CONFLICTUS *OVIS ET LINI.* A MODEL FOR *THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE*

A fair amount of the detail of the late XII or early XIII c. debate-poem *The Owl and the Nightingale* has by now been assigned to identifiable sources; as time goes by more will no doubt come to light. A source for the idea of the debate itself is in its nature more elusive. On the one hand the search is hardly worth pursuing: we know of a rich tradition of Latin debate-poetry in the centuries leading up to the composition of the poem, and, given the popularity of the form, there seems no need to look for a specific model. On the other hand no close parallel has so far been proposed from among the surviving examples of Latin debate. In drawing attention to a text which offers, I believe, interesting formal and thematic parallels to *The Owl and the Nightingale,* I hope to make some advance towards defining a tradition and a context into which the poem can be fitted.

The *Conflictus Ovis et Lini*, a poem of 770 lines in leonine elegiacs, is preserved in four copies, at Basle, Brussels, Munich and Lambach (Upper Austria); copies are also known to have existed at Trier and at Blaubeuern (between Stuttgart and Ulm). The attribution to Hermannus Contractus made by the *anonymus Mellicensis,* who was writing near Ratisbon shortly after 1130, is evidently wrong;[1] the correct attribution is probably given by an incipit and a brief dedicatory epilogue at the end of the Basle text, from which it emerges that the poem was addressed to Udo, archbishop of Trier from 1066-78, by one Winrich, librarian and master of the cathedral school there from

[1] It was accepted by the only editor so far of the complete text, Max Haupt, 'Hermanni Contracti *Conflictus Ovis el Lini*', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, xi (1859), 215-38, who knew only the Brussels and Lambach MSS.

1068-75 and 1080-81.[1] The only objection to this attribution, a reference at 122 to *nostra Flandria,* operates *a fortiori* against the Swabian Hermannus: Winrich himself may have been of Flemish origin. He is perhaps better known for a vigorous expostulation against the malpractices of Pope Gregory VII addressed to Gregory between October 1080 and August 1081 in the name of Thierry, bishop of Verdun.[2]

The literary qualities of the poem have not made a great impression on readers. Whereas Haupt is prepared to allow that it is 'nicht ganz leer an Inhalt', Raby characterizes it as being 'of inordinate length and tediousness'.[3] This is not altogether fair. The work is technically accomplished: the difficult metrical form is carried through consistently, modified only by the substitution of assonances for rhymes in some seven per cent of the lines,[4] and the sense is not generally recondite, though technical terms are employed when required and a few words used which smell of the schoolroom.[5] The comic introduction promises a lightness of touch which the debate itself, at times long-winded and a little pedantic, never quite fulfils, but there are enough touches of wit, if again often of a rather schoolmasterly kind, and enough curious information to retain a reader's interest.

---

[1] J. Werner, 'Verse auf Papst Innocenz IV und Kaiser Friedrich II', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde,* xxxii (1906-7), 591-601, at 602-4. For details of the career of Winrich, see A. van de Vyver and Ch. Verlinden, 'L'auteur et la portée du *Conflictus Ovis el Lini', Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire,* xii (1933), 59-81.

[2] *Wenrici scholastici Trevirensis epistola sub Theoderici episcopi Virdunensis nomine composita,* ed. K. Francke, *MGH Libelli de Lite* I (1891) 284-99.

[3] F. J. E. Raby, *Secular Latin Poetry* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1957), II, 298.

[4] I count 57 out of 770, including cases of assonance on a final vowel, allowance made for obvious errors.

[5] Note in particular 372 *nolis* from *nola* 'little bell', a word of extreme rarity probably given currency only by the opportunity it afforded for jokes at the expense of pupils who mispronounced the second person singular of the present subjunctive of *nolo*.

The poet, as in the case of *O&N,* represents himself as a fortuitous spectator of the debate —in this case at the edge of a field of green flax in summer. A sheep, separated from its flock, finds its way into the flax, which, understandably enough, vociferously resents the intrusion, asking why it of all crops should be chosen to be trampled and defecated on by such a stinking beast (15-18). The sheep replies that any other crops might be spared such indignities because they provide food for man or beast; the Flax, which is patently good for nothing else, should be glad to make itself useful as a bed or latrine for her (19-22). The Flax retorts by mocking the undignified manner in which the Sheep is shortly to be stripped of her one valued attribute: tied up and shorn, tail and all, down to her mangy skin by some disgusting old woman (23-30). The terms are thus set for a debate in which the chief focus of interest is the utility to man of the two disputants.

The sheep replies to the Flax's insult by describing in detail the way in which the Flax is in turn to be treated (35-60): pulled up by the roots, put to rot in water, beaten and torn to shreds. The Flax replies that other natural commodities equally benefit man only as a result of such rough treatment: man does not in any case waste his energy on worthless things (63-72). Besides, the preparation of sheepskin is hardly aesthetically pleasing: the smell of a tanning-vat is enough to drive people from their homes (79-92). The first exchange thus ends with dishonours more or less equal.

The Sheep now points out that, unlike the Flax, she provides for two basic human needs: clothing and food (95-100). Clothing is passed over for the time being, but the variety of dairy products afforded by sheep is described at some length (101-22). A culturally conditioned dislike for mutton must be assumed to explain the complete lack of reference to meat.[1] The Flax cannot in honesty deny this point, but observes that the Sheep is not the only source either of milk or of cloth and accuses her of claiming all the credit for benefits for which others are responsible (123-34). This seems a rather

[1] I have only anecdotal evidence for a distaste for mutton or lamb in German-speaking cultures, but I am assured that within living memory it was hardly ever eaten.

disingenuous evasion of an unanswerable point, but the Flax swiftly moves on to argue that wool is an inferior fabric. All would wear linen if they could: it is honoured by being worn next to the skin, whereas wool is relegated to the utilitarian function of keeping the weather out. Linen is thus treated as a friend, wool as a servant (139-60). Wool, however, the Sheep replies, is produced by no other animal (165-6; again, not an answer to the point at issue) and is in any case after all a high-class material, as is shown by the different colours in which woollen cloth is produced —whether natural or dyed— among the several nations of Europe, a subject pursued at length for over thirty lines (167-210). The Flax responds, quite reasonably, that the possibility of dying wool as such (213-4), and that, besides, the natural colour of linen is intrinsically pleasing in a way that of wool is not (219-22). Linen, besides, is used for many things beside clothing —towels, tablecloths, cushions, sheets, curtains and so forth— and, a final stroke, the thread necessary to sew or repair even woollen clothing (223-68).

But if the earthly nobility wear linen next to the skin, saints, the aristocracy of heaven, favour wool (273-84). Furthermore, the Sheep points out, sheepskin has other uses: parchment is necessary for books, and if there were no books there would be no liturgy, no Church, no Pope (285-96); all human knowledge is written on parchment (297-304); so that *omnia novit ovis, per oves haec percipit orbis; ipsa dei patris mystica novit ovis* (305-6). This is a neat but plainly dishonest point. Even her despised guts are a source of benefit, for as harp-strings they not only afford delight, as in the hands of the great musicians of antiquity, but also serve the glory of God, as in the hands of the Psalmist and the eldest of the Apocalypse (307-22). To this the Flax replies that, if music is an issue, the bleating of sheep is not notably melodious (323-6), which is a debating point, and then addresses the serious arguments one by one. The parchment made from sheepskin is an inferior product: better is made from calves or kids (327-30). Holy men indeed wear woollen underclothes, but that is expressly for the sake of discomfort: by the same token one might prefer ashes to wheat or stones to bedding (333-

42). The honour given in scriptute to the Sheep as the source of David's harp-strings is outweighed by the pre-eminence given to linen in the rituals prescribed in Leviticus: here follows another long digression on these and specially on the vestments of the high priest (343-96). The Sheep replies that she knows the law of Moses well, having studied books more assiduously than the flax (397-8, repeating the spurious argument used earlier at 305-6), and that sheep, not flax, are described for sacrifice (401-22); a catalogue of the ten plagues of Egypt leads up to the supreme instance of the Passover, in which the sacrificial lamb played the central part (423-76). At this point the Sheep urges the Flax to submit to her judgement and recognize the folly of its arguments (477-8).

The impropriety of a disputant's claim to act as judge in his own case is instantly seized on by the Flax, in a response reminiscent of the procedural points raised by the Owl against the Nightingale (479-80); it then returns to the substantive point. The Sheep's reference to the Passover and the Exodus was confined strictly to the literal level, and the inevitable point is now made that the Mosaic sacrifices a merely a figure, but that the ritual use of linen is carried over into the New Dispensation (481-90): even the basest part of flax, as of sheep, is put to good use —in this case in the wicks of lamps and candles (491-6). Linen, again, has as many liturgical uses for Christians as for Jews (497-508). In a brief facetious digression we are told that angels and apparitions of the blessed appear in white robes—thus in linen; the Sheep may, however, take comfort in the fact that there is indeed one angel who is conventionally dressed in black —thus in wool (509-16)! Returning to the point, the Flax answers the argument concerning the passover with a reference to its figural significance: linen is used above all in the white vestments of Eastertide, which even those who, as previously argued, wear wool as an ascetic practice wear over their habits at that season (517-28). Wool has no place on such occasions (529-34). It is the Sheep's turn to confess herself beaten, for the judgment to which she must submit is not that of her adversary but that of Holy Church herself (535-44).

The Sheep is temporarily nonplussed —and shows it by blushing— but nevertheless finds an argument with which to continue (545-6). Whatever the case may be regarding Eucharistic vestments, the Roman pallium at least is made of wool, and so are the hangings used in church at high seasons (549-74). But, most important of all, the Lamb occupies the highest place in the vision described in the fifth chapter of the Apocalypse, which is here paraphrased at length (575-620). This Lamb is God; and just as the Lamb of God reconciles sinners to the Father, so the Sheep undertakes, if the flax recognises the error of its ways, to act as mediatrix for it before the throne of Grace (621-6).

It is now the Flax which is reduced to silence (627-8), but once again the Sheep has confused the literal and the figural, and it is this lapse, rather than the undoubted blasphemy of her peroration, that the Flax now takes up. St John's vision no more means that there is really a lamb in heaven that St Peter's in Acts X means that there are really frogs there (629-40); Christ is no more (641-8) a sheep than He is a worm, a serpent or a lion.[1] We are next given a long and at first sight irrelevant disquisition on the Redemption and its benefits as transmitted through the Eucharist. The significance of all this is that the corporal, in which the consecrated elements are enfolded at Mass, is a linen cloth, in token of the linen clothes in which the lifeless body of Christ was wrapped (649-734).[2] Here we have the decisive argument in the debate, in

[1] The text refers to *omnia quadrupia, et serpentia terrae, et volatilia caeli*; the frogs, which do not figure among the creatures allegorized in Bede's commentary, may be poetic licence. For the worm, see Ps. xxi [xxii]: 7 *Ego autem sum vermis, et non homo* read as prefiguration of the Passion; for the serpent, Joh. iii: 14 *Et sicut Moyses exaltavit serpentem in deserto, ita exaltari oportet Filium hominis;* for the lion, Apoc. v: 5 *ecce vicit leo de tribu Iuda, radix David*, in the very passage alluded to by the Sheep in her previous speech.

[2] See *Enciclopedia Cattolica* (Vatican City, 1948-54), IV, s.v. corporale. For its form, symbolism and supposed powers, see Joseph Braun, *Die liturgischen Paramente* (2. Aufl., Freiburg im Breisgau, 1924), pp. 205-9. I am grateful to Fr Donal Kerr and to Ms Etáin Ó Síocháin, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, for photocopies from this elusive book.

that, though the corporal is itself only a symbol, the Body and Blood of Christ which it enfolds are really present; and to enfold them is an honour for the Flax to which the Sheep cannot aspire. The Sheep has no answer, beyond continuing to assert the identity between herself and the Lamb of God, claiming that the privilege granted to the corporal is thus in her gift, and threatening to withdraw it if the Flax does not show her proper respect (730-40). The fallaciousness of this argument confirms the decisiveness of the Flax's final argument. But that in turn suggests that the debate is not an end in itself: rather, that it is to be situated in the context of some controversy connected with the corporal, indeed that the underlying purpose of the debate is connected with the reassertion of the claims of traditional practice in its use.

The matter is at first sight an unimportant one: so far as I am aware there was no major controversy regarding the use of the corporal in the eleventh century. But a context for the poet's concern is supplied by the coincidence in that century of two quite unrelated developments. First, there was a tendency in the course of the century for the corporal to be reduced in size to something like its modern dimensions: this is in part due to the innovative use of altar-cloths,[1] a liturgical use of linen towards which the Flax is notably nonchalant, remarking *quod linum sacras circundat vestibus aras / nec magni facio nec nihil esse puto* (489-90). Secondly, in the third quarter of the century, thus at the very time when *COL* was being composed, the controversy was at its height regarding the teaching of Berengar of Tours, who denied, or more precisely was reasonably supposed to have denied, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.[2] Van de Vyver and Verlinden, in an article

[1] *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, ibid.: *'Introdottasi l'abitudine di coprire l'altare con due, tre tovaglie e diminuite d'altra parte le offerte, il corporale fu accorciato così che sino dal edioevo appare già ridotto alla forma presente.'*

[2] On the Berengarian controversy, see R. W. Southern, 'Lanfranc of Bec and Berengar of Tours', in *Studies in Medieval History presented to F. M. Powicke*, ed. R. W. Hunt, W. A. Pantin and R. W. Southern (Oxford, 1948), pp. 27-48, and the various papers collected in *Auctoritas und Ratio: Studien zu Berengar von Tours,* ed. P. F. Ganz and R. B. C. Huygens, *Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-studien* (1990).

published in 1933,[1] correctly identified the Berengarian controversy as providing the material for much of the poem, but curiously, perhaps because they were more interested in its testimony concerning the Flemish cloth trade, failed to pursue its significance, citing only four lines (695-8) which express a rather commonplace opposition between faith and reason. Given, however, that the corporal, as we have seen, represents the shroud in which Christ's body was wrapped, it was almost inevitable that someone would eventually make a debating point against the supporters of Berengar by associating the diminished size of the corporal with a lack of respect for the consecrated elements and thus with the denial that Christ was really present in them. It thus appears that the whole debate is really designed to lead up to the reassertion of orthodox Eucharistic doctrine against Berengar and his confederates.

There may even be political ramifications. We have seen that in 1080 or 1081 Winrich composed an address to Gregory VII in which he complains of his conduct in the course of his dispute with the Emperor. The issues of clerical celibacy, oaths of allegiance and investitures are here discussed in a somewhat intemperate, if lucid and erudite manner. This is not, however, the only attack on the Pope attributed to Winrich, for in the dedication to Udo appended to *COL,* which survives only in the Basle manuscript and in which the author identifies himself, the archbishop is praised highly on the grounds that *ecclesiae fures vigil indefessus agebas.* The objects of Udo's vigilance are evidently 'thieves within the Church'; and though it appears that Udo maintained an independent position in the dispute, it is hard not to see here a veiled allusion to the investiture controversy. Now we know that by 1080, af-

His error is reported thus in 1050: *qualiter ... astruant corpus domini non tam corpus esse quam umbram et figuram corporis domini* (Theoduin, bishop of Liège, to Henry I, *PL* 146, 1439b); his numerous recantations demonstrate that this was indeed the doctrine imputed to him, whatever he may have thought he was teaching.

1 See A. van de Vyver and Ch. Verlinden, 'L'auteur et la portée du *Conflictus Ovis el Lini', Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire,* xii (1933), 59-81.

ter Henry's second excommunication, his supporters were accusing Gregory himself of having once embraced the Berengarian heresy; this wild accusation has been explained, by the fact that, both before and after his election as Pope, he had taken a measured view of Berengar's teaching rather than condemning it out of hand; he did not, indeed, force a comprehensive recantation until 1079.[1] So long as the epilogue in the Basle manuscript is authentic, we may see in the warning to priests and, especially, bishops at the end of the *COL*[2] to treat the corporal with due respect —with the implication that disrespect for it implies disbelief in the Real Presence— the germ of the slander which was later to be directed openly at the Pope himself.

The parallels with *O&N* are suggestive rather than conclusive; their effect in many cases is to bring into perspective the differences between the two poems, in most cases in favour of the later work. An instance is afforded by the summer setting: this is a familiar convention and there is no need to turn to *COL* in search of a source for *O&N*, but whatever the source the contrast is evident —the wealth of detail in the latter, much of it remarkably circumstantial, as in the reference to the *breche* or clearing where the debate takes place and the precise description of the adjacent vegetation;[3] shows the possibilities of bringing a comnonplace to life. Winrich by contrast knows that flax in Summer resembles tall grass, but that is all.

The common theme of utility to man is a more interesting parallel, though it is perhaps sufficiently obvious in a debate of this kind not to be much more

---

[1] H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'The Papacy and the Berengarian Controversy', in *Auctoritas und Ratio*, pp. 109-38, at 133.3.

[2] 719-22 *at tu qui terris medius caelestia iungis, ad tantum cautus uade, minister, opus. discute rem sollers, quid tu sis quidque quod offers, quos habeas sacri participes operis;* 729-30 *pontifices aliis praefert lex sacra ministris: ipsi quid faciant solicite videant.* The reverence paid to the corporal is nowhere better exemplified than in the elaborate provisions made for its laundering, on which see Braun, pp. 207-8.

[3] 13-28; on the clearing of forests as characteristic of the **earlier** Middle Ages in England, see for example M. M. Postam, *The Medieval Economy and Society* (London, 1972), ch. 2.

significant. Once again, where in the Latin poem the argument is over little more than the respective merits of the disputants, and that largely confined to a discussion of clothing and textiles, the comparable discussion in *O&N* is much wider in scope, ranging from purely aesthetic considerations concerning the nature of music to theological arguments over its proper use, the respective merits of cheering young lovers and comforting abandoned wives or poor people, the practical problems of controlling mice and the art of making scarecrows; and while utility to mankind remains the central consideration it is only one of a number of issues raised. The controversial issue of the corporal, it is true, gives *COL* a focus lacking in *O&N,* but the poem remains distinctly monotonous beside the variety of its English counterpart.

Some parallels may suggest a closer relationship. In both cases the necessarily adversarial form of the debate is elaborated with an evident interest in legal procedure: in *COL* this is evident in the alacrity with which the Flax seizes on the Sheep's incautious claim to act as judge in her own case (479-80), in *O&N* in the Owl's objections to the Nightingale's attempt to supplement her case with an additional charge outside the agreed forms (551-5) and her alleged resort to battle at the end (1668-1706). Once again it is *O&N* which makes imaginative use of a motif used quite perfunctorily in the Latin poem, for the whole substantive debate is formally structured on the pattern of a legal action, complete with charges, counter-charges, responses and citations of authority and precedent. In contrast to the somewhat unstructured point-by-point argument of *COL.*[1] In a similar way, each of the disputants in Winrich's poem is shown as being temporarily discomfited by the opposing argument, before pulling itself together and responding to the challenge; in both cases (545-6, 627-8) the description is brief and formal and bears no relation to the real position of the relevant disputant. In *O&N* by contrast, even though the Owl sometimes loses her temper, it is always the Nightingale who is reduced to confusion: her responses are analysed in detail and the shifts to

[1] See J. W. H. Atkins, ed., *O&N* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 1ii-1v. This is not to deny that the debate eventually gets out of hand.

which she has recourse shown up for what they are (391-410, 659-706, 1291-7), with the consistent effect of alerting the reader to the weakness of her plausible arguments.

The form of the conclusion in the two poems shows similarities as well as differences. In both the debate remains formally undecided and the disputants go off to receive judgment —the church dignitaries of *COL* being once again a less imaginative choice than *O&N's* faintly absurd neglected genius Nicholas of Guildford, perhaps the author's own caricature of himself— but, whereas in the former the Flax appears to have won with an unanswerable argument, readers of *O&N* have been left with the impression of a more balanced conclusion.[1] This may be an illusion given that if the Owl's claim to do good even by her death (1611-17) is really a *stultiloqium,* as the Nightingale claims (1649-52), the whole foundation of the Christian religion is threatened;[2] but, even if the poet finally favours the Owl, the conclusion is suggested, as one might expect, in a more complex way than in *COL*.

A more specific and less predictable parallel lies in the element of gratuitous scatology in both poems: true to form, *O&N* develops at length and with disconcerting enthusiasm (91-138, 583-96) what is the subject of a rather veiled reference in *COL* (11-12, 18). Again, the Flax's suggestion (213-20) that its own pleasing natural colour is somehow better than the range of artificial colours with which wool is disguised calls to mind the Nightingale's claim (711-12, 805-36) that her one skill is worth all the abilities the Owl can muster. Perhaps more significant still is the Sheep's curious claim (297-306, 397-8) that, because parchment is made of sheepskin, she knows everything that is

---

[1] See G. Stanley, ed., *O&N* (London and Edinburgh, 1960), p. 22, whose observation that 'the Nightingale's case ... is not enough ... the Owl's ... Is not everything' is exemplary. My earlier cursory judgment ('The Typology of Debate and the Interpretation of *Wynnere and Wastoure*', *RES*, n.s., xxxvi (1985), 481-500, at 483) that a balanced conclusion is intended in *COL* cannot, I think, be sustained.

[2] Atkins, *op. cit.,* pp. XLIV-XLV, on the *stultiloquium*. Cf. here I Cor: 22-3 *Quoniam et Iudaei signa petunt, et Graeci sapientiam quaerunt: nos autem praedicamus Christum crucifixum, Iudaeis quidem scandalum, gentibus autem stultitiam*.

written in books. We can make sense of this at one level by assuming a figurative sense for *novit* 'is connected with', but that is not all that the Sheep is claiming, and the claims she makes are curiously reminiscent of the Owl's claim to understand astrology and to be able to foretell the future (1189-1214, especially 1208 *Ich con inoh on bokes lore)*. The Flax does not nail the fallacy, whereas the Nightingale, in one of her few philosophically cogent ripostes, does (1321-30), her image of an ape reading a book (1325-8) being particularly interesting in this context.

These similarities, I would suggest, leave open the possibility that the author of *O&N* may have been familiar with *COL*, or something like it, and that at least part of the idea for his own debate may have come from such a source. But how could an Englishman writing at the end of the twelfth century or later[1] have known Winrich's poem? The distribution of surviving manuscripts is not such as to suggest that it was well known outside Imperial territory, but if the inference that it was an assault on the Berengarian heresy be accepted it may be supposed to have had a wider circulation than the mere *jeu d'esprit* of an obscure Lotharingian cleric. A more open piece of anti-Papal polemic, if it were right to see *COL* in such a context, would of course have become topical at various junctures in Angevin England, but any such *animus* in the poem would, one suspects, have been hard to recognise outside the immediate context of its composition. The best chance of its having been known, directly or indirectly, in xii c. England depends on its status as a contribution controversy of the previous century.

In conclusion we may consider the problem of the irrelevance and long-windedness by which have been troubled in both poems. In each case much of what is said seems superfluous to the point at issue: we do not, it seems, **need** to know about the intellectual status of astrology and prognostication,

[1] On the date, see F. Tupper, 'The Date and Historical Background of *O&N*' , *PMLA*, XLIX (1934), 406-27; N. Jacobs, *'O&N* and the Bishops', *Medieval Literature and Antiquities: Studies in Honour of Basil Cottle* , ed. Myra Stokes and T. L. Burton (Cambrldge, 1987), 91-8.

about the sociology of adultery, about the colours favoured by the clothtrade in eleventh-century Europe, about the vestments of the Jewish high priest, about the plagues of Egypt, about the heavenly vision of John the Divine, and so on. Yet we might after all **want** to know about these things, and the authors evidently supposed that their readers would: their apparent irrelevance to what we suppose to be the subject of debate may be counterbalanced by the evident pleasure taken by the poets in the rehearsal and, more particularly, the versification of such knowledge. If we allow that a wide-ranging discussion of multifarious issues is as much part of the subject-matter of the poems as the ostensible debates, it may be possible to see generic as well as formal and material parallels between the two poems, in that both straddle the boundary between debate and miscellany[1] in a way that suggests that there was a ready audience for hybrid works of the sort. And if so, the way may be open for modern readers to appreciate and to enjoy both in ways that have not hitherto been obvious.

Nicholas Jacobs
Jesus College, Oxford

* † *

[1] *Miscellany* is the best term I can devise for a compilation comprising varied disquisitions on learned or quasi-learned topics and disparate accounts of often curious matter: something less formal than an encyclopaedia but more structured than a commonplace-book. Walter Map's *De Nugis Curialium* might stand as an example. Some such generic category seems desirable in order to account for these elements In such poems as Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Roman de 1a Rose* or Chaucer's *Hous of Fame,* where it is grafted on love-vision, or even In *Piers Plowman,* where it converges with what is characterized by Morton W. Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth Century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick, NJ, n.d.), pp. 23-4, as 'encyclopedic satire'.