

Dido's willful self-delusion, heavenly radiance is the flashing of lightning, and the only laughter expresses Venus's foreknowledge that the plans of *pronuba Iuno* will be destroyed, and with them Dido herself.³⁴ As in Bernardus's *Cosmographia*, the universe of this lyric is indelibly inscribed with the history of human error, and its seeming beneficence and harmony are deeply ambiguous.

It is a version of this poetic universe that frames the early ventures in "serious" Latin lyric that I would like to turn to now. I have chosen to consider first some poems that are almost certainly by Peter of Blois, who, as Dronke has shown, was a central figure in the literary culture inspired by the court of Henry II.³⁵ At Henry's court he might well have met vernacular poets,³⁶ and in any case his interest in vernacular lyric seems to me unmistakable. But Peter's poetry expresses his own milieu, and he uses the conventional resources of school-poetry to construct lyrics which, true to the Ovidian tradition of the schools,³⁷ articulate and analyze the paradoxes of a kind of *fin' amors* in the process of imitating it. Many features of twelfth-century vernacular lyric are evoked in his poems: its autonomy, the "circular" character of the emotional experience it defines,³⁸ the intimation of larger harmonies in the courtly vision of love. But the experience is always self-conscious, conditioned by an awareness of the cosmic and historical problems discovered by Alan's *Natura*, and nearly always ends with an acknowledgment of defeat or dislocation.

I will not argue for precise connections between any of these lyrics and specific vernacular models, but their sustained tracing of lyric and erotic effects, though probably influenced by the Ovidian experiments of Baudri of Bourgueil and other French precursors in school-poetry,³⁹ has no real precedent in the medieval Latin tradition, and seems to be most readily explicable as a response to the vernacular *chanson*, an appropriation of the resources of the Latin tradition to the creation of a new kind of poem in emulation of the most significant new departures in vernacular poetry. Thus the presentation of the lady of Peter's "A globo veteri" (appendix 1), who embodies the ideal preconception of earthly beauty which once inspired the primal creativity of Nature, is reminiscent of Bernardus's cosmogony and the *descriptions puellae* (descriptions of a girl) prescribed by Matthieu de Vendôme on the one hand, and at the same time responsive to the presentation of the *Dompna*, the all-powerful woman in troubadour lyric. Peter's lady is an archetype, an expression of all that is divine in the handiwork of Nature:

A globo veteri
cum rerum faciem

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traxissent superi
 mundique seriem
 prudens explicuit
 et texuit
 Natura,
 iam preconceperat
 quod fuerat
 factura.⁴⁰

When the higher powers had drawn forth the face of creation from the ancient mass, and Nature in her wisdom unfolded and wove together the sequence of world history, she had already formed a preconception of that which she was to create.

In a lyric of Raimbaut d'Orange, "mi donz" becomes, like Peter's lady, or like Nature herself in Alan's *De planctu Naturae*, the vice-regent of God on earth:

C'a mi donz laisset en patz
 C'a seignoriu vas totz latz,
 Qe'l mons totz li deu servir
 E sos volers obezir.⁴¹

For God left my lady to enjoy in peace sovereignty over all about her. So all the world must serve her and obey her wishes.

As Raimbaut's lady elsewhere becomes the model to whom other ladies bear a tentative, figural relation,⁴² Peter's exhibits in herself all the beauties that Nature distributes more sparingly among other women: she is that creature in which Nature's artistry expresses itself most clearly. But in a fallen world this very splendor is a source of peril. As Raimbaut contrives to make the beauty of his lady an argument for promiscuity, since his love of others is inspired by their partial embodiment of the ideal most fully realized in her, so the consummate artistry of Peter's *Natura* finally serves the interests of Venus, in that the effect of his lady's perfect beauty is to render him prey to the snares of desire. Peter's allusions to Bernardus thus serve to frame an ironic humor very close to that latent in Raimbaut's idealizations. School-poetry and vernacular lyric are here brought together by a common *clergie*, the vernacular drawing on the learned topoi of the Latin tradition.⁴³ But in Peter's poem the irony is more sustained, and ends by bringing to the surface a deeper irony, latent in the initial references to the artistry of Nature. "Rapit michi me Coronis" (Coronis steals me from myself), he declares, and this line, with its disturbing hint at a kind of Ovidian transformation,⁴⁴ is in effect the poem's punch line. To contemplate the primal perfection embodied in his lady is only to be made finally more keenly

Like the emergence of vernacular poetry in the twelfth century, the new renaissance of vernacular lyric represented by the Italian *stilnovisti* of the later thirteenth century is acknowledged by a Latin treatise, the *De vulgari eloquentia* of Dante, a work which recalls in various ways the concern of Alan's *De planctu* with the "nature" of language, the language proper to nature. Alan's *poeta* had yearned to recover his lost status as the "secretary" and "familiar" of Nature. The poet posited by the *De vulgari eloquentia* is properly the *domesticus* and *familiaris* of his own vernacular, a language which is itself a "nature," aspiring to full articulation through the discipline of a *grammatica* which orders the different strains of the *volgare* in their common impulse toward the recovery of a primal speech.⁵⁵ The confirmation of this insight into language is the *canzone* as developed by Dante and his contemporaries, a poem whose vernacular medium has attained the learned density and allusiveness of Latin. It is a measure of Dante's extraordinary sense of the capacities of vernacular poetry that his semi-mythical treatment of the *volgare* is in effect a rewriting of the myth of poetic language in the *De planctu*, a rejoinder on behalf of the vernacular which confirms how completely the Latin tradition has been assimilated, and conveys as well the implicit suggestion that it has been transcended.

APPENDIXES

Texts of Lyrics Discussed

1. Peter of Blois, "A globo veteri," *Carmina Burana*, no. 67, ed. Alfons Hilka and Otto Schumann, vol. 1: 2 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1941), 31-32.

1a

A globo veteri
cum rerum faciem
traxissent superi
mundique seriem
prudens explicuit
et texuit
Natura,
iam preconceperat
quod fuerat
factura.

1b

Que causas machine
mundane suscitans,
de nostra virgine
iamdudum cogitans,
plus hanc excoluit,

plus prebuit
honoris,
dans privilegium
et premium laboris.

2a
In hac pre ceteris
totius operis
Nature lucet opera.
tot munera
nulli favoris contulit,
sed extulit
hanc ultra cetera.

2b
Et que puellulis
avara singulis
solet partiri singula:
huic sedula
impendit copiosius
et plenius
forme munuscula.

3a
Nature studio
longe venustata,
contendit lilio
rugis non crispata
frons nivea.
simplices siderea
luce micant ocelli.

3b
Omnes amantium
trahit in se visus,
spondens remedium
verecunda risus
lascivia.
arcus supercilia
discriminant gemelli.

4a
Ab utriusque luminis
confinio
moderati libraminis
iudicio
naris eminentia
producitur venuste

quadam temperantia:
 nec nimis erigitur
 nec premitur
 iniuste.

4b
 Allicit verbis dulcibus
 et osculis,
 castigate tumentibus
 labellulis,
 roseo nectareus
 odor infusus ori.
 pariter eburneus
 sedet ordo dentium
 par niveum
 candori.

5a
 Certant nivi, micant lene
 pectus, mentem, colla, gene;
 sed, ne candore nimio
 evanescant in pallorem,
 precastigat hunc candorem
 rosam maritans lilio
 prudentior Natura,
 ut ex his fit aptior
 et gratior
 mixtura.

5b
 Rapit michi me Coronis
 privilegiata donis
 et Gratiarum flosculis.
 nam Natura dulcioris
 alimenta dans erroris,
 dum in stuporem populis
 hanc omnibus ostendit,
 in risu blando retia
 Veneria
 tetendit.

1a. When the gods had drawn forth the visible universe from ancient chaos, and wise Nature was unfolding and coordinating the order of things, she had already preconceived all that she would fashion.

1b. As she gave energy to the motive forces of the world system, she was thinking long in advance about [creating] my lady. She endowed her with

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extra refinement and beauty, offering her as the seal and mark of value on her handiwork.

2a. In her, beyond all other creatures, the craft of Nature shines forth. On no other did she confer so many special gifts, but raised this one above the rest.

2b. And though she stingily parcels out her gifts one at a time to young girls, on this one she eagerly bestowed a full abundance of the gifts of beauty.

3a. Beautified by zealous Nature, her snow-white forehead, unmarked by wrinkles, rivals the lily. Her modest eyes shine with a starry light.

3b. She draws to herself all lovers' gazes, proffering the balm of her smile in playful modesty. Twin arcs define her eyebrows.

4a. From the inner corners of her eyes, with a nicely calculated inclination, her charmingly formed nose extends forth to a moderate extent; it is neither extended too far nor unduly recessive.

4b. She charms with the sweet words and kisses of her chastely swelling lips, her rosy mouth suffused with the odor of nectar. Her ivory teeth are arranged in perfect order, and as white as snow.

5a. Her breast, chin, neck, cheeks, gently glowing, rival the snow. But lest they seem too faint and pallid by an excessive whiteness, Nature prudently limits this whiteness, marrying the rose to the lily, that a more appropriate, more pleasing blending may take place.

5b. Coronis steals me from myself, licensed by the flourishing gifts with which she is graced. For Nature, who lets us feed on the sweets of folly, by showing forth this maiden to the astonishment of all, sets the traps of Venus through that fair smile.

2. Peter of Blois, "Vacillantis trutine," ed. Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Poet and His World* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1984), 298–300.

1a
 Vacillantis trutine
 libramine
 mens suspensa fluctuat
 et estuat,
 in tumultus anxios
 dum se vertit
 et bipertit
 motus in contrarios.
*O, O, O, O languedo—
 causam languoris video,*

On Montpellier in this period see Linda M. Paterson, *The World of the Troubadours* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 188–95.

28. On the intellectual and religious background common to Latin and vernacular lyric, see Dronke, *Medieval Latin*, vol. 1, chaps. 2–3; and the pioneering study by Dimitri Scheludko, "Über die Theorien der Liebe bei den Trobadors," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 60 (1940): 191–234.

29. See Paul Zumthor, *Langue et techniques poétiques à l'époque romane (XIe-XIIIe siècles)* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1963), 27–49. As Zumthor remarks, "une poétique tient sa nature de la langue à laquelle elle s'applique, plus que d'une intention spirituelle générale" (47). See also Peterson, "Writing Flowers," 15–16.

30. Leupin, *Barbarolexis*, 22.

31. *De planctu*, 8, in Häring, "Alan of Lille," 837.

32. *Poetria nova*, 538–41, 545–48, 552–53; in Faral, *Arts poétiques*, 213–14.

33. "Troie post excidium" (*Carmina Burana* 98), stanza 9, as emended by Dronke, "Dido's Lament: From Medieval Latin Lyric to Chaucer," in his *Intellectuals and Poets in Medieval Europe* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1992), 440. Compare Alfons Hilka and Otto Schumann, eds., *Carmina Burana*, vol. 1, part 2 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1941), 129.

34. For a very different reading see Dronke, "Dido's Lament," 440.

35. Peter Dronke, "Peter of Blois and Poetry at the Court of Henry II," in Dronke, *The Medieval Poet and His World* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1984), 281–339.

36. See *ibid.*, 283–85; Reto R. Bezzola, *Les origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en occident*, 3:1 (Paris: Champion, 1963), 257–64.

37. That Peter may have been the pupil of Bernardus Silvestris during the early stages of his poetic career is suggested by Dronke, *Cosmographia*, 9.

38. On these aspects of vernacular lyric, see Pierre Bec, "Quelques réflexions sur la poésie lyrique médiévale: problèmes et essai de caractérisation," in *Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1969), 2:1309–29; Bec, "La douleur et son univers poétique chez Bernard de Ventadour," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 11 (1968): 545–71 and 12 (1969): 25–33; Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 189–285.

39. See Dronke, *Medieval Latin*, 1:163–263; Gerald A. Bond, "'Iocus Amoris': The Poetry of Baudri of Bourgueil and the Formation of the Ovidian Subculture," *Traditio* 42 (1986): 143–93.

40. *Carmina Burana* 67, stanza 1a, in Hilka and Schumann, *Carmina Burana*, 1: 2: 31; also Wilhelm Meyer, ed., *Die Arundel Sammlung mittellateinischer Lieder*, Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philosophische-Historische Klasse, N.F. vol. 11, part 2 (1908), 13; C. J. McDonough, *The Oxford Poems of Hugh Primas and the Arundel Lyrics* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), 80. In translating I take "Natura," rather than an understood *rerum facies*, as the subject of "preconceperat." David A. Traill argues for the other reading on grammatical grounds ("Notes on 'Dum Diane vitrea' (CB 62) and 'A globo veteri' (CB 67)," *Mittellateinische Jahrbuch* 23 (1988): 149–50), but his alternative presents syntactic problems of its own, and so far as I can see this is true of any reading of the passage as it stands. On the topos of "Nature as the maker of beautiful human beings," see Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (New York: Pantheon, 1953), 180–82. With the opening of CB 67

compare Bernard de Ventadour, "Lo tems vai e ven e vire," in Lazar, *Bernard de Ventadour*, no. 44, lines 50–59; "Be m'an perdut lai enves Ventadorn," *ibid.*, no. 9, lines 43–45.

41. Raimbaut d'Orange, no. 30, lines 53–56, in Walter T. Pattison, ed., *The Life and Works of the Troubadour Raimbaut d'Orange* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1952), 172. See also the discussion of Raimbaut in Dronke, *Medieval Latin*, 1:98–112.

42. "Per vos am, dompn'ab cor vaire / Las autras tant co'l mons dura, / Car son en vostra figura" (It is through you, lady of the changing heart, that I love the others, while worldly existence lasts. For they are but *figurae* of you); no. 11, lines 64–66, in Pattison, *Life and Works of Raimbaut d'Orange*, 105.

43. Conversely a lyric relatively free of learned reference such as Peter's "Vacillantis trutine" (appendix 2) will show how much he can sound like Bernard de Ventadour when he is writing less pedantically.

44. This Acteon-like victimization by the consequences of gazing is, so to speak, the complement to the *effictio* Peter practices in this lyric, the detailed description of a beautiful woman prescribed by the *artes poeticae*. See A. C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 35–48.

45. For a less precious variation, apparently by Peter of Blois, on the theme of virginity deliberately unravished, see "Ex ungue primo teneram," in Dronke, *Medieval Latin*, 2:378–80; for the attribution, Dronke, "Peter of Blois," 322. Godman suggests that this more obviously ironic poem may have been an answer to "Amor habet superos," which he regards as a straightforward celebration of continence ("Literary Classicism," 166).

46. *Carmina Burana* 58, stanzas 1–2, in Hilka and Schumann, *Carmina Burana*, 1:2: 4.

47. On such thematic uses of the idea of aesthetic coherence, see Leupin, *Barbarolexis*, 66–67.

48. There are striking correspondences between "Si linguis" and Guillaume's poem. Dronke, noting that "Si linguis" shows signs of having been copied at least twice before the *Codex Buranus* appeared in the 1220s, suggests that the Latin poem is a generation earlier than Guillaume's, commonly dated 1225–30 (*Medieval Latin*, 1:323n).

49. On this affinity see Edwards, *Ratio and Invention*, 52–74.

50. Dronke sees the lover's wish as literally granted, and emends the final words of stanza 5, line 4, to "dum moraret icta" (*Medieval Latin*, 1:323).

51. The religious references are noted by Dronke (*ibid.*, 1:318–31).

52. For Dronke the poem is a *summa* of courtly idealism, remarkable for "its high cult of the beloved, its awe before the mystery of love, . . . its faith in the sublimity of the courtly ideal" (*ibid.*, 1:330). D. W. Robertson, Jr., views "Si linguis" as a parody of courtly love ("Two Poems from the *Carmina Burana*," in his *Essays in Medieval Culture* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980], 138–50). Divergent interpretations are discussed by P. G. Walsh, ed. and trans., *Love Lyrics from the Carmina Burana* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 68–69.

53. Toril Moi, "Desire in Language: Andreas Capellanus and the Controversy of Courtly Love," in *Medieval Literature: Criticism, Ideology and History*, ed. David Aers (London: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 24.