,  
Amors n'est gueres en un point.

(3476-3480)

It has been said as well of Fortune that one knows her only after he has made the complete revolution of the wheel. He who sits atop the wheel sees only one aspect of Fortune and deceives himself into believing that he is one of Fortune's favorites. She has no favorites, of course, for she is unfeeling. It is only after he has been run through the mud beneath the wheel that he discovers Fortune's true character,

The kind of love that Reason calls vile love (feigned love for profit) has already been shown to be similar in nature to Faux Semblant and thus to Fortune. Reason makes reference to the moon by saying that vile love is first bright and then obscure. The profit that she is referring to in her definition of vile love is riches. But in the eyes of Reason carnal love is a vile love as well. Even in the Romance of the Rose the Lover is impassioned at his first glimpse of the Rose, abandons his senses (reason) and is willing to go to any lengths to get the Rose. And in the end when he plucks the Rose from the tree and wins his prize, what

will be left but for love to grow obscure and the Rose to wither? In the same fashion, those who put all their faith in Fortune are jubilant as they are raised to the top of the wheel. But when they face the descent to the bottom of the wheel their joy fades, for they see there is no further profit to be gained.

The movement of the wheel could also be compared to the metamorphosis of love between lovers and between husband and wife. Jean de Meun discusses at great length the subject of the evils of marriage. He states with great certainty that those who love before they are married will lose their affection for each other after they are married. The evolution of the wealthy and the powerful on Fortune's wheel to a state of humility and poverty. And Jean de Meun makes the analogy when Amis says:

Voire neïs, que qu'el deïst,  
saillet il por qu'el le veïst,  
car tout avoit mis son desir  
en fere li tout son plesir.  
Mes quant sunt puis entrespousé,  
si con ci raconté vous é,  
lors est tornee la roële . . . .

(9431-9437)

Although in this particular case Jean de Meun is not necessarily talking about carnal love or love for profit, he shows that any kind of love, by its very nature may be as capricious and changing as Fortune herself,

The Duenna speaks at great length on the capricious nature of lovers. She uses the examples of Aeneas, Demophone and Paris. Throughout her advice to Bel Accueil, of course, she is advocating a materially-oriented kind of love and so she is placing the outcome of the love squarely in the hands of Fortune. She tells of how Paris swears that Xanthus would reverse its flow before he

would leave Oenone. But he promptly deserts her for Helen. The Duenna seems to be suggesting here that she who puts her faith in the capricious nature of a lover is sure to lose him; and if she has not obtained from him the security of material wealth she has nothing to show for her relationship when she loses her lover. Since the retention of worldly goods is as capricious as love itself, women can in no way be sure to keep their lover or their worldly goods.

The dual nature of Fortune as displayed by the Isle of Fortune is certainly comparable to many of the descriptions of love in the Romance. Nearly every major character in the Romance that talks about love to any extent at all speaks of it as a completely paradoxical emotion where opposing feelings exist at one and the same time within the same person. The illustration of the Isle of Fortune from the Romance of the Rose shows Fortune herself in a state of simultaneous wealth and poverty, joy and sorrow, pride and humility. The Isle, too, as described earlier, represents very well Fortune's dual nature, especially the two rivers, one of a dark sulphurous substance, the other of a clear crystal water, which flow together without mingling. The rivers represent beautifully the idea of change as well as paradox.

One of the first descriptions of the paradoxical nature of love is given by the poet as he attempts to touch the Rose. The Lover smells the sweet odor of the Rose and at the same time sharp briars are warding him off:

L'odor de lui entor espent;  
la soautume qui en ist  
tote la place replenist;  
et quant jou senti se fleirier,  
je n'oi talant de repairier,  
ainz m'en apressai por le prendre,



se g'i osasse les mains tendre.  
Mes chardon agu et poignant  
m'en aloient trop esloignant;  
espines tranchanz et aguës,  
orties et ronces cornues  
ne me lessaient avant trere,  
car je me cremoie mal feire.

(1666-1678)

It is at this very moment that the Dieu d'Amour comes along with his ten arrows, five of pleasing aspect and five of a hideous black iron. As was mentioned earlier, it seems most likely that five of those arrows were dipped in the sweet stream of Fortune and the other five in the sulphurous stream. In any case, as the Dieu d'Amour pursues the Lover with his arrows, the Lover again experiences the dual aspects of love. He feels pain from the wounds made by the arrows, but at the same time his desire for the Rose increases. The Lover is wounded, of course, only by the five golden arrows and the last one, Beau Semblant, carries with it a balm which reinforces the double nature of all the arrows:

Cele floiche ot fiere costume:  
doçor i ot et amertume.  
J'ai bien sentu et coneü  
qu'el m'a aidié, si m'a neü:  
il ot angoise en la pointure,  
si tost m'asouage l'ointure.  
D'une part m'oïnt, d'autre me cuit:  
ausint m'aïde, ausint me nuit,

(1871-1878)

After the Dieu d'Amour has taken the Lover into his service he instructs him in the ways of love. Love resembles a kind of sickness but with paradoxical characteristics:

A une part iras tot seus,  
lors te vendront soupirs et plaintes,

friçons et autres dolors maintes;  
em plusors sens seras destroiz,  
une eure chaut, autre eure froiz,  
vermaus une eure, et autre pales;  
(2262-2267)

One finally comes to Reason herself who gives the  
Lover a description of love:

Amors, ce est pez haïneuse,  
Amors, c'est haïne amoureuse;  
c'est leautez la desleaus,  
c'est la desleautez leaus;  
c'est poor toute asseüree,  
esperance desesperee;  
(4263-4268)

This description is probably the best in illustrating the basic paradoxes of love and rightfully so, since Reason has a vested interest in showing the Lover the folly of the kind of love advocated by the Dieu d'Amour. She offers a path without the capricious vicissitudes of love and Fortune. She also wants the Lover to take her as his friend, of course, but, more than that, she wants the Lover to turn away from the folly of carnal love. Like the gifts of Fortune, the rewards of carnal love are often arbitrary and ambiguous. As with the gifts of Fortune, in carnal love the Lover will get his share of unhappiness and misfortune as well as of good fortune. Both the wheel and the Isle of Fortune express the extreme instability and capriciousness of Fortune. But one could hardly say the love is any more stable. In both cases, the reason for such instability is simply the transience of worldly goods. By putting one's faith in Fortune one hopes to gain power through material possessions. By seeking carnal love one must necessarily put a great deal of value on superficial qualities such as physical beauty, clothes,



demeanor--all of which are extremely unstable, as the Duenna later testifies. Thus one comes again to the didactic nature of the Romance of the Rose and the use of Fortune. The only way one can avoid the mutability of worldly goods is not to value them. The true worth lies in individual spiritual qualities--that which is to be found within.

The theme of wealth is a common one in the Romance--who has it, how he loses it, what purpose it serves and how to gain it. It is probably one of the themes most closely linked with Fortune in the Romance. Even as far back as her origin, as was demonstrated earlier, Fortune was a bestower of goods. It is the abstract wealth that one draws from these goods such as power, love or renown, that one is seeking when he puts his faith in Fortune. There are two major themes connected with wealth and, consequently, linked to Fortune. The first is love. Several major characters discourse at length on how one may gain love through worldly treasure. The second is the theme of adversity versus good fortune. Jean de Meun demonstrates how adversity is of great use and talks about the advantages and disadvantages of wealth and poverty.

The idea of wealth as access to love, or more specifically, to Bel Accueil, is linked to Fortune only in that it is Fortune who distributes the gifts in the first place. Worldly goods in themselves are not necessarily bad. The evil lies in putting faith in what they will bring as one puts faith in a goddess to rule one's destiny. The evil in the Romance of the Rose is not only relying on worldly things but looking upon the person loved as if he were a thing. And certainly in Jean de Meung's section the Lover looks on the Rose as an object to be gained by any means possible.

One of the first references to love and wealth is made by the Dieu d'Amour as he gives his commandments to the Lover. The Dieu d'Amour warns

the Lover not to be avaricious (2199-2200). This statement has two interpretations. A person is not extremely likeable if he is greedy and overly concerned with money. But, on the other hand, the Dieu d'Amour implies that the Lover should spend freely. This is a common notion even today. The idea of lovers wishing to spend exorbitant amounts is brought up later by Wealth when she asks:

Ou deables porroit l'en prendre  
quan qu'uns amanz vorroit despandre?  
(10235-10236)

But then, how is the Lover, who is new at the game, to distinguish between generosity and extravagance? The loved one is certainly not going to tell him to stop giving.

The use of wealth is often mentioned as a means of gaining access to Bel Accueil. Here one must not forget that Bel Accueil is not a character separate from the Rose but represents a part of her, the aspect that encourages the Lover to come to her, that accepts him as a lover. And so if he were to gain access to Bel Accueil, he would also gain access to the Rose. This is, in fact, the approach which permits him to deflower the rose tree. It is Amis who first counsels him to use wealth as a means of getting inside the walls:

Vous i entrerez mout a paine,  
se Richece ne vos i meine;  
mes a touz cels qu'el i conduit  
au retour refuse conduit.  
A l'aler o vos se tenra,  
mes ja ne vos en ramenra;  
et de tant soiez asseür,  
s'ous i entrez par nul eür,  
ja n'en itroiz n'a soir n'a main,  
se Povreté n'i met la main,  
par cui sunt en destrece maint. (7913-7923)

This relationship between Wealth and the Lover is much like that between Fortune and the Lover. Wealth will lead him in but not out. It is Poverty that leads him out. In the same manner will Fortune lead him joyous into love and pull him out in a sad state of misery and dejection.

The Lover in fact takes the Friend's advice and when he finally meets the Duenna he promises her gifts if she will guide him to Bel Accueil:

bon drap avrez, ou pers ou vert,  
se je puis trouver l'uis ouvert.

(14689-14688)

False Seeming and his companions use the same methods on the Duenna in trying to convince her to have Fair Welcome descend from the tower:

Bon fet un ami gaaignier,  
et vez ci de ses joelez:  
cest fermaill et ces noelez  
vos done, voire un garnement  
vos donra il procheinement.

(12396-12400)

The gifts work in both cases. The Duenna sets Fair Welcome free and leaves the door open for the Lover. This is not negative didactics, of course. In the context in which one finds the Rose, it is only fitting that one could gain access by means of material gifts. The Duenna herself is certainly going to present no obstacle since she is the prime advocate of accepting love only on a material basis. And the material basis is not even something as far-removed as carnal love. She is speaking of a relationship based on a monetary agreement.

The Duenna speaks from bitter experience and so one is sympathetic with her point of view. No other character is so blatant and straightforward

about the wealth-love relationship--not even Wealth herself. While others advocate using wealth in a devious manner to attract affection, the Duenna speaks of "selling" one's love:

Biau filz, ja larges ne saiez;  
en pluseurs leus le queur aiez,  
en un seul leu ja nou metez  
ne nou donez ne ne pretez,  
mes vendez le bien chierement  
et torjorz par enchierement;  
et gardez que nus qui l'achat  
n'i puisse fere bon achat;

(13007-13014)

If one is going to sell oneself at the highest price, one can not be concerned with poor men. Thus the Duenna reinforces the myth about Fortune's wheel. He who is at the top indeed does have love (although feigned):

Bon acointier fet homes riches,  
s'il n'ont les queurs avers et chiches,  
s'il est qui bien plumer les sache.

(13075-13077)

And those at the bottom of the wheel who wallow in the mire are not worth the bother:

D'amer povre home ne li chaille,  
qu'il n'est riens que povre home vaille;

(13587-13588)

Her justification is that that which is dearest bought is dearest held:

c'iert cele qui meilleur l'avra  
et qui plus iert chiere tenue,  
quant plus chier se sera vendue;

(13670-13672)

She speaks of love here in relation to monetary gain and her teaching is again in accordance with the lesson to be drawn from Fortune. As Regnabo approaches the top of the wheel he becomes more sure of himself, confident about his own power. But at the same time he feels a great deal of anxiety at his position which he has procured through external wealth, or rather, in Fortune's terms, by playing the game of chance on her wheel. In either case he realizes the temporal aspect of his power--he has nowhere to go but down the other side of the wheel.

As the Duenna speaks about her life, one can almost see the wheel of Fortune slowly turning and forcing her ever closer to the mud below. Indeed, the movement of the turning wheel has often been compared to the passage of a lifetime. There has been some dispute about the rose window at Amiens. Some say it is the Wheel of Fortune, others the process of man's life. The two are interdependent and so may be considered as simultaneous possibilities. The Duenna has already made the ascent to youth and beauty and is now descending to old age. (The image is probably more accurate for medieval woman since the length of time from birth to full youth and from youth to death was more equal, although the capricious movement of the wheel could make the image hold true even today.) She even talks about how she should have taken advantage of her position at the time:

Si je fusse sage, par m'ame,  
trop eüsse esté riche dame,  
car de trop granz genz fui acointe  
quant g'iere ja mignote et cointe,  
et bien an tenoie aucuns pris.

(14441-14445)

She does not realize, of course, that building up more wealth at the top of the wheel is to no avail in preventing one's falling into poverty or growing

old as long as one's faith is in the game of Fortune.

The idea of wealth and superficial material goods is mentioned by other characters in talking about love in general, that is, love not specifically related to the Rose. One of the major characters with a vested interest in the relationship between love and money is the Jealous Husband. He is spending, but he is getting nothing in return, as this love myth promises. Instead it is his wife who uses all the finery to seduce new lovers. So we are again dealing with carnal love;

Por ce portent eus les cointises  
aus queroles et aus iglises,  
car ja nule ce ne feïst  
s'el ne cuidast qu'an la veïst  
et que par ce plus tost pleüst  
a ceus que decevoir peüst.

(9002-9008)

The Jealous Husband also talks of what he calls the war on Chastity. Just as Fortune lures man away from Reason, so does she lure women away from Chastity by the finery in which she arrays them:

Dom je jur Dieu, le roi celestre,  
que fame qui bele veust estre  
ou qui dou ressembler se paine,  
et se remire et se demaine  
por soi parer et cointoier,  
qu'el veust Chastaé guerroier,  
qui mout a certes d'anemies.

(8983-8989)

Both men and women are guilty--both are to blame for putting such great hope in such transient things. Again Jean de Meun shows the chaos which arises when man puts his faith in Fortune and abandons Reason. In the case of love, women lay them-

selves open to being taken advantage of, and men who attempt to keep their wives through material goods see these goods turned against them.

Wealth, in her workings on mankind, can be compared to Fortune as justifiably as can Faux Semblant. Those who worship Wealth worship Fortune as well and all the folly that goes along with such a faith. There is indeed good reason that one should put so much faith in wealth. The power of money seemed as strong in the Middle Ages as it does today. The rich, landed nobility ruled and probably the only way the common man saw of gaining wealth was by pure chance. There were other kinds of power, of course, for example, political and religious. But even those were becoming associated more and more with the idea of material wealth.

First of all, Wealth takes revenge on those who are foolish enough to fall into the vice of worshipping her:

Ainsint Peccune se revanche,  
comme dame et raïne et franche,  
des sers qui la tienent enclose.

(5175-5177)

Wealth operates with Fortune in that she works on the character on top of Fortune's wheel. She torments him with the idea that he may lose what he has gained. She keeps him awake at night. Likewise, Fortune takes revenge on Regno:

Fortune ainsinc le peuple vanche  
du boben que vos demenez  
con orgueilleus et forsenez.

(6520-6522)

She simply spins her wheel, shows her other side, to prove what a fool Regno has been.

Wealth, like Fortune, also offers her rewards for only a short time. So she is ever-changing and promises no future whatsoever to the one who

values her. It is, in fact, later explained that it is Poverty that takes over where Wealth leaves off. In the same manner, the position that one is seeking when he puts his faith in Fortune is no less sure. Man is probably always sure that he is the one that will be able to stop the Wheel of Fortune and thus perpetuate his position of power. Or perhaps he is not deceived at all and only hopes to enjoy such reputation for however long it may last. In either case, he represents a very pitiful picture.

The idea most commonly associated with the wheel and wealth is the paradoxical lesson that poverty is the most advantageous position for man to be in. There are many who teach this lesson in the Romance of the Rose, but Amis perhaps best illustrates the idea, since he is a living example. He once was wealthy and had bought many friends he believed to be true. But on the contrary:

et quant en ce point me sentirent  
tuit cil ami, si s'en foïrent  
et me firent tretuit la moe  
quant il me virent souz le roe  
de Fortune envers abatu,  
tant m'a par Povreté batu.

(8007-8012)

The lesson here is not only the idea that wealth draws feigned friends while poverty exposes the true ones, but as Wealth deserts Regno and Fortune turns her wheel, he is forced to rely entirely on himself. Thus, instead of looking to Wealth or to others to find out who he is and what he is worth, he is forced to look inward. At the same time, those who are brave enough to look inward with him discover a man's true worth and consequently a true friend.

In conclusion, one might say that looking at



Fortune in the Romance of the Rose from the point of view of her evolution since ancient Rome, she has stayed surprisingly consistent. She is always fickle and remains true to the idea that she is a bestower of earthly goods. The theme of adversity is still a popular one and serves the purposes of the Romance of the Rose very well. Two new symbols, derived from medieval literature, are introduced, the wheel and the Isle of Fortune; both of these serve to reinforce visually Fortune's capricious and paradoxical nature. And, in fact nearly every reference to Fortune or her wheel in the Romance can be linked to this dual nature as represented by these symbols. The instability of Fortune is so omnipresent in the book that even though Fortune as an allegorical figure never appears on the scene to give her lesson to the Lover, she instructs in a clandestine fashion at every turn of the page. Perhaps one could not even say she instructs. She serves as an example for the instruction given by Amis, the Duenna, Wealth and, most of all, by Reason. She actually instructs in the best fashion possible: she does not theorize, she demonstrates, and in so doing illustrates that hers is not the best way.

Fortune's role in the Romance is a didactic one. She illustrates the teachings of some characters such as Amis and Dame Raison. She reinforces the character of others such as Faux Semblant and Wealth because she is so similar to them. But the idea of Fortune and love are so closely linked in the Romance that they are nearly inseparable. Love and Fortune both make fools of Lovers and turn them upside down in the midst of their earthly gain. In all cases in the Romance, except in the love offered by Reason and rejected by the Lover, Fortune rules. She has dominion over wealth, fine clothes, beauty and especially carnal love. All the major characters deal with her in one way or another. What is more, she is related to all of them directly or indirectly, so

that, although she is completely passive in her appearance in the Romance of the Rose, she is very active in her influence.

The message carried by Fortune is primarily that which Reason teaches. One must look to one's own inner virtue to discover any true worth that is not capricious. One must also realize that there is an element of chance in anyone's future. It is the reliance upon and worship of that element of chance, personified by Fortune, that is to be condemned, not Fortune herself.

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#### Notes

1

J.G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, abridged (New York: Macmillan, 1952).

2

Howard R. Patch, "The Tradition of the Goddess Fortuna in Roman Literature and in the Transitional Period," Smith College Studies in Modern Languages (Northhampton, Mass.: Smith College, 1922) III, iii, p. 140.

3

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, Le Roman

de la Rose, ed. Felix Lecoy (Paris: Editions Champion, 1966). Hereafter all quotes from this edition will be indicated by line numbers and placed in parentheses in the text.

4

Boethius, Consolation of Philosophy, trans. V.E. Watts (Middlesex: Hazel Watson and Viney, Ltd., 1969), p. 55.

5

Howard R. Patch, The Other World (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press), 1950.

6

Claudian, trans. Maurice Platnauer (London: William Heineman, 1922), p. 247.

7

Angus Fletcher, Allegory (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1964), p. 328.

8

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9

Fleming, p. 127.

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