**THE WIFE OF BATH**

The wife of Bath is one of the several pilgrims going to Canterbury. She is introduced in the General Prologue to Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. The only piece of information the reader can have from the title is that she comes from bath. He/she also understands her social statues from the word wife.

The woman's characterisation is built up resorting to different aspects of her personality. In the present paragraph I'm going to illustrate the ways the narrator exploits in order to bring the woman on surface.

The first reference plays on irony since G. Chaucer immediately informs the reader that she is"somewhat deaf". He also tells about her origin: she comes from bath or the near about and besides he preaces her skill in clothes making. He also adds that she could compete with the dressmakers from "Ypres" and "Gant", two important towns famous for their clothes and materials in the Flemish countries. The language he uses relies on a rhyme scheme that ties lines together that is the rhyming couplet. The reader’s attention is immediately drown by the narrator's choice of typical incipit of fables when he says "There was... ".

Also he exploits word order deviation when he says "at making clothes she had a skilful hand", because this is not the ordinary word order. In this way the stressed part of the line is "had a skilful hand" which rhymes with Gant.

On a second moment the narrator indirectly underlines her ambition and vanity: he tells the reader that nobody in the parish dared "to go and proceed her in the offerings" because if somebody did so she would immediately get angry. Such behaviour shows the woman was not really interested in charity but she rather enjoyed always to be in the front or on the floor (stage). The characterisation proceeds (goes on / is developed) with reference to the way she dresses and the narrator focuses the reader’s attention on two aspects of her dressing style: the first one "her head dresses were of finest women groud". He highlights the good quality of her style of wearing but immediately afterwards he parodies it because inform that "they weight about ten pounds". Farther than he makes it loud and clear that she used to doing this on Sundays that is on the day when she went to mess and this implies that she wanted everybody to look at her. In a way or another the narrator’s judgement unveils the double nature of the woman’s behaviour.

Also when the narrator describes (presents) the stockings she would wear he insists on the colour red: "the finest scarlet red" makes the effect exaggerated and therefore ridiculous. The colour is an additional way to underline that whatever the woman did was in excess and therefore once again the narrator wants to convey a rather critical point of view about the woman to whom he always refers with the noun "the wife of". The intelligent reader wonders why a married woman should chose a dresses style just for pleasure to focus everybody's attention on her in the style of today's veline. Probably she was more interested in attracting men's attention than in any other possible matter.

The idea is immediately confirmed by the narrator's description of the way she wore her stockings which he says were tightly fastened. He also insists on the money she used to spend on her, physical appearance which makes the lady dearing and rich. This allows the intelligent reader to understand that the narrator sets the character among the merchants in the middle class, one that had risen consistently in that period. Again the narrator plays on the woman's personality in line 416 since he speaks of her "as of a bald" and "fear" this is the point of irony "red of hue".