**THE WIFE OF BATH – CHARACTERIZATION’S ANALYSIS**

The object of the present work is to analyse The Wife of Bath’s characterization in the verse taken into consideration, which is an extract of Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.

The present work will discuss the most important strategy of the characterisation. A denotative analysis will be first provided, on a second moment connotative choices will be considered to find out how they add to meaning.

The most important strategy used is irony, which is a figure of speech that express a concept through its exact opposite.

First of all, while reading the dominant effect is the feeling of confusion, indeed the reader finds himself or herself in front of very peculiar juxtapositions of noun and adjectives. Hence, the reader is curious to find the link between the unconventional traits.

Furthermore, the narrator speaks in the first plural person, thus the reader also wonders who the “us” refers to.

Right from the start the “woman” is connoted with the adjective “worthy, which is in a key position at the beginning of the line, and the text, and also highlight by the alliteration of sound “w”. As a consequence the reader understand the importance of the adjective, that is indeed repeated once more in line 15, “A worthy woman all her life”, and is curious to find out the reason why she’s worthy.

What’s more, the expression “all her life” acquires a superlative meaning, underlining even more the adjective.

Hers skills in her profession, making cloth, are highlighted by the alliteration of sound “s”: “she showed so (great a bent)”, she overcomes even the people of Ypres and Ghent, renowned for their weaving.

Her clothes are widely described and peculiar. Such as: “her kerchiefs” “were of finely woven ground” and “weighed a good ten pound”, also “her hose” “were of the finest scarlet red” and “gartered tight”, “her shoes were soft and new”. The abundance of adjectives, the absolute superlative adjective “finest” and the expensive and eye-catching clothes suggest an eccentric and showy trait of her personality.

Moving forward the narrator adds “well wimpled up”, “a hat as broad as is a buckler or a shield”, “flowing mantle” and “her heels spurred sharply”, that contribute to the feeling of confusion above mentioned. Indeed the reader feels lost and confused because he or she can’t fit the character into a category.

Her character is connoted with the adjective “wrath” and the litotes “put out of charity”, that underline her bossy and strong-willed traits. They are mirrored in her physical appearance, indeed her faces is also described as “bold” and “red in hue”.

The repetition of the colour red (lines 12, 14) connotes her passion of life and living. Indeed, despite appearing as a pious woman, there are some details that disturb the picture, such as the fact that she had “five husbands” and “other company in youth”, she was “skilled in wandering”, she sat “on an ambling horse” and was experienced in love, “an art in which she knew the oldest dances”.

Thus far the Wife of Bath’s portrait is extremely unconventional and contradicts the one usually associated to a medieval woman, humble, shy and docile.

In conclusion, the poet underlines her emancipation with an ironic tone, created by some expressions like “what’s more”, “no need just now to speak of that”, “forsooth”, “truth to say” and the litotes “put out of charity”. Also the expression “she was skilled in wandering by the way” suggest an ironic note, indeed it is as if he’s slightly making fun of her.