



Difficile liberté

Franc Vouloir, de la notion éthique à la figure poétique (xiii^e-xv^e siècles)

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Abstract: In the last centuries of the Middle Ages, allegory contributed to the psychic and ethical exploration of the individual. This article investigates the figure of Franc Vouloir, which personifies individual free will, in a set of literary texts ranging from the 13th to the 15th century. Its philosophical lineaments were first traced through the 13th-century scholastic debate about liberty and moral responsibility. French literature vulgarized the main ideas of this debate from the 13th to the 15th century, first from a conceptual point of view (Jean de Meung), and then with the poetic personification of Franc Vouloir, which was frequent in Eustache Deschamps or replaced by Franche Volonté or Franc Arbitre in some morality plays. The individual life choice embodied by Franc Vouloir also involved sentimental life, either in marriage or in courtly love, where it became all the more problematic as two individual liberties had to conjoin in one couple. Lastly, Franc Vouloir appeared as a figure of the *intentio auctoris* in several 15th century texts.

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