

see the neighbor as "the other," the mistaken, fallible savage, rather than as an expression of his own fallibility and essential allegiance to the safety of tradition, he remains in the same dense shade of ignorance that, he thinks, darkens only his neighbor's actions.

In this darkly symbolic way, "Mending Wall," as Frost mentions in his Foreword to *North of Boston*, "takes up the theme where 'A Tuft of Flowers,' in *A Boy's Will*, leaves off." In that poem the radiance of a clearing provides a communion between the mower and raker and between the playful and practical natures of a psyche. In "Mending Wall" the shade of trees preserves an unproductive distinction enforced, in fact, by the speaker and *his* wall.

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ADSO'S CLOSING LINE IN THE NAME OF THE ROSE

Adso, the narrator of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, closes his lengthy memoir with an enigmatic line:

Stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda
tenemus.

The verse means, "the rose of old stands in name; we hold mere names." One critic sees in the sentence in the sentence the "key to the book's meaning," while another detects in it the theme of "disclosed concealment."² The symbolism of the rose and the force of "nomina nuda" intrigue, I am sure, all readers

of this absorbing detective story in a late medieval setting.

The source of Adso's puzzling remark is Bernard of Morval's *De contemptu mundi* (Liber I, line 952), a work described by its modern editor as "a bitter satirical poem of 3000 lines upon the morals of the XIIth century."³ The author was a Cluniac monk about whom nothing is known save that he composed his long versified invective on human pride and its consequent misery in the middle decades of the twelfth century.⁴ The work vehemently scores human iniquities, details the wretchedness of the human condition, and directs its reader's vision toward the eternal life of reward and punishment. The central theme is conversion from *amor mundi* to *contemptus mundi*, which Bernard fosters by contrasting the misery of this life with the everlasting joy of the heavenly Jerusalem. As part of this theme, he relentlessly insists upon the transience of all earthly pleasures,

1. Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, translated by Wm. Weaver (New York, 1983), p. 502; Italian original: *Il nome della rosa* (Milan: Bompiani), p. 503.

2. Anthony Hartley, "Eco's Great Mystery: Secrets of an Old Library," *Encounter* (March, 1984), 38; John Churchill, "Wittgenstein's Ladder," *American Notes & Queries*, 23 (1984), 21.

3. H.C. Hoskier, *De contemptu mundi by Bernard of Morval* (London, 1929), title page. Eco revealed his source in *Postscript to the Name of the Rose*, translated by Wm. Weaver (New York, 1984), p. 1.

4. George J. Engelhardt published a three-part study of Bernard's poem in *Mediaeval Studies* 22 (1960), 26 (1964), and 29 (1967).

among which he includes the satisfaction derived from power, fame and glory. To press the point, Bernard introduces classical and scriptural exemplars of strength (Hercules, Hector): learning (Socrates, Plato): eloquence (Demosthenes, Cicero): beauty (Absalom); power (Alexander).⁵ All have passed away! *Est ubi gloria nunc, Babylonia?*, he inquires in another line (Liber I, 933) which Eco borrowed for Adso's summation in *The Name of the Rose*. Culminating these *ubi sunt?* examples is a list citing exclusively Roman figures of old, such as Marius, Fabricius, Cato, and, of course, Julius Caesar. Where are they all?, Bernard asks:

Nunc ubi Regulus, aut ubi Romulus, aut ubi Remus?
Stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus.⁶

Placed in its own context, then, the curious line of Bernard of Morval underscores the impermanence of all things by reminding us that all which remains of Rome's ancient grandeur is names. The view accords, precisely, with Eco's main theme in *The Name of the Rose*, which is dissolution, the collapse of a world.⁷ At the end of the novel,

5. Liber I, lines 903-36.

6. The name *Regulus*, supported by several manuscripts in Hoskier's *sigla*, is probably correct, though he accepted the reading *Remulus*.

7. Hartley, 37-38. The collapse of the Middle Ages as a theme of Eco's novel is also discussed in a perceptive review essay by Verlyn Flieger, "The Name, the Thing, the Mystery," *Georgia Review* (Spring, 1984), p. 178-181.

nothing survives of the great monastery and its extraordinary library, except names. However, the original context clearly favors the reading *Stat Roma* for *Stat rosa*. Moreover, there is manuscript authority for this which Eco overlooked, or perhaps discounted.⁸ I would argue that the theme of this portion of Bernard's poem, which was a twelfth century commonplace (*sic transit gloria mundi*), is best served by *Roma*, not *rosa*.⁹ Adso's closing line should be "The Rome of old stands in name; we hold mere names."

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THE GORGE AND THE BISHOP: NEW INFORMATION FOR THE *OED*

In the facetiously satiric "The Dream," published in the *Columbian Magazine* [Philadelphia], III (Jan., 1789), 17-19, we find the types of social man characterized as fish of many kinds. Particularly, the author notes "a strange fish" with "two large haunches somewhat like those

8. Ms. H, which offers a number of compelling variants in the text of Bernard's poem, is discussed by Hoskier on p. xxii of his edition. It is of German provenance, and dated from the late 12th-early 13th century.

9. A passage celebrating the ancient glories of Rome in Alexander Neckam's *De laudibus Divinae Sapientiae* (ca. 1215) has the verse: *Roma stat, orbis apex, gloria, gemma, decus*. See Thomas Wright, *Alexandri Neckam De Naturis Rerum libri duo and De Laudibus Divinae Sapientiae* (London, 1863), p. 444.