Studies in Chaucer's Imagery.

William Allen Tornwall
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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STUDIES IN CHAUCER'S IMAGERY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by

William A. Tornwall
B. S. Delta State Teachers College, 1937
M. A. University of Alabama, 1943
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<td>Anel</td>
<td>Anelida and Arcite</td>
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<td>Astr</td>
<td>A Treatise on the Astrolabe</td>
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<td>HF</td>
<td>The House of Fame</td>
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<td>KnT</td>
<td>The Knight's Tale</td>
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<td>Lady</td>
<td>A Complaint to his Lady</td>
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LGW The Legend of Good Women
MancT The Manciple's Tale
Mars The Complaint of Mars
Mel The Tale of Melibee
MercB Merciles Beaute
MerchT The Merchant's Tale
MillT The Miller's Tale
MkT The Monk's Tale
MLT The Man of Law's Tale
NPT The Nun's Priest's Tale
PardT The Pardoner's Tale
ParstT The Parson's Tale
PF The Parliament of Fowls
PhysT The Physician's Tale
Pity The Complaint unto Pity
PrT The Prioress's Tale
Purse The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse
Rom The Romaunt of the Rose
RvT The Reeve's Tale
Scor Lenyo de Chaucer a Scogan
SecNT The Second Nun's Tale
ShipT The Shipman's Tale
SqT The Squire's Tale
Sted Lak of Stedfastnesse
SumT The Summoner's Tale
Thop Sir Thopas
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<td>The Complaint of Venus</td>
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<td>WBT</td>
<td>The Wife of Bath's Tale</td>
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<td>Wom Nob</td>
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ABSTRACT

This investigation of Chaucer's figurative imagery is based upon an examination of all the poems exclusive of the somewhat doubtful Romaunt of the Rose. The discussion is presented in an introductory chapter and a series of related essays, each of which treats a different aspect of the poet's figurative language.

The first essay, "Chaucer's Imagery and the Colors of Rhetoric," shows that Chaucer makes use of all the figurative devices recommended in the medieval treatises on rhetoric, though such colors as translatio, allegoria, and similitudo are found to be of much greater importance for the expression of imagery than most of the others.

The second essay, "The Appropriateness of the Subject Matter in Chaucer's Imagery," demonstrates that although his images characteristically contain a mixture of subject matter more or less fitting to his informal, conversational style, the materials in the imagery of the House of Fame, of the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women, and of the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales are appreciably influenced by the character of the poems. Further, it is shown that the imagery in the Reeve's and the Wife of Bath's prologues reflects the background
and occupation of the speakers and that in the tales of the Knight, the Miller, the Reeve, and the Nun's Priest the subject-matter in the figures is especially fitting not only to the character of the poems but to the narrators as well.

The next study, "Chaucer's Treatment of Derived Imagery," illustrates the poet's widely diverse methods of adaptation, which range all the way from the occasional instances in which images are shortened to the large number in which they are greatly extended, from those that closely reproduce a model to those that give independent development to a mere hint or suggestion, from the few which render an image less specific to the many that are made more definite. The striking originality which Chaucer so often achieves in his treatment is discovered to result for the most part from his numerous additions of concrete details.

The fourth essay, "The Imagery in Chaucer's Portraits," shows that the descriptive passages of this kind commonly contain an astounding abundance of imagery in all periods of Chaucer's poetry and that this imagery is of a functional character. Moreover, the imagery thus employed is found to manifest a development through the successive poems both in the particular functions which it serves and in its degree of suggestive power.
The final essay, "Chaucer's Attitude Toward Imagery," attempts to demonstrate that the poet's scattered and fragmentary comments on poetic art, though insufficient to construct a complete and hard-and-fast theory of imagery, seem to indicate (1) that Chaucer does not look with disfavor upon figurative language and the colors in general as some scholars have supposed, (2) that he sanctions a functional use of imagery, (3) that he favors materials which are at least in a general way appropriate to the character of a poem and to a narrator, (4) that he considers old books the chief source of images, though he recognizes the importance of oral materials and first-hand observation, and (5) that he realizes the value of visualizing imagination in the creation of imagery. These critical ideas are found to accord with the conclusions reached in the preceding essays concerning Chaucer's actual practices.
CHAPTER I

ON THE STUDY OF CHAUCER'S IMAGERY

Since many studies might be made of Chaucer's imagery, it is desirable to explain at the onset the method and purpose of this particular investigation. The subject, as every student of literature knows, is complex and presents numerous difficulties. There is, to begin with, the matter of definition. To the psychologist and some literary critics, an image is a mental reproduction of a sensation belonging to any of the senses. According to this definition, the image may be presented in either literal or figurative language. But, as understood by other literary critics, an image is never direct statement; it is always sense experience presented indirectly in metaphor and its related forms. Many students have adopted the latter definition, and it is the conception of imagery on which the present investigation is based.

Even within the narrowed borders set by this definition numerous lines of approach may be followed; yet all of these fall into three main divisions: they are concerned with the form, or the subject matter, or the function of the imagery. The present work, which is based on an examination of the images in all of Chaucer's poems
exclusive of the somewhat doubtful Romaunt of the Rose, is concerned with certain aspects of imagery in each of these divisions. The discussion is presented in a series of related essays, the first of which deals with Chaucer's imagery in its relation to the medieval colors of rhetoric; the second with the appropriateness of the subject matter in the images; the third with the treatment of borrowed and proverbial images; the fourth with the use of imagery in Chaucer's portraits; and the last with Chaucer's attitude toward imagery.

The subject of these studies has not, of course, gone without some amount of critical notice. Here might be mentioned the work of the source-hunters who, though not concerned especially with imagery, have often called attention to figures of speech which Chaucer derives from other poets and from the store of proverbial imagery.

current in his day. Also to some extent connected with imagery are the inquiries into Chaucer's relations to medieval rhetoric and poetic by J. M. Manly, B. S. Harrison, and Traugott Naunin and the studies of his originality in


3Chaucer and the Rhetoricians, Warton Lecture (London: Oxford University Press, 1926). Manly's thesis is that in his early work Chaucer followed more or less closely the elaborate teachings of Geoffrey de Vinsauf and others, but gradually broke away from these conventions into the realistic idiom of his maturer poems.

4"The Colors of Rhetoric in Chaucer" (unpubl. diss. Yale, 1932); and "Medieval Rhetoric in the Book of the Duchess," PMLA, XLIX (1938), 428-442. Harrison takes exception to Manly only in his argument that Chaucer gained his knowledge of rhetoric from the French poets rather than from the rhetoricians.

5Der Einfluss der mittelalterlichen Rhetorik auf Chaucers Dichtung (Bonn diss., 1929). Naunin finds, in opposition to Manly's thesis, that the influence of the rhetoricians is present in all periods of Chaucer's poetry and that in the later work rhetoric is closely woven with the main themes.
the use of rhetoric by Charles A. Muscatine and Dorothy Everett. Somewhat more closely related to the subject of the present investigation are several inquiries which deal in part with Chaucer's use of imagery. One notes particularly Muscatine's brilliant essay "Form, Texture, and Meaning in Chaucer's Knight's Tale," Bertrand H. Bronson's essay "The Book of the Duchess Re-opened," and John Speirs' book Chaucer the Maker.

Then there are a few Chaucer studies which are concerned exclusively with imagery. An essay by R. K. Gordon entitled "Chaucer's Imagery" identifies a number


8 PMLA, LXV (1950), 911-929.
9 PMLA, LXVII (1952), 863-881.
10 London: Faber and Faber, 1951. Along with such studies perhaps one should also mention Elizabeth R. Homann's unpublished doctoral dissertation "Kineesthetic Imagery in Chaucer" (University of California, 1948), though this work is based on imagery defined entirely in terms of sense perception and takes very little account of figurative expression.

of images with the poet's interests and experiences, and another by Paul F. Baum, "Chaucer's Nautical Metaphors," argues that the sea images in Book I of Troilus and Criseyde are derived from the poet's reading rather than from actual observation. Besides these brief studies, two major investigations deal with Chaucer's imagery. These are Friedrich Klaeber's book Das Bild bei Chaucer and Donald C. Baker's recent unpublished doctoral dissertation "Symbol and Theme in Chaucer's Vision Poems." The former, which is an expansion of the author's inaugural dissertation Sammlung der Bilder aus der Tierwelt, collects all of Chaucer's figures of speech and classifies them according to the spheres from which their subject matter is drawn, the forms and constructions in which they appear, and the literary sources from which they are derived. Despite its scholarly thoroughness, however, Klaeber's work suffers from over-classification and from the inclusion, in some cases, of what is merely etymological imagery or "dead

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12SAQ, XLIX (1950), 67-73.

13Berlin: Richard Heindrich, 1893.

14University of Oklahoma, 1954.

15Berlin: Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1892.
metaphor.° Baker's study, as its title suggests, takes an altogether different line of approach from that of Klaeber's. Concerned only with symbol, 17 the author shows how Chaucer uses imagery of this kind to enhance and express the poetic themes in the four dream-vision poems—the theme being understood to mean "the ultimate statement of the poem beyond its literal meaning." These studies by Klaeber and Baker have contributed much to the understanding of Chaucer's imagery and its functions, but they have by no means exhausted this interesting and significant subject. The essays which comprise the present investigation may therefore be thought of as a supplement to a body of inquiry already well begun, and as such they should have some value in contributing additional insight into the character and function of Chaucer's poetic images.

The definition of poetic imagery which has been given above is perhaps too broad to be sufficiently explanatory, but there have been numerous attempts to explain more specifically this conception of the image. According to H. W. Wells, an image is "the recognition of one concept

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16 As typical instances, note "beddes hed," "hevedes [of arwes]," "beddys fete," and "shilde us from meschaunce." Das Bild bei Chaucer, pp. 77, 123. For comment on etymological imagery, see p. 11, below.

17 In the present studies symbol is regarded as figurative imagery. See p. 9, below.
by another, dissimilar in kind, but alike in some strong ungeneric characteristic."\(^{18}\) Again, John Middleton Murry states: "The image may be visual, may be auditory, may refer back to any primary physical experience . . . or it may be wholly psychological, the reference of one emotional or intellectual experience to another . . . the essential is simply that there should be intuitive perception of similarity between dissimilars . . . "\(^{19}\) And, as explained by Miss Caroline F. E. Spurgeon in her study of Shakespeare's imagery, an image is "the little word picture used by the poet or prose writer to illustrate, illuminate and embellish his thought. It is a description or idea, which by comparison or analogy, stated or understood, with something else, transmits to us through the emotions and associations it arouses, something of the 'wholeness,' the depth and richness of the way the writer views, conceives or has felt what he is telling us."\(^{20}\)

Such pronouncements are helpful in that they stress the essential qualities of the poetic image: some form of sensory experience and some form of comparison which has more suggestive power than purely logical analogy. With


respect to the first of these qualities, it will be noted that persons differ greatly in their ability to recreate in the mind sensory impressions of past experiences.\(^{21}\)

But, as I. A. Richards has observed, "what gives an image efficacy is less its vividness as an image than its character as a mental event peculiarly connected with sensation."

That is, its efficacy results from its being "a relict" and a "representation" of sensation.\(^{22}\) In regard to comparison as an essential characteristic of poetic imagery, it must be emphasized that this principle is not to be understood merely as a matter of calling attention to resemblances. As Richards has convincingly pointed out, "it may be just a putting together of things to let them work together; it may be a study of them both to see how they are like and how unlike one another; or it may be a process of calling attention to certain aspects of the other."\(^{23}\)

The comparisons which constitute poetic imagery appear most frequently as tropes or figures of speech. Yet


\(^{23}\) *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 120.
representations of sense experience which appear on the surface as literal sometimes have signification beyond their literal, contextual meaning and thus embody the principle of poetic comparison. Such imagery is generally called symbol. While individual instances of trope and symbol are referred to as simple images, other forms are termed complex. These may consist of several short images which are fused to form a longer image, of a single image which is extended so as to encompass an entire poem, as in an allegory, or of a series of symbolic images which recur like the leitmotiv in Wagnerian opera.

The functions of imagery as here defined are many. It may be used to ornament, to illustrate, to clarify, to animate inanimate objects, to stimulate associations, to express poetic themes. As Stephen J. Brown remarks, "imagery enables us to express certain things for which there is no literal term that is their precise equivalent. It gives freshness and novelty to the expression of

\[\text{\textsuperscript{24}}\text{Charles Baudouin, Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1924), p. 28, points out that "every spontaneous mental image is to some extent symbolical." In the present study, however, symbol will be regarded as poetic imagery only in cases where the principle of comparison or figurativeness is recognizable and alive.}\]

ideas. . . . But even when our ideas can without figure be expressed, yet in the process of bringing home these ideas to our minds, figure renders speech a further service."26 Moreover, figurative imagery is "the normal vehicle for expression of emotion," and at times it is the only means by which a given emotion can "find adequate and precise expression."27

Imagery, which is thus so generally an important feature of language and poetry, claims special interest and attention in Chaucer, for throughout his poems, and particularly the later ones, there is an amazing abundance of figurative expression. Indeed, one could scarcely imagine the famous Prologue or the tales of the Miller and the Reeve without their colorful metaphors and similes.

The study of Chaucer's imagery, however, presents several difficulties which demand special consideration. One of these is the distinguishing of what is literal and what is figurative in Chaucer's Middle English vocabulary.

In approaching this problem, one will note that the figurative principle which is an essential quality in poetic imagery is also an ever-present principle in the development of language itself.28 This fact becomes

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27 Ibid., p. 88.
immediately evident if one reflects for a moment on the multitude of common words which have several distinct meanings. The verb "to see," for example, is applied not only to observation of material objects by the bodily eye, but also to the comprehension of things which are addressed exclusively to the understanding, as in "I see your drift," "I see how it will end." These extensions of meaning which originate by figurative processes are in one sense metaphorical and they are often referred to as linguistic or etymological images. But they are not to be confused with poetic images, since they become so staled and blunted through time and use that they have only literal meaning.

Large numbers of words, like the verb "to see," preserve both their basic and their extended or secondary meanings; other words develop secondary meanings which are current for a time and then drop out of use; while still others lose their basic meanings and retain only their secondary meanings. These linguistic developments naturally give rise to difficulties in the reading of early poets. And when the poet is Chaucer the matter becomes extremely complex, for vast numbers of his words survive in modern English with changed meanings and thought associations. If the student of Chaucer's imagery reads in terms of modern

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29 For further discussion on the distinction between poetic and etymological imagery, see Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth, trans. Susanne K. Langer (New York: Harper, 1946), pp. 94-95.
meanings, he may therefore find images where none are intended and miss others which are specially created. To avoid these dangers, he must, so far as it is possible, forget modern meanings and constitute himself a linguistic contemporary of the poet.

For accomplishing this linguistic reconstruction, the student has a number of aids. First, there are the glossaries which appear in many editions of Chaucer. In these a more or less accurate translation word is listed for a word in Chaucer's text, the translation word being chosen to interpret the particular passage in which the word occurs. In cases where a word is employed many times in the text, the glossary often gives many, sometimes contradictory meanings. Study of these may enable one to distinguish basic and figurative meanings; yet frequently the distinction is not clear. Although Middle English dictionaries are very inadequate in their lists of meanings, they prove more helpful in many cases than the

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glossaries. Like the latter, they give meanings in terms of translation words, but since they often quote particular passages to identify the application of the translation words, the danger of confusing basic and figurative meanings is somewhat reduced.

Perhaps the greatest assistance in dealing with the linguistic problem is provided by the *Concordance of the Complete Works of Chaucer*.\(^3^2\) An effective method for its use has been outlined by D. D. Griffith in his essay "On Word-Studies in Chaucer." "The desire to know the real meaning of a word or phrasing may be satisfied," he says, "by references to all the passages in which the poet has used the word under consideration. By careful analysis of the different passages, the association and meaning of the word or phrasing is ascertained. This study is supported by the etymology and the history of the word, especially in the language that Chaucer knew and in the writings of his contemporaries." As aids to the word analysis, Griffith recommends examination of "passages in which a synonym or contrast occurs or a situation is presented in which the meaning of the word is definitely fixed. Usually the consideration of the adjectival, adverbial, substantive and verbal meanings clarifies the

basic meaning... Through such study of many examples one thus "develops an understanding of literal, figurative, and associational meanings."\(^{33}\)

A further problem in the study of Chaucer's imagery is that of arriving at an unbiased estimate of the quality and effectiveness of the images. The special difficulty here arises from the fact that they are, in a very large proportion, adaptations of images from other writers and from proverbial sources.\(^{34}\) At first glance it may seem that invention would be greatly superior to adaptation, that freshness and novelty must be superior to conventionality. Upon this assumption some critics have based their evaluation of Chaucer's use of imagery. Klaeber, for example, is thus led to remark:

Ch. war kein "Originalgenie" ersten Ranges. Seine Bilder zeichnen sich nicht, in ersten Linie durch Originalität, durch überraschende Neuheit aus. Das formelhafte Element (im weiteren Sinne) spielt in ihnen eine außerordentlich grosse Rolle; was uns um

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\(^{34}\) Klaeber finds that Chaucer's figures of speech are most indebted to the Roman de la Rose, Boccaccio, Dante, Boethius, and Ovid. But he erroneously attributes to Chaucer's invention many stock comparisons in the Canterbury Tales: "Von manchen gerade der ausgezeichnetsten C. T. dürfen wir getrost annehmen, dass samtliche Vergleiche und Metaphern allein dem Genius des Dichters zu verdanken sind." Das Bild bei Chaucer, p. 412.
so deutlicher bewusst wird, wenn wir etwa die
grossartige Originalität Dantescher Bilder
 hiermit vergleichen.35

In considering such a method of evaluation and such an estimate of Chaucer’s imagery, one must remember that the extreme value which Klaeber and others have placed on überraschende Neuheit is a notion belonging only to late modern times. "Our robust elders in poetry," as John Livingston Lowes observes, "exercised the same imperial rights of eminent domain over beauty to their liking in a book, that they exerted over beauty of their finding in earth, sea, or sky. And the stipulation of their holding was in either case the same—they must improve the property."36 Actually, adapted images, as well as invented images, are present in varying degrees in the work of all good poets (Dante not excepted); and, to quote one recent critic, "it is an open question which method has produced the more memorable literary utterances."37

While it must be granted at once that invention has its own high value, an estimate based on this quality alone

35Ibid., p. 413.


37J. E. Hankins, Shakespeare’s Derived Imagery (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1953), p. 3.
ignores far too much that is effective and vital in Chaucer's use of imagery. One must recognize, in the first place, that what Klaeber and other source-hunters label as borrowed images are in many cases no more than the slightest hints and suggestions from other poets which Chaucer often has so transformed and developed that their effect on the reader is essentially new. Furthermore, it will be noted that Chaucer achieves artistic effect through the use of imagery of the most conventional sort. Sometimes he does this by giving stock images a more nearly perfect utterance than anyone has given them before. Again, even when he gives these images no distinctive treatment, they are often conducive to the particular feelings and associations he wishes to convey, for though they lack novelty and surprise, they can give satisfaction to the reader through

38 For discussion of this point, see P. V. P. Shelly, The Living Chaucer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940), pp. 100-109. "A poet's mind," says Shelly, "is necessarily stored with images, epithets, and cadences from his reading, and whether his verse is original or not is determined not so much by the presence or absence here and there of suggestions or echoes from others as by its imaginative and musical integrity and its effect upon the reader."
recognition of the familiar. 39

Astonishing newness, then, is not the touchstone to be employed in evaluating Chaucer's imagery. On the contrary, the critic who would arrive at a valid estimate must base his judgment upon what Chaucer has done with old images after he has obtained them and upon how well they work with other elements in the poems to create distinctive, original effects. 40

There is also to be considered the problem of the degree of artistic consciousness in Chaucer's use of poetic imagery. When, in considering this question, one examines the images, he will be impressed instantly by

39 Since many of the stock figures employed by Chaucer have dropped out of use, they are likely to have for the modern reader a much stronger appearance of freshness than was felt when Chaucer wrote. According to René Wellek and Austin Warren, images of this sort "give pleasure through traditionalism;" "the metaphoric in them is neither wholly realized nor wholly missed." See Theory of Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949), p. 202. Stock imagery in Homer has been defended on similar grounds by Milman Perry, "The Traditional Metaphor in Homer," CP, XXVIII (1933), 30-43; and in Milton by C.S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), pp. 51-60.

40 More than fifty years ago T.R. Lounsbury expressed this attitude in regard to Chaucer's borrowings in general. The greatness of genius, he remarked, "like that of nature, consists in the infinite ability it possesses to originate new effects by new combinations of old material." See Studies in Chaucer (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1892), III, 396-400. This view seems also to be implied in the following statement by two of the New Critics: "We are not to be concerned ... with whether any given element in a poem is in itself pleasing, or agreeable, or valuable, or 'poetical', but whether it works with the other elements to create the total effect." And in another place they remark: "The poetic effect depends not upon the things themselves but on the kind of use the poet makes of them." Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, eds., Understanding Poetry (2nd ed., New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), pp. 1, xlix resp.
their vividness and immediacy. But their seeming simplicity may at first deceive him into supposing that they lack profundity of meaning and conscious poetic purpose.\footnote{In this connection Speirs, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 25, remarks: "What may . . . at first disconcert the reader coming to the poetry of Chaucer from the poetry of the complex Shakespearean climax of civilization is that there are not the ambiguities and involvements in phrase and rhythm there are in Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, the other mature Elizabethan dramatists, Donne, Herbert and Marvell. . . . Chaucer's phrases appear almost disconcertingly simple and direct to a reader accustomed to the complexities, the encrustations of meaning involved in Shakespearean metaphor. . . . [Hence] it would be easy to be deceived into supposing that no profundities of meaning comparable to the Shakespearean are concealed within the crystal transparency of the Chaucerian phrases."}

For long the simplicity and naturalness in Chaucer's style was often mistaken by scholars for "an unsophisticated primitive naïveté." Fortunately, however, this attitude no longer prevails. Critics are now well aware that Chaucer has the faculty of appearing far simpler than he is, that behind what may look like naïveté in his imagery and in other features of style "there is art . . . perfected with deliberate, disciplined 'devocioun.'"\footnote{See Speirs, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 25-27. G. L. Kittredge, who did much to clear the air of the fiction of Chaucer's naïveté, remarked: "It is we that are naïf"; "Chaucer always knew what he was about." \textit{Chaucer and His Poetry} (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1915), pp. 1, 151 resp.}

But even though it is now possible to regard Chaucer as a mature artist who employs imagery consciously and deliberately, there is still the problem, in dealing with
particular images, as to whether all the functions and effects the investigator perceives are in accord with Chaucer's poetic intentions. In considering this difficult question, one can do no better than adopt the view set forth in the following noteworthy statement of Alan M. F. Gunn:

In every work of literature there are likely to be some hits and successes no part of the original scheme. The living imagination will send forth unexpected shoots and flowers, unpredictable tropes and symbols, as it climbs toward the apex of the trellis prepared for it by the conscious and predisposing mind. And yet, designed or undesigned, begotten with full consciousness or no, if this burgeoning is from a mind that has long been brooding over a chosen theme and over all its implications, it cannot be dismissed as fortuitous, irrelevant, or lacking significance. For nothing really discordant or irrelevant is likely to be begotten by such a mind; and what it emphasizes by repetition is almost always certain to have significance.\(^3\)

Finally, it should be recognized that the student who investigates Chaucer's imagery is faced with the danger of becoming so absorbed in the study of the parts that he loses sight of the whole. This danger, of course, is always present in any kind of specialized scholarship. But if one bears it constantly in mind, he can expect to reduce the hazards of his undertaking and come to a better understanding and appreciation of Chaucer's poetic art than would otherwise be possible.

CHAPTER II

CHAUCER’S IMAGERY AND THE COLORS OF RHETORIC

Although the word imagery is associated particularly with discussion of poetry in recent years, the study of different patterns of expression which gain poetic effect through the principle of figurative comparison is as old as literary criticism itself. Aristotle, who first bore witness to the creative power of poetic analogy, discussed several types of figurative expression in his Rhetoric and Poetics.

1 The term imagery, derived from the Latin imago "resemblance" or "comparison," was used as early as 1589 by George Puttenham to designate figurative expression of a special kind: "... when we liken an humane person to another in countenance, stature, speech or other qualitie, it is not called bare resemblanc[e], but resemblaunce by imagerie." The Arte of Poesie, ed. Gladys Doidge Willock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: The University Press, 1936), p. 243. By the time of Dryden the words imagery and image were sometimes employed to designate figurative language in general. See, for example, "The Author's Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic License," Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. F. Ker (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1900), i, 186-187. It was not, however, until the publication in the present century of such studies as H. W. Well's Poetic Imagery (1924) and Caroline F. E. Spurgeon's Leading Motives in the Imagery of Shakespeare's Tragedies (Shakespeare Association Publications, 1930) that the terms image and imagery became widely used in special investigations of figurative language.

and the classification of figures of speech was carried out in elaborate detail by Latin classical and post-classical theorists, who considered such devices a chief grace of style.\(^3\) Medieval rhetoricians\(^4\) likewise placed


In Anglo-Saxon times Bede dealt fully with figurative devices in his treatise On Figures and Tropes in Holy Writ. For discussion of this work, see J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: The Medieval Phase (Cambridge: The University Press, 1943), pp. 43-44, 47-49.

\(^4\)In the Middle Ages the word *rhetoric* denoted style in general whether in prose or in verse. Hence *rhetorician* (*rhetor, rhetorien*) meant a master of style. This conception is illustrated in the Clerk's Prologue (IV, 31-33, where Chaucer refers to Petrarch as "the lauriat poete, / ... whose rethorike sweete / Enluxymyned al Ytaille of poetrie." In this connection also may be noted William Dunbar's line in the Golden Targe (253): "O reverend Chaucere, rose of rhetoris all." The Poems of William Dunbar, ed. John Small, The Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1893), Vol. II.
high value on figurative devices and always included them among the colores rhetoricii in their manuals of rhetoric and poetic.

For the purposes of the present subject—the relation of Chaucer's poetic imagery to the medieval colors of rhetoric—one must examine the teachings of several works by rhetoricians of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. The fullest and clearest of these is the 2116-line verse manual, the Poetria nova (c. 1210) of Geoffrey de Vinsauf; and there are the two prose manuals attributed to the same author, the Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi and the Summa de coloribus rhetoricis, which provide a complete supplement to the Poetria, as well as the Ars versificatoria (c. 1175) of Matthieu de Vendôme, the Ars versificaria (c. 1216) of Gervais de Melkley, the Laborintus (c. 1213) of Evrard

As Harrison, "The Colors of Rhetoric in Chaucer," pp. 102-108, points out, the term color employed to indicate a rhetorical device seems to have originated not with the classical Latin rhetoricians, but with Onulf Speir, who wrote a treatise entitled Colores rhetoricii about the year 1050. Although Quintillian (Institutio oratoria, IV, ii, 88; IX, i, 10) and Cicero (De oratore, III, xxv, 96; III, liii, 199; III, lvii, 217) use the word color, they employ it to designate a "stylistic complexion" or "tone" rather than a rhetorical device. After Onulf, however, the term is commonly used in manuals to indicate the figuralae of the ancients. Geoffrey de Vinsauf, in his Summa de coloribus, extends the meaning to include the ornata difficultas or tropes and certain devices of amplification as well. It is in this large sense that the word color is employed in the present study.
L'Allemand, and the Poetria (probably before 1250) of John
of Garland.\(^6\) Basing their discussions upon precepts drawn
from such works as Cicero's *De inventione*, Horace's
*De arte poetica*, Donatus' *Ars grammatica*, and particularly,
the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*,\(^7\) these manuals, though differing
on certain points, teach a common rhetorical system which
remained in general use throughout the Middle Ages.\(^8\) The
doctrine which they set forth falls naturally and logi-
cally into three main divisions: (1) methods of beginning

\(^6\)For tests, summaries, and interpretation of these
 treatises, see Edmond Faral, *Les arts poétiques du XII\(^e\) et
du XIII\(^e\) siècle* (Paris: Édouard Champion, 1921). Subsequent
references to the treatises are to this edition.

\(^7\)See Faral, *op. cit.*., p. 99; C. S. Baldwin, *Medieval
Rhetoric and Poetic* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928),
p. 187; D. L. Clark, *Rhetoric and Poetry in the Renaissance*
(New York: Columbia University Press, 1922), p. 61; J. M.
Manly, *Chaucer and the Rhetoricians*, p. 7. For the back-
ground of the theories of the medieval rhetoricians, see
also Richard McKeon, "Rhetoric in the Middle Ages,"
*Speculum*, XVII (1942), 1-32; and J. W. H. Atkins, *op. cit.*.,
passim.

Although one naturally associates the names of
Quintilian and Aristotle with the history of rhetoric, these
authorities are of no importance here. According to Clark,
*op. cit.*., pp. 66-67, Quintilian's influence was slight for
the reason that during the Middle Ages his writings existed
only in mutilated fragments. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* was
almost unknown until the sixteenth century.

\(^8\)The probable reason for the lack of later medieval
treatises on rhetoric, according to Manly, *op. cit.*., p. 9,
is that "after the beginning of the thirteenth century,
the practical spirit of the time tended in the universities
to substitute instruction in letter writing and the *artes
dictamens* for the theoretical and supposedly less useful
study of the general principles of rhetoric."
and ending a poem, (2) methods of amplification and abbreviation, and (3) ornaments of style, the last of these receiving by far the greatest amount of attention. The ornamental devices are divided into two groups: ornata difficultas, which consist of words and phrases used in deviation from their normal and proper sense, and ornata facilitas, which are still further classified as figurae verborum and figurae sententiarium, the former gaining effect by arrangement or repetition of sentence parts and the latter by an assumed attitude of the writer's mind. As a method of procedure, the treatises define and discuss the various rhetorical colors and often illustrate them by examples, some of them taken from earlier writers, such as Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Statius, and Sidonius, and some composed by the rhetoricians themselves.

Of the vast jungle of colors discussed in these treatises, only a comparatively small number characteristically serve as devices for the expression of poetic imagery. In the present chapter these will be described and illustrated by examples from Chaucer's poems. Most of the figurative rhetorical patterns are discussed in the manuals under the ornata difficultas and figurae sententiarium, though a few are given as methods of beginning and ending a poem and of amplification. For the purpose of making clear the relation of the rhetorical colors to poetic imagery, the arrangement followed in the manuals has been abandoned
for a grouping based upon three types or divisions of figurative comparison, which, as noted in the introductory chapter, is an essential quality of the poetic image. These divisions are (1) resemblance, (2) connection, and (3) contrast.

The largest number of the figurative devices are found to come under the first of these three headings; that is, they show resemblance or likeness between the parts of the comparison. In several of these—translatio, pronominatio, conformatio, apostropha, allegoria, and nominatio—this likeness is assumed, since the sense perception, or "vehicle," and the thing itself, or "tenor," are not both named, but only the former, the vehicle being put directly in the place of the tenor.

Translatio, or metaphor, the most notable of the devices which show assumed resemblance, is defined by the rhetoricians as a color in which "aliqua dictio transfertur a propria significatione ad impropriam quadam similitudine"; and it is divided into four classes based upon transfer of meaning "ab animato ad animatum, ab inanimato ad

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9 Richards' terms "tenor" and "vehicle" are employed throughout this discussion to distinguish between the two parts of the poetic comparison or image. The relationship between the two Richards explains as follows: the tenor is "the underlying idea which the vehicle or figure means." See The Philosophy of Rhetoric, p. 97.

10 Geoffrey, De coloribus rhetoricos, Faral, p. 325. See also Poetria nova, 767-948.
inanimatum, ab animato ad inanimatum, ab inanimato ad animatum."¹¹ Chaucer employs all four of these classes of translatio. As examples of his use of the first, the substitution of one living thing for another, one may note the following passages:

Trewly she was, to myn ye
The soleyn fenix of Arabye.
(BoD, 981 f.)¹²

... it was greet crueltee
Swich briddes [litel children] for to putte in swich a cage.
(MkT, VII, 2413 f.)

... the cox, comune astrologer,
Gan on his brest to bete ...
(Tr, III, 1415 f.)

Instances of the second class, the substitution of the inanimate for the inanimate, may be observed in

... hir moneie is hire plogh.
(SkipT, VII, 288)

Arcite hath born awey the keye
Of al my world, and my good aventure.
(Anel, 323 f.)

But yit, I seye, what eyleth the to wryte
The draf of storyes, and forgete the corn?
(LGW, Prol G, 311 f.)

¹¹Matthieu, Ars versificatoria, III, 19.

¹²All lines from Chaucer are quoted from F. N. Robinson's The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1933).
Of the third class, the substitution of the inanimate for the animate, one notes such examples as

She was a prymerole, a piggesnye.  
(MillT, I, 3268).

The cok, that orlage is of thorpes lyte.  
(PF, 350)

The fourth class of translatio, the substitution of the animate for the inanimate, comprises forms which modern theorists usually include under personification. In Chaucer, this class of translatio appears in several types of images. Sometimes it presents an imperfect picture which merely gives an inanimate object some physical or mental human attribute, as in these examples: "the hevens ye" (Tr, II, 904), "the jealous strokes" (KnT, I, 2634), "a reyn ... wilde and wood" (MillT, I, 3517), a horn "hors of soun" (BD, 347). In other instances, the translatio may give only an imperfect picture of an abstraction, as in the following:

And to your routhe, and to your trouthe, I crie.  
But welawey! to fer they be to feche.  
(Anel, 337 f.)

Yet eft I the biseche and fully seye,  
That privite go with us un this cas.  
(Tr, III, 282 f.)

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13Hiram Corson, however, includes such forms in a list of metaphors which he gives in his Index of Proper Names and Subjects to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, Published for the Chaucer Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), pp. 108-111.
Under this class of translatio must be included many allegorical abstractions, such as Pity, Cruelty, Gentilesse, Plesance, and Delight, which, as D. S. Fansler observes, "are usually introduced into the English poet's work simply to fill out a situation, to elaborate a description, to turn a compliment, or perhaps to enforce a bit of satire." Personification of this kind, as Fansler points out, is most abundant "in the Complaynt to Pite and the Parlement of Foules. In the former are mentioned Pite, Crueltie, Beaute, Lust, Jolitye, Maner, Youthe, Honestec, Wisdom, Estaat, Dreed, Governaunce, Bountee, Gentilesse, Curtesye, Trouthe, Desire. In the latter, in addition to the seven already named, we find Plesaunce, Aray, Craft, Delyt, Fool-hardinesse, Flatery, Messagerye, Mede Pees, Pacience, Art, Behest, Jalousye, Richesse, Nature." 

But this fourth class of translatio is employed by Chaucer for presenting images of a fuller sort of both concrete objects and abstract ideas, as may be seen in the following instances:

[Whan the wode were falle] ... the ground agast was of the light,
That was not wont to seane the sonne bright. 
(KnT, I, 2931 f.) 

Chaucer and the Roman de la Rose, p. 83 and n.
... Phebus, that was comen hastely
Within the paleys yates sturdely,
With torche in honde, of which the stremes bryghte
On Venus chambre knokkeden ful lyghte.

(Mars, 81-84)

When he had mad thus his complaynte,
Hys sorwful hert gan faste faynte,
And his spirites wexen dede;
The blood was fled for pure drede
Down to his herte, to make him warm--
For wel hyt feled the herte had harm--
To wite eke why it was adrad
By kynde, and for to make hyt glad.

(Bd, 487-494)

Night with his mantel, that is derk and rude,
Gan oversprede the hemysperie aboute.

(MerchT, IV, 1798 f.)

Although translatio thus includes most types of personification, it does not embrace those forms in which the personified object speaks. This kind, which is called conformatio (prosopopoeia) by the rhetoricians, will be given special attention later in the present chapter.

Besides dividing translatio into the four categories based on different relationships in the transference of animate and inanimate significations, the rhetoricians further classify this color according to the various grammatical patterns in which it appears. Geoffrey de Vinsauf pays particular attention to verbs, which he illustrates with this passage describing the proper time for sailing:

The north wind does not rebuke the water, nor does the south wind intoxicate the air; but the radiant
sun, like a rose-colored broom, cleans the sky;
with a cloudless face, the day flatters the
sea; the invisible murmuring breeze calms the
waters and drives the sails.\textsuperscript{15}

Translatio in verbs appears frequently in Chaucer.
The following instances are characteristic:

Than wol I styenge him with my tongue smerte.
\textit{(Pard Prol, VI, 413)}

\ldots she floured in virginitee.
\textit{(PhysT, VI, 44)}

And thus she sette hire woful herte afire
Through remembraunce of that she gan desire.
\textit{(Tr, V, 720 f.)}

But other grammatical forms also provide the vehicle for
Chaucer's metaphors. The substantive occurs often:

\ldots in erthe I was his purgatorie.
\textit{(WB, III, 489)}

The oule al nyght aboute the balkes wond,
That prophete is of wo and myschaunce.
\textit{(LGW, VII, 2253 f.)}

His herte, which that is his brastes ye,
Was ay on hire \ldots
\textit{(Tr, I, 453)}

\textsuperscript{15} "Non 'objurgat' aquas aquilo, nec 'inebriat' auster /
\textit{Aera}; sed solis radius, quasi scopa lutosi / \textit{Aeris}, 'emundat' caelum, vultuque sereno / Tempus 'adulatur' pelago clandestina flatus / Murmura 'stare' fretum faciunt et 'currere' vela,"
\textit{Poetria nova}, 808-812. In the \textit{De coloribus rhetorícis}
(Faral, p. 325) Geoffrey gives a long list of verbs used as metaphors.
In many cases a figurative substantive is used with a figurative verb:

... ebben gan the welle
Of hire teeris ...

(Tr, IV, 1145 f.)

... unbokeled is the male.
Lat see now who shal telle another tale.

(Mill Prol, I, 3115 f.)

For with that faire cheyne of love
he bond
The fyr, the eyr, the water, and
the lond.

(KnT, I, 2990 f.)

Sometimes the translatio takes the form of a substantive in the genitive case:

The pekok, with his aungels fetheres bryghte.

(PF, 356)

... in Pilates voys he gan to crie.

(Mill Prol, I, 3124)

Again, the translatio is a primary adjective:

... rype and sad courage.

(CL, IV, 220)

Disblameth me, if any word be lame.

(Tr, II, 17)

Generally, however, Chaucer's metaphorical adjectives are derived from substantives:
The lambish peple, voyd of alle vice.  
(Form Age, 50)

Com forth with thine eyen columbyn.  
(MerchT, IV, 2141)

O stormy peple, unsad and evere untrewel!  
(CLt, IV, 995)

Occasionally Chaucer employs participles metaphorically:

O sodeyn wo, that evere art successour  
To worldly blisse, spreyn with bitternessei  
(MLT, II, 421 f.)

O Januarie, dronken in plesaunce  
In mariage ...  
(MerchT, IV, 1788 f.)

Rarely, however, does he use an adverb as translatio:

And in the nyght ful thefly gan he stalke.  
(LGW, V, 1781)

Although in the majority of instances Chaucer uses translatio in single statements, as illustrated in the passages above, he often expands the metaphorical idea over more than one statement, with either a substantival or verbal conception as the dominating one. As examples may be cited:

The dart is set up for virginitee:  
Cacche whoso may, who renneth best  
lat see.  
(WB, III, 75 f.)
For certes, lord, so sore hath she me wounded, 
That stood in blak, with lokying of hire eyen, 
That to myn hertes botme it is ysounded.

(Tr, II, 533-534)

Your bagges been not fild with ambes as 
But with sys cynk, that renneth for youre chaunce.

(MLT, II, 124 f.)

Not too frequently a translatio extends through a longer series of statements, as may be seen in the following:

Dredeles, I have ever yit 
Be tributarye and yiven rente 
To Love, hooly with good entente, 
And throgh plesaunce become his thral 
With good wille, body, hert, and al. 
Al this I putte in his servage, 
As to my lord, and dide homage.

(BD, 764-770)

For wel I wot, that ye han her-biforn 
Of makyng ropen, and lad awey the corn, 
And I come after, glenyng here and there, 
And am ful glad yf I may fynde an ere 
Of any goodly word that ye han left.

(LGW, Prol F, 73-77)

And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,  
As many a yeer as it is passed henne 
Syn that my tappe of life bigan to renne. 
For sikerly, when I was bore, anon 
Deeth drough the tappe of lyf and leet it gon; 
And ever sithe hath so the tappe yronne 
Til that almoost al empty is the tonne. 
The streem of lyf now droppeth on the chymbe.

(Rv Prol, I, 3888-3895)

Sometimes Chaucer interrupts the translatio by statements of a non-figurative character. The following lines by the Wife of Bath provide an instance:
Nay, thou shalt drynken of another tonne,
Er that I go, shal savoure wors than ale.
[And whan that I have told thee forth my tale
... (four lines)]
Than maystow chese wheither thou wolt sippe
Of thilke tonne that I shal abroche.

(WB, III, 170-177)

Translatio, with its numerous variations, thus provides
Chaucer with a pattern of wide scope for the expression
of poetic images.

Closely related to translatio but much more limited
in use is the color pronominatio, which the rhetoricians
define as a descriptive term or epithet used in the place
of a proper name. The primary purpose of this device
is to awaken in the reader a feeling of greater worth or
grandeur for the person designated. Chaucer often employs
pronominatio to name the divinity in prayers, as in the
following instances:

O verrey light of eyen that ben blynde,
O verrey lust of labour and distresse,
O tresoreere of bountee to mankynd.

(A R C, 105-107)

Thow Mayde and Mooder, doghter of thy Sone,
Thow welle of mercy, synful soules curr.

(SecN Prol, VIII, 36 f.)

But he uses this color for other purposes as well. In the
Second Nun's Prologue (VIII, 62) he refers to himself as the

16See Geoffrey, Poetria nova, 950; and Documentum,
II, iii, 6.
"unworthy son of Eve," and in the *Priest's Tale* (VII, 627) he designates the mother weeping over the bier of her child by the epithet "this newe Rachel." In the *Nun's Priest's Tale* (VII, 3227-3229) he heightens the comic effect of the narrative by calling the fox

O newe Scariot, newe Genylon,
False dissymulour, O Greek Synon,
That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwel.

Further instances of Chaucer's use of *pronominatio* may be noted in the phrases: "O cursed folk of Herodes al newe" (*PrT*, VII, 574), "thou Semyrame the seconde" (*MLT*, II, 359), "worthi Ector the seconde" (*Tr*, II, 158).

The color which the rhetoricians designate as *conformatio* or *prosopopeia* is a special kind of personification in which a person dead or absent, an abstraction, or an inanimate object is given speech.\(^{17}\)

Naunin, in his study of the influence of medieval rhetoric on Chaucer, contends that Chaucer does not emply this device, that it is too rhetorical for

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\(^{17}\)According to Geoffrey, *Documentum*, II, ii, 22, "*prosopopeia* est conformatio novae personae, quando scilicet res non loquens introducitur tanquam loquens." In the *Poetria*, 461-526, he illustrates this color with an example in which the Earth laments the conflagration kindled by Phaeton and with another in which Rome mourns the death of Caesar. In the *Documentum*, *loc. cit.*, he repeats these examples, but adds several new ones: the Holy Cross laments its neglect by the Christian world, a powerful castle speaks in defiance of the French armies, and in a more familiar style than that employed in the other examples an old table-cloth bids farewell to the table.
him. Although it is true that the instances in which Chaucer's personifications speak might be explained on other grounds, such as translatio or allegory, and that his uses are for more realistic than the examples given by the rhetoricians, still these cases fit the definition of conformatio and there seems to be no valid reason for considering them otherwise.

First may be noted some examples in which the personified figure has only a brief speech:

The notice of digestioun, the sleep,
Gan on hem wynke and bad hem taken keep
Than muchel drynke and labour wolde han reste;
And with galpyng mouth hem alle he keste,
And seyde that it was tym to lye adoun,
For blood was in his domynacioun.
"Cherisseth blood, natures freend," quod he.
(SqT, V, 347-353)

Love hym made al prest to don hire byde,
And rather dyen than she sholde go;
But resoun seyde him, on that other syde,
"Withouten assent of hire ne do not so,
Lest for thi werk she wolde be thy fo,
And seyn that thorugh thy medlynge
is iblowe
Youre bother love, ther it was erst
unknowe."
(Tr, IV, 162-168)

Now fil it so that Fortune liste no lenger
The hye pryde of Nero to cherice,
For though that he were strong, yet
was she strenger.

\footnote{\textit{Der Einfluss der Mittelalterlichen Rhetorik auf Chaucers Dichtung}, p. 40.}
She thoughte thus, "By God! I am to nyce
to sette a man that is fulfild of vice
in heigh degree, and emperour hym calle.
By God! out of his sete I will hym trice;
When he leest weneth, sonnest shal he falle."
(Mkt, VII, 2519-2526)

In other instances Chaucer gives personified figures
speeches of considerable length. Fortune in the little
poem entitled Fortune is twice presented as a goddess who
makes rather extended speeches in reply to complaints made
against her (25-46; 57-72). In the Physician's Tale
(VI, 11-28) Nature speaks eighteen lines expressing joy
over the beauty she has created in Virginia. And Pluto
and his queen Proserpyna in the Merchant's Tale (IV,
2224-2316) present an extended interlude of conversation.
Further, it should be noted that Fame in the House of
Fame and Nature in the Parliament of Fowls both make long
speeches. The former replies thus to a group of petitioners:

"Fy on yow," quod she, "everychon!
Ye masty swyn, ye ydel wretches,
Ful of roten, slowe techches!
What? false theves! wher ye wolde
Be famous good, and nothing nolde
Deserve why, ne never ye roughte?
Men rather yow to hangen oughte!
For ye be lyke the sweynte cat
That wolde have fissh; but wostow what?
He wolde nothing wet his clowes.
Yvel thrift came to your jowes,
And ek to myn, if I hit graunte,
Or do yow favour, yow to avaunte!
(HF, III, 1776-1788)
Such language, as Kemp Malone aptly observes, changes "Fame from a personification into a person"; yet the rhetorical pattern which underlies Chaucer's treatment here, as in the other examples cited, is clearly **conformatio**.

The rhetorical device known as **apostropha** is described by the ancients as an address made by a speaker who turns from the judge to address an opponent in a law-suit. But for the medieval rhetoricians this color becomes identified with **exclamatio**, which designates a passionate outcry, and is understood as any turning aside by a speaker or writer from the immediate course of thought to address vividly, as if present, a person absent or dead, an abstract idea, or an inanimate object. Matthieu de Vendôme does not mention the **apostropha**, but Geoffrey de Vinsauf discusses it fully, as an important means of delaying the narrative of a poem. Apostrophes, he says, are like delicate dishes at a banquet; and a poem full of these figures he compares to a sumptuous dinner where the

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courses of fine foods come slowly in.\textsuperscript{22}

The distinguishing feature of \textit{apostropha} lies in arrangement rather than in figurative comparison, the second person being employed to address an absent person or an inanimate object that would normally be referred to by the third person. It will be noted, however, that \textit{apostropha} which addresses abstract ideas and insensible objects involves personification of the things addressed and therefore embodies the principle of assumed comparison. It is only \textit{apostropha} of this sort that is significant as poetic imagery and which claims attention here.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{loc. cit.} The stress which Geoffrey lays upon \textit{apostropha} or \textit{exclamatio} is also seen in the number of examples which he presents. These include three addresses to individuals, expressing blame for excessive joy for presumption, and for pusillanimity; and addresses to Day, to a murderer, to Death, to Nature, to the Deity, and to England. Besides these, he gives examples of \textit{apostropha} containing irony and ridicule, as well as the famous lament on the death of Richard the Lion-Hearted, which Chaucer refers to in the \textit{Nun's Priest's Tale} (VII, 3347-3354).

In the \textit{Documentum II, ii, 24}, Geoffrey states that the \textit{apostropha} may be embellished by the four colors \textit{exclamatio} (exclamation), \textit{conduplicatio} (repetition of a word to express emotion), \textit{subjectio} (a suggested answer to a question), and \textit{dubitatio} (expression of doubt or of assumed embarrassment). But the addition of these figures does not alter the essential character of the \textit{apostropha} and therefore merits no special attention in the present discussion.
For Chaucer, as for Geoffrey de Vinsauf, the apostropha or exclamatio is a favorite device. Although the greater number of the addresses in his poems are to persons, instances involving personification are also numerous. In some cases Chaucer directs the apostropha to abstract conceptions, as in the following passage:

O sodeyn hap! o thou Fortune unstable!
Lyk to the scorpioun so deceyvable,
That flaterest with thyn heed whan
thow wolt stynge;
Thy tayl is deeth, thurgh thyn
envenemynge.

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Naunin, op. cit., p. 39, finds that Chaucer’s works which are dated before the second Italian journey contain no instances of apostropha, and he believes that Chaucer must have become acquainted with this device in the roundabout way of Italian poetry. Says Naunin: "... zeigt die Second Nun's Tale, die allegmein um 1373 angesetzt wird, und die einen ähnlichen Stoff behandelt wie Man of Law's Tale und Prioress' Tale, keine Apostrophe, während letztere, die erst später entstanden sind damit durchtränkt sind. Wie konnten wir anders diesen Unterschied erklären? Auch hätte gerade B. D. glänzende Gelegenheit für die Verwendung der Apostrophe gegeben, da die Rhetorik sie gerade für die Klage empfiehlt. Im.Rosenroman und bei Machaut findet sich keine eigentliche Apostrophe, wie auch in der früheren englischen Dichtung Chaucer hat also erst bei den Italienern, vor allen bei Dante, der diesen pathetischen Ausruf gern verwendet, diese Figur schätzen gelernt, um sie später nach den Vorschriften der Rhetorik selbst überall zu verwenden. Er ist dann dieser bis in seine letzten Erzählungen hinein treu geblieben." While Naunin is probably right in his contention that Chaucer learned the value of the apostropha from Dante, he appears mistaken in his belief that Chaucer did not employ this figure in his poems composed before the second Italian journey. An A B C, one of his earliest poems, is an extended address to the Holy Virgin. And the Book of the Duchess (481-484) contains this example:

"Allas, deth, what ayleth the, / That thou noldest have taken me, / Whan that thou toke my lady swete, / That was so fair, so fresh, so free...."
O brothil joye! o sweete venym queynte!
O monstre, that so subtilly kanst peynte
Thy yiftes under hewe of stidfastnesse,
That thou deceyvest bote moore and lesse!
Why hastow Januarie thus deceyved,
That haddest hym for this fulle freend receyved?

(MerchT, IV, 2057-2068)

The apostrophizing of abstractions is also observed in these lines by the Pardoner against vice:

O cursed synne of alle cursednesse!
O traytours homycide, O wikkednesse!
O glotonye, luxurie, hasardrye!
Thou blasphemour of Christ with vileynye
And othes grete, of usage and of pride!

(PardT, VI, 895-899)

Generally of bolder imaginative power than the addresses to abstractions are those directed to inanimate objects. Troilus' outcry to the house abandoned by Criseyde affords a striking example:

... "O! paleys desolat,
O hous of houses whilom best ihight,
O paleys empty and disconsolat,
O thow lanterne of which queynt is the light,
O paleys, whilom day, that now art nyght,
Wel oughtestow to falle, and I to dye!
Syn she is went that wont was us to gye!

"O paleis, whilom crowne of houses alle,
Enlumyned with sonne of alle blisse!
O ryng, fro which the ruby is out falle,
O cause of wo, that cause has ben of lisse!
Yet, syn I may no bet, fayne wolde I kisse
Thy colde dores, dorste I for this route;
And farewell shryne, of which the seynt is oute.

(Tr, V, 540-553)
Here too may be noted Troilus' speeches to the star (V, 638-644), to the moon (V, 650-658), and to the wind blowing from the Greek camp where Criseyde is (V, 669-679). A further vivid instance of this sort of *apostropha* is the short poem entitled *The Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse*.

The next color to be considered is *allegoria* or *permutatio*, which is defined by the rhetoricians as expression with a hidden meaning, either ironical or allegorical. Of these two kinds of *permutatio*, only that with allegorical meaning contains the principle of assumed comparison. Here the *allegoria* may be

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24 Remarks P. V. D. Shelly concerning such instances of *apostropha* in Chaucer: "These embedded lyrics, as they may be called, whether single lyric or longer units in the form of a song or complaint, must be put down to Chaucer's credit as a lyric poet as well as the separate or independent lyrics among the Minor Poems. Considered rightly, they belong with the great body of English lyrics, hidden or obscured by their position though they are, and they prove conclusively that Chaucer possessed the lyric gift in high degree." *The Living Chaucer*, p. 307.

25 Matthieu de Vendôme, *Ars versificatoria*, III, 43, says: "*allegoria* est allienum eloquium quando a verborum significatione dissidet intellectus, ut in Bucolicis [Buc. III. 70]: 'Aurea mala decem misi, eras altera mittan.'" And he explains that "the ten golden apples" which Menalcus sends his boy are to be understood as ten pastoral songs. For discussion of *allegoria* or *permutatio*, see also Geoffrey, *Poetria nova*, 949-946; and Geivaiz de Melkley, as summarized by Faral, *op. cit.*, p. 329. According to the *Khtorica ad Herennium*, LIV, iv, 34, "*Permutatio est oratio, aliud verbis, aliud sententia demonstrans. Ea dividitur in tres partes, similitudinem, argumentum, contrarium."
thought of as metaphor which through abruptness or through extension causes the reader to think more of the vehicle or picture than of the object or idea which it stands for. In Chaucer allegorical passages consisting of only a few lines are numerous. As an example, one notes Pandarus' words concerning Troilus' needless anxiety:

... "Thow hast a ful gret care
Lest that the cherl may falle out of the moone!"

(Tr, I, 1023 f.)

Another instance is the passage in which Pandarus assures Troilus of a meeting with Criseyde:

"Lo, hold the at thy triste clos, and I
Shal wel the deer into the bowe dryve."

(Tr, II, 1534 f.)

Again, we may note the Friar's warning against Satan:

The leoun sit in his awayt alway
To sle the innocent, if that he may."

26 Modern definitions of allegory usually emphasize only the length of the metaphor. For example, the Dictionary of World Literature, ed. Joseph T. Shipley (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1943), p. 21, states that allegory is "distinguished from metaphor and parable as an extended story that may hold interest for the surface tale ... as well as for the meaning borne along." Francis B. Gummere, however, includes short instances as allegory. "In point of style," he says, "allegory is a sustained metaphor, one extended into several phrases or clauses, so that we do not think much of the object as of the illustration. Often, however, abruptness makes up for length." A Handbook of Poe. (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1885), p. 103.
In instances such as the last quoted passage, in which the meaning of the figure is indicated by an accompanying literal statement, the allegory is sometimes called mixed or imperfect. A further instance of this sort of allegory is found in Chaucer's explanation at the beginning of Book II of the Troilus (1-6):

Out of thise blake wawes for to saylle,
O wind, o wind, the weder gynneth clere;
For in this se the boat hath sych travaylle,
Of my connyng, that unneth I it steere.
This see clepe I the tempestuous matere
Of disespeir that Troilus was inne.

At times Chaucer expands a translatio or metaphor through the addition of an allegory, as is illustrated in the following passage:

His brest was hool, withoute for to sene,
But in his herte ay was the arwe kene.
And wel ye knewe that of a sursanure
In surgerye is perilous the cure,
But men myghte touche the arwe, or come therby.
(FranklT, V, i111-i115)

In a similar manner, he may extend a simile into allegory:

27See Gummere, loc. cit.
... she
Coveith every man that she may se,
For as a spaynel she wol on hym lepe,
Til that she fynde some man hire to chope.
Ne noon so grey goes gooth ther in the lake
As, seistow, wol been withoute make.

(WB Prol, III, 265-270)

Allegory developed to encompass an entire poem, with personified abstractions as characters and action which is symbolic of other action, constitutes one of the most widely cultivated medieval literary forms. The rhetoricians, however, have nothing to say concerning the allegorical poem as a literary type. Throughout the fourteenth century the model for poems of this sort was the famous French thirteenth-century love-vision, the Roman de la Rose, by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun. Whether or not Chaucer began his career by translating the Roman into English as many scholars have believed, he must have known this work well. Yet none of his poems is a complete love-allegory. Remarks C. S. Lewis on this point:

Commenting on this point, V. A. Neilson says: "A direct knowledge of that poem by any later medieval author is to be presumed about as certainly as a knowledge of the Bible; and even though a writer had not himself read the book, its influence would still appear in his work if he followed the allegorical tradition at all. And this tradition, it has sufficiently appeared, every allegorist did follow." "The Origins and Sources of The Court of Love," Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature, VI (1890), 223.
Nowhere in Chaucer do we find what can be called a radically allegorical poem.... By radical allegory I mean a story that can be translated into literal narration ... without confusion, but not without loss.... The function of allegory is not to hide but to reveal, and it is properly used only for that which cannot be said, or so well said, in literal speech. The inner life, and especially the life of love, religion and spiritual adventure, has therefore always been the field for true allegory; for there are intangibles which only allegory can fix and reticences which only allegory can overcome. The poem of Guillaume de Lorris is a true allegory of love; but no poem of Chaucer's is.29

Still many of Chaucer's poems show influences or traces of the love-allegory. One such feature is the framework of the dream-vision which appears in the Book of the Duchess, the House of Fame, the Parliament of Fowls, and the Legend of Good Women. But the allegorical device which Chaucer employs most is the personification of abstractions,30 the figurative principle of which has already been dealt with in the discussion of translation and conformation.31 As noted earlier, Chaucer, for the most part, employs these abstract figures as decoration, though Fame in the House of Fame, Nature in the Parliament of Fowls, and the God of Love and his Queen in the


30. Fausett, Chaucer and the Roman de la Rose, p. 83.

31. See p. 28, above.
Prologue to the Legend of Good Women appear as characters who speak and act.

But if Chaucer's poems include no example of a complete love-allegory, some of them are probably allegorical in another way: that is, they may contain autobiographical or historical allegory. That Chaucer did, almost indisputably, write one poem which has historical meaning is attested by the Book of the Duchess, which is generally accepted as an elegy on the death (in 1369) of Duchess Blanche, first wife of Chaucer's patron, John of Gaunt. The House of Fame likewise may have a purpose beyond the presentation of a love-vision. Though many nineteenth-century critics have found in the poem a rather elaborate allegory of Chaucer's own life, this interpretation, if not entirely rejected, has been ignored by most modern critics. According to the theories of Imelmann, Brusendorff, and others, the poem allegorizes the decision of Richard II to marry Anne of Bohemia. Koch believes, however, that it refers to John of Gaunt's plans for the marriage of his daughter.

32 For a review of these various theories, see O. W. Sypherd, Studies in Chaucer's House of Fame, Chaucer Society, 2nd ser., XXXIX (London, 1907), 156-158.

33 See Rudolf Imelmann, "Chaucer's Haus der Fama," Englische Studien, XLV (1912), 397-431; Aage Brusendorff, The Chaucer Tradition, pp. 157-166.
Philippa. And Riedel offers the interpretation that Chaucer, suspecting John of Gaunt of having had illicit relations with Philippa (Chaucer's wife), makes a covert attack upon Lancaster for appearing in public with his mistress Kathryn Swinford. Again, a number of historical interpretations have been given the Parliament of Fowls. In the opinion of M. E. Reid, T. W. Douglas, and others, this poem allegorizes the betrothal of Richard II and Anne


35 See Frederick C. Riedel, "The Meaning of Chaucer's House of Fame," JEGP, XXVIII (1928), 218-229. Bertrand H. Bronson, "Chaucer's House of Fame: Another Hypothesis," University of California Publications in English, III (1934), 171-192, demonstrates that the entire context of the poem is scarcely one fitting for a betrothal gift, chiefly by its exempla illustrating unfaithfulness in love, and holds that no tactful poet would have intended it as a compliment to an important person contemplating marriage. On the contrary, he believes the poem intended as an attack on a high-placed person of "bad fame," an interpretation which carries an inherent reason for the poem's abrupt conclusion. Since Bronson does not supply this person of "bad fame," Riedel's essay, though written earlier, thus provides a supplement, in placing the attack upon Lancaster.

of Bohemia (in 1381). As interpreted by Edith Rickert, however, it represents the wooing of Philippa of Lancaster, oldest daughter of John of Gaunt, by Richard II, John of Blois, and William of Hainult. Haldeen Braddy offers a still different explanation, tracing the allegory to the negotiations conducted in 1376 and 1377 for the marriage

36 See M. E. Reid, "The Historical Interpretations of the Parlement of Foules," Wisconsin Stud. in Lang. and Lit., XVIII (1923), 60-70; T. W. Douglas, "What Is the Parlement of Foules?" MLN, XLIII (1928), 378-384. This interpretation was originally advanced by John Koch, who identified the three tercels as Richard, William of Hainult, and Frederick of Meissen. See "Ein Beitrag zur Kritik Chaucer's," Englische Studien, I (1887), 287-289. Later, O. F. Emerson showed that William was not a suitor for Anne in 1381, and he identified the second tercel with Frederick of Meissen and the third with Charles VI of France. See "The Suitors in Chaucer's Parlement of Foules," MP, XXVI (1910), 45-62; "The Suitors in the Parlement of Foules Again," MLN, XXVI (1911), 109-111; "What is the Parlement of Foules?" JEGP, XIII (1914), 566-582.

of Richard to Marie, daughter of Charles V of France. 38

Moreover, there may be historical meaning in the Complaint of Mars, which one group of critics explains as intrigue between Lady Isabel of York (Venus) and John of Holland, Earl of Huntingdon (Mars), 39 and another as the seduction


by John Holland of John of Gaunt's daughter Elizabeth.\textsuperscript{40}

To these possible instances of topical allegory in Chaucer's poems may also be added the compliment to Queen Anne in the panegyric on the daisy in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women and the identification of the God of Love with King Richard.\textsuperscript{41}

The beast-fable, a literary form distinguished by the application of the ways of the lower animals to satirize the ways of men, is, like the allegory, a sustained metaphor and therefore to be comprehended under allegoria or \textit{permutatio}.\textsuperscript{42} In considering Chaucer's use of this

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\textsuperscript{40}See Brusendorff, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 226-268, and George H. Cowling, "Chaucer's Complaints of Mars and Venus," \textit{RES}, II (1926), 405-410.


\textsuperscript{42}The beast-fable, as R. G. Moulton points out, is in some measure the converse of personification. See \textit{The Modern Study of Literature} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1915), p. 425.
form, one notes first of all the Nun's Priest's Tale, which presents a most natural parody of husband and wife, Chantecleer depicting the cock-like strutting male aspect and Pertelote the hen-like female aspect. The House of Fame and the Parliament of Fowls, which have been mentioned above in connection with historical allegory, must be referred to also as containing elements of the beast-fable. In the former, there is the clerkly eagle, whose scientific exposition of how sound travels to Fame's house burlesques the absurdity of pedantry. And in the latter, the classification of birds into groups possibly represents different social ranks: the birds of prey, or the nobility; the worm-fowl, or the bourgeoisie; the seed-fowl, either the clergy or the agricultural class; and the water-fowl or the mercantile class. Each group chooses a spokesman who presents a point of view suited to the nobleness or scurrility of its kind. As David Patrick points out, the speeches of the lower classes may be interpretable as voicing the social discontent culminating in the Peasants' Revolt (1381). Too, there may be some relationship between the parliament of birds and the English Parliament of Chaucer's day. Nature

begins with a speech from the throne somewhat reminiscent of the opening of a session of Parliament, but, as Kemp Malone observes, "she could hardly have done anything else and this parallel is not worth much." Elements of the fable appear again in the story of the tell-tale crow in the Manciple's Tale and in the second part of the Squire's Tale, where a falcon is deserted and betrayed by her tercelet lover.

A very close kinship exists between allegory, fable, and symbol; and allegoria or permutatio would, by its nature, extend to include the last-mentioned of these concepts as well as the other two. The term symbol, like image, appears in widely different contexts, but here, as in literary study generally, it is understood as expression which has meaning simultaneously on more than

44 Chapters on Chaucer, p. 72.

45 The situation here, as N. Coghill observes, is "much as if the formal eagle of the Parliament of Fowls had been deserted by the royal tercel that the Goddess Nature had advised her to marry, or as if one of the legends in the Legend of Good Women had been the legend of a good bird." The Poet Chaucer, The Home University Library (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 166.
The primary distinction between this device and metaphor or *translatio* is observed in the recurrence or persistence of the former. As Wellek and Warren point out, "an 'image' may be evoked once as a metaphor, but if it persistently occurs, both as presentation and representation, it becomes a symbol." Symbolism thus defined is to be thought of as comprising two broad types: the private symbolism specially created by modern poets and the widely intelligible conventional or traditional symbolism of poets of the past.

The symbolism found in Chaucer's poetry is, of course, of the latter kind and for the most part consists of

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46 On this point Wellek and Warren, *Theory of Literature*, p. 193, remark: "It [symbol] appears as a term in logic, in mathematics, in semantics and semiotics and epistemology; it has also had a long history in the worlds of theology ('symbol' is one synonym for 'creed'), of liturgy, of the fine arts, and of poetry. The shared element in all these current uses is probably that of something standing for, representing something else. But the Greek verb, which means to throw together, to compare, suggests that the idea of analogy between sign and signified was originally present. It survives in some of the modern uses of the term. Algebraic and logical symbols are conventional, agreed-upon signs; but religious symbols are based on some intrinsic relation between 'sign' and thing 'signified,' metonymic or metaphoric: the Cross, the Lamb, the Good Shepherd. In literary theory, it seems desirable that the word should be used in this sense: as an object which refers to another object but which demands attention also in its own right, as a presentation."

47 op. cit., p. 194.
imagery which is easily interpreted. One may observe, as an example, the cliff of ice on which the Palace of Fame is built, in the House of Fame, and the melting of the names carved upon it (1124-1164), which symbolize the erratic and unstable nature of the goddess Fame. Also readily understood are such instances as the Wife of Bath’s "paire of spores sharpe" (Gen Prol, I, 473), which represent her masterful, domineering character. In some cases, however, the modern reader must have special knowledge of traditional meanings in order to recognize and interpret Chaucer’s symbols. He must, for example, know that beryl is, according to tradition, a stone which fosters love if he is to realize its symbolical value and the appropriateness of its use in a place where Chaucer expects to hear "love tydynges."\(^{48}\) And to gain the full meaning of the carbuncle or ruby which in the same poem constitutes the "see imperiall" of the Lady Fame, he must know that this gem is symbolic both of love and of honor and renown.\(^{49}\) Again, in cases of Chaucer’s

\(^{48}\) See W. O. Sypherd, "Studies in Chaucer’s House of Fame," Medium Aevum, XII (1942), 133.

use of color symbolism, special knowledge may be required.
In the following passage from the *Squire's Tale* describing
the mew which Canace prepares for the falcon, Chaucer
explains the symbolism of two colors:

And by hire beedes heed she made a mewe,
And covered it with veluettes blewe,
In signe of trouthe that is in wommen sene.
And al withoute, the mewe is peynted grene,
In which were peynted alle thise false fowles,
As ben thise tidyves, tercelettes, and owles. (V, 643-648)

The same symbolical meanings of constancy and fickleness
signified by these colors may be observed in the refrain
of the little poem *Against Women Inconstant* (7, 14, 21):

In stede of blew, thus may ye were al grene.

One notes also that Criseyde wishes to send Troilus a
"blewe ring" (*Tr*, III, 885) and that Anelida, who appears
in a dream to swear new faithfulness to Arcite, is
"clad in asure" (*Anel*, 330), which seems to have the same
meaning as blue. 50

Although Chaucer's symbols generally present images
of this transparent sort, yet there are cases which cannot
be pinned down easily to a single definite interpretation.

50 A number of further instances of color symbolism
are noted by Klaeber, *Das Bild bei Chaucer*, pp. 225-227.
The "rusty blade" which the Reeve bears at his side
(Gen Prol, 618), for example, has been taken, along with
his closely shaven face, his somewhat clerical hair-cut,
and the tucking up of his long surcote, to represent his
inferior rank. But according to another interpretation,
it is a symbol of the elderly Reeve's youthful desires.

A further instance of symbolism which has been interpreted
variously is that in which the dreamer in the House of
\textit{Fame} leaves the Temple of Love and discovers himself in the
midst of the sandy waste (1, 480-495).

\begin{verbatim}
When I out at the dores cam,
I taste aboute me beheld,
Then sawgh I but a large feld,
As for as that I myghte see,
Withouten toun, or hous, or tree,
Or bush, or grass, or eryd lond;
For al the feld nas but of sond
As smal as man may se yet lye
In the desert of Lybye;
Ne no manner creature
That ys yformed by Nature
Ne sawgh I, me to rede or wisse.
\end{verbatim}

See Muriel Bowden, \textit{A Commentary on the General
Prologue to the Canterbury Tales} (New York: The Macmillan

Remarks Brooks Forehand: the blade "is rusty
because the Reeve is past the age of using it. He may have
used it frequently and cruelly in his youth (anger still
one of his 'four gleedes')... The peasants are 'adrad
of hym as of the deeth'... But if he knows that he is not
going to use the blade, why does he wear it? As a symbol.
He likes to think of things youthful." "Old Age and
"O Crist\textsuperscript{i}!" thoughte I, "that art in blysse,
Fro fantome and illusion
Me save!" and with devocion
Myn eyen to the hevene I caste.

According to W. H. Clemen, the passage symbolizes the aridness and sterility of books and therefore contrasts with the "stoffe" of realism that Chaucer will receive in the House of Fame and upon which he will base his future poems.\textsuperscript{53} Raymond Preston, however, believes that it represents a "wasteland" of the spirit and is therefore in some measure autobiographical.\textsuperscript{54} Kemp Malone offers a still different interpretation, pointing out that the desert surrounding the Temple of Venus is perhaps intended to contrast with the May garden of the Roman de la Rose and the May garden in general that surrounds the temples or poets' bedrooms in the dream-vision poems.\textsuperscript{55} Most commentators thus find a symbolical meaning in Chaucer's desert,\textsuperscript{56} though there is little uniformity or certainty

\textsuperscript{53}Der j\textsuperscript{unge} Chaucer, K\textsuperscript{o}lner anglistische Arbeiten (K\textsuperscript{\o}ln: Bochum-Langendreer, 1938), p. 92.


\textsuperscript{55}Op. cit., p. 50.

\textsuperscript{56}For argument against symbolical interpretation of the waste, see W. O. Sypherd, Medium Aevum, XII, 92. Says Sypherd: "Too much stress should not be laid upon the waste where Chaucer finds himself on coming out of the temple. He himself has little concern with it. He needed an open field in order that his eagle might swoop down and bear him away on his journey."
of opinion as to what this meaning may be.

A further color which should perhaps be mentioned in connection with assumed comparison is circuitio or circumlocutio, a term employed by the rhetoricians to designate circumlocution or paraphrase. This is not always a figurative device, and when it is so, it constitutes no distinctive pattern of imagery since it usually consists of some type of translatio or allegoria which serves the purpose of circumlocution. As a characteristic example of figurative circuitio in Chaucer, one may observe the following line in which Justinus laments his domestic troubles:

But I woot best where wryngeth me my sho.  

(MerchT, IV, 1553)

Or one may note the excellent circuitio in this line which refers to Theseus:

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57 Geoffrey, Documentum, II, ii, 11, says: "Circumlocutio similiter anget materian. Est eim circumlocutio quando sententiam aliquam dicturi eam non directe dicimus, sed quasi in circuitu ambulamus et per quasdam circumstantias sub ampliori serie verborum ipsam insinuamus." See also De coloribus rhetoricis, Faral, p. 325; and Matthieu, Ars versificatoria, III, 36.

58 Occasionally, however, circuitio consists of synecdoche or metonomy. A good example of the former so used appears in the following line which describes the Shipman: "With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake," Gen Prol, I, 406. Instances of this kind do not come under assumed comparison, but under the principle of connection or association. See below, pp. 72-74.
For after Mars he serveth now Dyane.

(ElT, I, 1682)

The *Wife of Bath's Prologue* is particularly rich in circumlocutions, practically all of which are used to veil matters of sex. As instances may be cited

For peril is bothe fyrd and tow t' assemble: Ye know what this ensample may resemble.

(Ill, 89 f.)

And after wyn on Venus moste I thynke.

(Ill, 464)

The clerk, whan he is oold, and may noght do O Venus werkes worth his ole sho.

(Ill, 707 f.)

On the treatment of such subjects, Geoffrey and Matthieu have nothing to say, but the author of the *Ad Herennium* recommends the use of metaphor to avoid obscenity.

From these patterns of imagery that assume a resemblance between tenor and vehicle, one turns next to two rhetorical devices in which the comparison is stated directly. These are the *similitudo*, or simile, and the *exemplum*, or example. Although the first of these appears widely in

59See also Ill, 170 f.; 198-200; 412; 487; 492; 510; 602.

60"Obscenitatis vitandae causa, sic: 'Cujus mater quotidians nuptiis delectatur.'" *Ad Herennium*, iv, 34.

61The rhetoricians also refer to this figure as *comparatio*, *collatio*, and *imago*. For definition and discussion, see Matthieu *Ars versificatoria*, IV, 3-5; Evrard *Laborintus*, 313; Geoffrey, *Poetria nova*, 241-263; *Documentum*, II, 11, 21.
both ancient and medieval Latin poetry, except for short conventional comparisons, it is not often employed in English poetry until the time of Chaucer. In general the rhetoricians warn against its use. Matthieu de Vendôme explains that the *similitudo* is allowable in the ancients, who use its richness to compensate for the poverty of matter, but he advises modern writers to avoid similes. Evrard presents a similar condemnation. Geoffrey de Vinsauf, though less severe, permits only one kind of *similitudo*. Making a distinction between the *similitudo*

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62 Remarks W. P. Ker: "It is rather strange that similes are not used much in English poetry before Chaucer, or in medieval vernacular poetry before Dante. Yet medieval writers used them, and used them well, when they wrote in Latin, and in Latin verse similes are very frequent. Somehow or other the simile came late into vernacular poetry. It is uncommon in Anglo-Saxon, and in Old Icelandic, being used only where there was some special motive, as in lyric and elegiac passages. There are similes in Old French epic poetry, but these are seldom more than mere comparisons, for example, the shafts in battle falling 'as thick as rain in April,' not going beyond those found in prose or ordinary conversation." *Form and Style in Poetry*, ed. R. W. Chambers (London: Macmillan and Company, 1928), p. 253.

Gummere, *op. cit.*, p. 108, observes that "the simile is essentially oriental, the metaphor occidental." The former, he points out, "came into our literature through Latin models and the love of sacred literature for allegory. The Bible is very fond of similes: 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so, panteth my soul after thee, O God!'" But our primitive poetry ventured, at best, only on such timid flight as when it says that the ship glides over the water 'most like a bird' (*fugle gelicost*). This fact, that the simile stands on a higher plane of development than the metaphor, must be borne in mind when one is told that the metaphor is a 'condensed' simile. It is so logically, not, however, chronologically."
"per collationem" (roughly, an extended comparison) and the similitudo "per brevitatem," he shows strong preference for the latter, but apparently not so much for the idea of brevity as for the clearness or obviousness of the comparison.

Whether Chaucer was acquainted with these precepts or not, the short similitudo is his most characteristic figurative device. He employs it throughout his poems, in the Canterbury Tales almost five hundred times, in the Troilus nearly one hundred and twenty times, in the remaining works two hundred and ten times. Many of his similes are only one or one half line in length, as may be seen in the following examples:

[John and Aleyn are] very and weet, as beest is in the reyn.

\[(\text{KyT}, I, 4107)\]

This Diomede, as fresh as brancne in May.

\[(\text{Tr}, V, 844)\]

[The House of Fame]is as ful eke of wyndowes,
As flakes falle in grete snowes.

\[(\text{HF}, I, 1192)\]

\[63\text{Cf. Speirs, op. cit., p. 25.}\]

\[64\text{Cf. Naunin, op. cit., p. 35.}\]
The majority of Chaucer's similes, as in the case of those quoted above, are introduced by *as*; but *than* and *like* are also often employed for stating the comparison:

He sleep namoore than doth a nyghtynghale.  
*(Gen Prol, I, 98)*

Other colour then asshen hath she noon.  
*(Anel, 173)*

Sit, Eneas, like Phebus to devyse,  
So was he fressh arayed in his wise.  
*(LCH, III, 1206 f.)*

... she was lyk the brighte morwe of May.  
*(MerchT, IV, 1748)*

Frequently the simile is expanded beyond a single line by the addition of clausal modifiers:

Of kynde he coude his olde fadres wonne,  
Withoute lere, as can a drake swymme  
When it is cauyht and carved to the brymme.  
*(LGW, VII, 2449-2451)*

Wente his foule trumpes soon,  
As swift as pelet out of ronde,  
When fyr is in the poudre ronne.  
*(HF, III, 1642-1644)*

In other instances independent statements are added to give closer realization of the point of comparison:

For every mortal mannes power nys  
But lyk a bladdre ful of wynd, ywys.  
For with a nedles poyn, whan it is blowe,  
May al the boost of it be leyd ful lowe.  
*(SecNT, VIII, 438-441)*
Now and then Chaucer makes use of a series of similes, as in this passage from the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* (III, 371-377):

 Thou liknest eek wommenes love to helle,  
To bareyne lond, ther water may nat dwelle.  
Thou liknest it also to wilde fyr;  
The moore it brenneth, the moore it hath desir  
To consume every thynge that brenn wol.  
Thou seyest, right as wormes schende a tree,  
Right so a wyf destroyeth hire housbonde.

Another series of this sort may be observed in this passage from the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* (VIII, 1341-1349):

This sotted preest, who was gladder than he?  
Was nevere brid gladder agayn the day,  
Ne nyghtyngele, in sesoun of May,  
Was nevere noon that luste bet to synge;  
Ne lady lustier in carolyne,  
Or for to speke of love and wommanhede,  
Ne knyght in armes to doon any hardy dede,  
To stoden in grace of his lady deere,  
Than hadde this preest this soory craft to leere.

While short similes are most characteristic in Chaucer, instances which extend for several lines are not at all uncommon. Usually these develop a single line of thought which remains throughout the image in rather close connection with the stated resemblance. One notes, for example, the
following image from The Legend of Lucrece (LGW, V, 1764-1766):

Al this conceit hys herte hath newe ytake.
And ad the se, with tempest al toshake,
That after, whan the storm is al a go,
Yit wil the water quappe a day or two,
Ryght so, thogh that hire forme were absent,
The plesaunce of hire forme was present.

Another instance of this kind is seen in the fine simile which ends Book I of the Troilus (1086-1092):

Now lat us stynte of Troilus a stounde,
That fareth lik a man that hurt is score,
And is somewhat of akynge of his wounde
Ylissed wel, but heeled no deel moore;
And, as an esy pacient, the loore
Abit of hym that gooth aboute his cure;
And thus he dryeth forth his aventure.

In some cases Chaucer's extended similes are Homeric or epic in character; that is, they tend "to go beyond the exact point of contact," into particulars that have little or nothing to do with the likeness of the comparison and become "a distinct piece of ornament, a picture in the margin of the narrative."65 But similes of this type are

little cultivated by Chaucer. As Klaeber aptly observes, "so anschaulich er zu schildern weiss, so sehr er die Detailmolerei liebt: eine vorgestellte, zur Vergleichung gewählte Situation mehr um ihrer selbst willen, mit allerhand selbständigen, dem eigenlichen Zusammenhange vielleicht ganz fern stehenden Einzelzügen auszumalen, ist durchaus nicht seine Art. Gerade in seinen vollendsten Meisterwerken bedient er sich grosstenteils recht kurzer Vergleiche, was allerdings auch in dem Charakter und der Anlage der novellenhatten Erzählungen begrundet ist." According to Klaeber, Chaucer employs only fifteen epic similes, the most clearly marked of which is the following example from the *Knight's Tale* (I, 1637-1648):

Tho chaunten gan the colour in hir face, 
Right as the hunters in the regne of Trace, 
That stondeth at the gappe with a spere, 
Whan hunted is the leon or the bere, 
And hereth hym come russelshyng in the greves, 
And breketh both bowes and the leves, 
And thynketh, "Heere cometh my mortal enemy! Without faille, he moot be deed, or I; 
For outhre I moot sleen hym at the gappe, 
Or he moot sleen me, if that me myshappe,"—
So ferden they in chaungyng of hir hewe, 
As fer as everich of hem oother knewe.

The other examples which Klaeber lists appear in the following places: (1) the *Complaint of Mars*, 245-263;

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66*Das Bild bei Chaucer*, p. 289.
(2) the *Legend of Good Women*, VII, 2317-2322; (3) *Troilus*, I, 218-225; (4) II, 764-770; (5) 967-973; (6) III, 351-357; (7) 1233-1239; (8) 1240-1246; (9) IV, 225-231; (10) 239-243; (11) the *Knight's Tale*, I, 1177-1182; (12) the *Wife of Bath* a Prologue, TIT, 348-356; (13) The *Man of Lawe's Tale*, II, 645-651; (14) the *Squire's Tale*, V, 610-621. But the selection of epic similes in Chaucer's poetry is, of course, largely a subjective matter, and students are not likely to agree on the precise number of examples to be found. In addition to those listed by Klaeber, one may also include the following noteworthy image from the *Complaint of Mars* (236-244), in which God is compared with the fisherman and the loved ones with the fish caught:

67Ibid., pp. 289-294. Klaeber points out that seven of these similes are borrowed from Boccaccio, Dante, Ovid, and Boethius, while those remaining are apparently of Chaucer's own creation. Ker, *Essays in Medieval Literature*, pp. 32-35, believes that Chaucer was especially influenced by Dante in his use of similes even when there is no direct borrowing, and he quotes the simile from the *Man of Lawe's Tale* (II, 645-651) beginning "Have ye nat seyn somtyme a pale face, / Among a press . . . , r as evidence. Says Ker: "There is nothing that exactly corresponds to this in Dante, but the character of Dante is stamped upon it; it has the quality of Dante's imagination, as shown whenever he has to translate his emotional meaning into a pictorial image, and chooses to do so without going very far from his subject. This comparison of Chaucer of the anguish of Constance to the anguish of a man led to execution, whose face is dignified and made remarkable among the indistinct faces of the crowd, is not a simile from alien matter, like those in which an army is compared to cranes or to flies: it is a repetition of the same kind of situation, a case of another person under the same sort of distress. A large number of Dante's comparisons are of this sort: not analogous from something superficially different, but very close repetitions of the original in which the poetic effect is produced by detaching and emphasizing one particular aspect of the subject without attraction of the other features."
Hit semeth he hath to lovers enmyte,
And lyk a fissher, as men alday may se,
Baiteth hys angle-hok with some plesaunce,
Til many a fissh ys wod til that he be
Sesed therwith; and then at erst hath he
Al his desir, and therewith al myschaunce;
And thogh the lyne breke, he hath penaunce;
For with the hok he wounded is so sore
That he his wages hath for evermore.

As ten Brink remarks, "Chaucer makes no pretentions what-
ever to the epic style," and he does not often find
occasion to employ the epic simile. Yet the instances
cited above, along with the numerous other types of simile
in his poetry, help to indicate the high esteem he held for
this color in general. 69


69 "Chaucers vorliebe fur Vergleiche," says Naunin,
op. cit., p. 36, "ersehen wir besonders aus Stellung zu
seinen Quellen. In der Man of Law's Tale hat er in seine
Vorlage drei ausfuhrliche Vergleiche eingeschoben. In
Troilus hat er vom Filostrato five Vergleiche ubernomen
17 weitere hat er frei hinzugefugt (I. 218-31, 698-700,
704-07, 731-35, 785-88, 964-66, 1087-91, II. 764-68, 1331-37,
1533-54, III. 856-59, 1230-32, 1233-39, 1240-46. IV.
1098-99, 1188-41, V. 599-603. Zweimal hat er an Stelle
der Vergleiche Boccaccios andere gebraucht: IV. 225 bis
31 bringt Chaucer den Vergleich des Troilus mit einen
seiner Blatter beraubten Baume, Boccaccio den mit einem
wilden Tier; I. 171-72 vergleicht Chaucer Criseyedes
uberrangende Stellung uber alle andern Mädchen mit des
Buchstaben A Uber die andern Buchstaben und ersetzt
damit Boccaccios Vergleich der Cresei mit der Rose, die das
Vulchen Uberstrahle, ja, Chaucer war mit dem ein Vergleich
hier nicht zufrieden. Er fügte noch unabhängig von
diesem ein zweiten hinzu (I. 175)." (Naunin's line references
are to Skeat's Oxford Chaucer.)
Also of utmost importance for Chaucer, as well as for medieval writers as a whole, is the exemplum, a color which appears everywhere in Chaucer's poems. Contrary to their recommendations for the use of the similitudo, the rhetoricians strongly urge the use of this color. Matthieu de Vendôme, in his discussion of the description of persons and things says: "Amplius, attributis tam negotii quam personae non superfluit exemplorum pluralitas, ut, si duo vel plura inducantur exampla, primum evidens, secundum evidentius, tertium evidentissimum esse perpendatur. Majoris etenim firmitatis est aedificum cui columnarum diversitas accommodat fulcimentum. Podest etiam exemplificanti exemplorum opulentia." Then, anticipating the Wife of Bath's remark,

I holde a mouses herte not worth a leek
That hath but oon hole for to sterte to,

(WB Prol, III, 572 f.)

he declares: "Etenim mus intercipitur facile muscipulae detrimentis, cui propinuat refrigiam crepido singularis."70

Originally and theoretically the exemplum is defined

70 Ars versificatoria, I, 114. The parallel between Chaucer's and Matthieu's lines is pointed out by Manly, op. cit., p. 12.
as a simple quotation from an authority. In medieval practice, however, it came to include comparisons employed for the purpose of illustration. The latter are not always figurative; yet they are often of a wild and rampant character which goes beyond the bounds of purely logical comparison. As an example of this type of exemplum, one may note the following passage spoken by the bereaved knight in the Book of the Duchess (1055-1073):

Tho' I had had all the beaute
That ever had Alcipyades,
And all the strengthe of Ercules,
And therto had the worthynesse
Of Alysaunder, and all the rychesse
That ever was in Babyloynne,
In Cartagc, or in Macedoyne,
Or in Rome, or in Nynye;
And therto also hardy be
As was Ector, so have I joye,
That Achilles slough at Troye---
And thercfore was he slayn alsoo
In a temple, for bothe twoo
Were slayne, he and Antylologus,
And so seyth Dares Frygius,
For love of Polixena--
Or ben as wis as Mynerva,
I wolde ever, withoute drede,
Have loved hir, for I mooste nede.

The Rhetorica ad Herennium, IV, 49, states: "Exemplum est alicujus facti, aut dicti praeteriti, cum certi auctoris nomine proposito"; and Geoffrey, in the Documentum, I, 9, gives these two examples: (1) "Sciilla seditio Scillam seduxit: eodem / Quo laesit patrem vulnere laesa fuit"; (2) "In Scillam redit fraus propria; dedit aequa / Auctorem fraudis fraude perire sua." Chaucer's reference to Lollius in the Troilus I, 394, represents this classical conception of the exemplum. For other references to authority, see Tr, IV, 414; V, 1653, 1771.
Sometimes Chaucer employs a series of such exempla, as may be observed in the following passage where the Nun’s Priest compares the uproar caused by Chauntecleer’s capture with three great events in ancient history:

Certes, swich cry ne lamentacion
Was nevere of ladyes maad when Ylion
Was wonne and Pirrus with his streite swerd,
Whan he hadde hent kyng Priam by the berd,
And slayn hym, as seith us Eneydos,
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighte,
Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
Whan that hir housbonde hadde lost his lyf,
And that the Romayns hadde brend Cartage.
She was so ful of torment and of rage
That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hirselven with a stedefast herte.
O woful hennes, right so criden ye,
As whan that Nero brende the citee
Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves
For that hir husbondes losten alle hir lyves;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
(NPT, VII, 3355-3373)72

In a number of instances Chaucer presents an entire story as an exemplum, as in the case of the Pardoner’s tale of the three revellers;73 but perhaps none of these should be regarded as examples of figurative comparison.

In all of the various patterns of imagery discussed up to this point, one expression has been used in place of another on the basis of resemblance, either assumed or

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72 For other examples of exempla in a series, see HF, 388-426; MLT, II, 470-504, PardT, VI, 483-590; SumT, III, 1885-1905; MerchT, IV, 1362-1374.

73 Note also the Prioress’s Tale, the Nun’s Priest’s Tale, and the Physician’s Tale. The Monk’s Tale consists of a series of exempla of men “yfallen out of high degree.”
stated. The two parts of the comparison in these may be separated in space and thought; yet a common quality, a likeness in one point, allows one to be employed for the other. In the group of figurative devices next to be considered, one expression is used for another on the basis, not of resemblance, but of connection or association in space or in thought.

When the connection is one which involves space, the figure is called intellectio or sinodoce (synecdoche) and is defined as the mention of the part when the whole is to be understood, or vice versa. Examples of this device are common in Chaucer's poems. In the following, one notes the use of the part for the whole:

And in the bier, withouten lenger lette,
Hir fomen in the feld anon hem mette.

(Tr, IV, 41 f.)

And fully twenty-wynter, yeer by yeere,
He hadde of Israel the governaunce.

(MkT VII, 2059 f.)

The whole for the part is observed in

[Troilus] ... held aboute hym alwey, out of drede,
A world of folk ...

(Tr, III, 1720 f.)

74 Says Matthieu, Ars versificatoria, III, 3: "Amplius, sidonoche [sic] est quando gratia partis aliquid tote attribuntur, vel e converso...." See also Geoffrey, Poetria nova, 1022-1037, and Documentum, II, ii, 33-35.
My joly body schol a tale telle.
(ML Epil, II, 1185)

Also to be included under intellectio or synecdoche are instances in which the species is substituted for the genus and the reverse, as in the use of thef to designate a bad man in general:

... this false thef
Nath don this lady yit a more myschef,
(LGW, VII, 2300 f.)

and the use of joly lyf for "delight":

This joly lyf how thise two clerkes lad
Til that the thridde cok bigan to synge.
(RvT, I, 4232 f.)

Denominatio, or metonymy, which does not differ greatly from intellectio, substitutes one expression for another on the basis of connection in thought, as the exchange of terms signifying the cause and effect, the concrete and the abstract, the signs and the concepts. Examples of this device abound throughout Chaucer's poems. As typical instances of the exchange of words denoting cause and effect, one may note:

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75See Matthieu, Ars versificatoria, III, 30; Matthieu, Poetria nova, 966-1012; Documentum, II, iii, 4.
Lyve thow soleyn, wormes corupcioun!
(PE, 614)

Thou art largesse of pleyn felicitee.
(ABC, 13)

For certes she was, that swete wif,
My suffisaunce, my lust, my lyf,
Myn hap, myn hele, and al my blesse,
My worldes welfare, and my goddesse.
(BD, 1037-1040)

... the dronke vyne.
(PE, 181)

So was hir joly whistle wel ywet.
(RvT, I, 4155)

Denominatio which substitutes the concrete for the abstract closely approaches translatio or metaphor. Typical examples of this kind of denominatio in Chaucer's poetry may be observed in the following:

Whan tendre youth hath wedded stoupyng age.
(MerchT, IV, 1738)

76Aristotle makes no distinction between any of the types of synecdoche and metonymy and metaphor. Of the four examples of metaphor which he discusses in Poetics, XXI, 4-8, the first two are synecdoches and the third is a metonomy. But following the distinctions made by the Latin and medieval rhetoricians, modern theorists generally treat these devices separately. See, for example, Dictionary of World Literature, p. 381.
... "ful wel koude I yow quite
With bleryng of a proud mulleres ye."
(Rv Prol, I, 3864 f.)

No tendre mouth, noon herte delicaat.
(ChT, IV, 927)

Chaucer also employs the type of **denominatio** in which a sign or symbol stands for a conception, as may be noted in these instances:

And she that bar the ceptre ful of flowres
Shal bere a distaf, hir cost for to quyte.
(MkT, VII, 2373 f.)

For wyn and youthe dooth Venus encresse.
(PhysT, VI, 59)

The symbolical use of colors and gems which has been noted earlier involves the same principle as the instances cited above and might be included here equally as well as under **permutatio**.

The last group of figurative devices to be discussed in this chapter are those which have as their distinguishing quality the principle of contrast. In order to express an idea in a very forcible way, a writer can employ a phrase entirely unexpected, which makes a sharp contrast with literal statement. Such expression does not deceive the

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77 See pp. 53-56, above.
reader or hearer; "it simply draws his attention, as by a violent gesture, to the real object." Three rhetorical patterns belong in this group: superlatio or hyperbole, ironia, and significatio. The first of these colors, according to the rhetoricians, consists of a straining of the truth and may be employed for either exaggeration or attenuation; that is, it is an exhibition of things as greater or less in dimensions, more or less in number, or better or worse in kind than they really are.

Chaucer often makes use of superlatio, though, as Naunin has observed, it appears less frequently in his later and more realistically conceived tales.

The following instances are characteristic:

76 Gummere, op. cit., p. 115.

79 Superlatio is not mentioned by Matthieu in the Ars versificatoria nor by Geoffrey in the Documentum and the Summa de coloribus rhetorici. It is discussed briefly and illustrated by Geoffrey in the Poetria nova, 1013-1021, and references are made to it by Gervais De Melkley in the Ars versificaria (Faral, p. 329) and by Evrard in the Laborintus, 415. For a clear definition of this color one must turn to the Rhetorica ad Herennium, IV, 33: "Superlatio est oratio superans veritatem, alicujus augendi, minuendive causa. Haec sumitur separatim, aut cum comparatione. Separatium sic: 'Quod si concordian retimebimus, imperli magnitudinem solis ortu atque occasu metiemur.' Cum comparatione, aut similitudine, aut a praestantia superlatio sumitur. A similitudine sic: 'Corpore niveum candoren, adspectu igneum ardomem assequabatur.' A praestantio, hoc modo: 'Cujus ore sermo melle dulcior profluebat.' Ex eodem genero hoc est: 'Tantus erat in armis splendor, ut solis fulgor obscurior videretur.'"
But now so wepith Venus in hir spere
That with hir teeres she wol drenche us here.
(Song, 11 f.)

... the peple, blisful al and somme,
So cryeden that to the sterres it wente.
(Anel, 26 f.)

Therewith his manly sorwe to biholde,
It myghte han nad an herte of stoon to rewe.
(Tr, III, 113 f.)

This Palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh his herte
He felt a coold sword sodeynliche glyde.
(KnT, I, 157 f.)

For I dar swere wel, yif that she
Had amonge ten thousand he,
She wolde have he, at the lest,
A chefe meroure of al the fest,
Thogh they had stonde in a rowe,
To manmys eynen koude have knowe.
(Bo, 970-975)

The principle of superlatic is further to be observed
in the under-evaluation of some person, thing, attribute,
or quality by means of a *reductio ad absurdum* comparison
with a well-known object of the smallest possible worth,
as in the following:

Swich talkyn is not worth a boterflye.
(NP Prol, VII, 2790)

But thilke text heeld he not worth an oystre.
(Gen Prol, I, 182)

I wol nat wirche as muchel as a owat.
(WB Prol, III, 3147)
This device is clearly a favorite with Chaucer, for it appears no less than sixty-five times in his poems, and the comparisons are drawn from a wide range of objects.\textsuperscript{82}

As a type of superlative may also be considered what is commonly termed litotes, a figure in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative of its contrary.\textsuperscript{83} This device is not widely used by Chaucer, but one may note the following examples:

\begin{quote}
He was nat pale as a forpyned goost.
\textit{(Gen Prol, I, 259-261)}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
This knyght ne stood nat stille as doth a best.
\textit{(WBT, III, 1034)}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{81}Superlative in such instances as these depends upon intellectio, since a concrete object is set in place of a more abstract conception.

Frischer, Chaucer and the Roman de la Rose, p. 74, points out that this type of expression was introduced into early Middle English from the French. Although it is rather common in Latin and Old High German, it does not seem to have been used in Old English.

\textsuperscript{82}For a complete list of these expressions, see Frischer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 75, n.

\textsuperscript{83}The medieval rhetoricians do not employ the term litotes. This device could perhaps be understood as a kind of contrarium or oppositio, a color defined as denying the contrary of an expression before affirming it. See Geoffrey, \textit{De coloribus rhetoriciis}, in Faral, p. 322. See also Faral's comment, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 84-85. Chaucer rarely uses contrarium precisely as defined, but there is a good example in the description of the Friar: "For ther he was nat lyk a cloysterer / With a thredbare cope, as is a poore scoler, / But he was lyk a maister or a pope," \textit{Gen Prol}, I, 259-261.
I warn ye well, it is no child's play
To take a wyf ... (MerchT, IV, 1530 f.)

The bacon was not set for hem, I trowe,
That som men han in Essex at Dunmowe. (WB Prol, III, 217 f.)

The figure *ironia*, as noted earlier, is a division of *allegoria* or *permutatio*. Here the contrast consists in the reader's believing the opposite of what is said. Although Chaucer's forte is irony, this element in his poetry is for the most part situational rather than dialectical, and his use of the color *ironia* is rare. In most instances the irony in his figures of this kind is of a harmless character. One notes, for example, his remark upon Deiphbus' entreaty that Troilus be Criseyde's "fulle frend":

But swich a node was to preye hym thenne,
As for to bidde a wood man for to renne. (Tr, II, 1553 f.)

Another instance is found in Chaucer's words concerning the comfort which the "route of wommen" try to give Criseyde:

But swich an ese therwith they hire wroughte,
Right as a man is used for to feele,
For ache of hed, to clawen him on his heele. (Tr, IV, 726-728)

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84 See p. 42, above.
Again, one notes the remark of the Nun's Priest concerning his tale:

This storie is also trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
(NPT, VII, 3211 f.)

and the Miller's description of Absolon's singing:

He syngeth, brokkyng as a nyghtyngele.
(Mill T, I, 3377)

There is also probably ironical intention in these lines relating to Chaucer's appearance:

This were a popet in an arm t'embrace
For any womman, smal and fair of face.
(Thop Prol, VII, 701 f.)

Occasionally, however, Chaucer employs irony of a sterner sort. Two such instances occur in this passage from "the compleynt of Anelida the quene upon fals Arcite":

For thogh I hadde yow to-morowe ageyn,
I myghte as wel holde Aperill fro reyn,
As holde yow, to make yow be stidfast.
Almighty God, of trouthe sovereyn,
Where is the trouthe of man? Who hath it slayn?
Who that hem loveth, she shal hem synde as fast
As in a tempest is a roten mast.
(Anel, 308-314)

A further example of bitter irony may be observed in the little poem Against Women Unconstant (15 f.), where the poet says of the lady:
Ye might be shryned, for your brotelnesse,  
Bet than Dalyda, Creseyde or Candace.

Significatio, the last of the colors to be discussed here, includes five subdivisions, only one of which, significatio per ambiguum, concerns the present discussion. This is said to occur when a word can be understood in two or more senses but has the one the speaker or writer wishes to give it. Such figures of double-entendre thus constitute what in modern terminology is known as the pun. It has often been pointed out by critics that this device

85 "Significatio," states the author of Ad Herennium, IV, 54, "est, quae plus in suspicione relinquit, quam positum est in oratione. Ea fit per exuberationem, ambiguum, consequentiam, abscissionem, similitudinem." See also Geoffrey, Poetria nova, 1269 f.

86 "Per ambiguum, cum verbum podest in duas pluresve sententias accipi, sed accipitur tamen in eam partem, quam vult is, qui dixit." Ad Herennium, loc. cit. The example given, "Prospice tu, qui plurimum cernis," illustrates a play on the two meanings of cernere, "see" and "accept an inheritance."
is unusual in Chaucer's poetry, though J. S. P. Tatlock observes that in Chaucer it "is as common, perhaps, as in other poets of humor except during times when Euphuism and the like gave special vogue to artificial wit." The best known example of Chaucer's use of significatio per ambiguum is the word philosophre, meaning at once both "philosopher" and "alchemist," in the description of the Clerk of Oxford:

But al be that he was a philosophre
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre.

(Gen Prol, I, 297-298)

87According to Lounsbury, Studies in Chaucer, III, 319, Chaucer is virtually "free from those verbal quibbles which characterize to so marked degree the language of the Elizabethan dramatists." "The single instance," he goes on to say, "in which he furnished any notable example of this sort is the play upon the word 'style' in the Squire's tale [V, 105], though there is possibly one of the same character in a line of 'Troilus and Cressida' [I, 71], where it is said that 'This Calkas knew by Calkulyng/ that Troy was to be taken.'"

Robinson, The Complete Works of Chaucer, p. 760, likewise remarks that "puns are unusual in Chaucer" and that "it is not always easy to determine whether they are intentional." But he increases the number from two to nine. For discussion of these and a few other instances, see also J. S. P. Tatlock, "Puns in Chaucer," Flügel Memorial Volume (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University, 1916), pp. 228-232; Helge Kühleritz, "Rhetorical Word-Play in Chaucer," PMLA, LXIX (1954), 937-952; and Paull F. Baum, "Chaucer's Puns," PMLA, LXXI (1956), 225-246.


89This word appears again as a pun in the Introduction to the Man of Law's Tale, II, 25 f.: "Wel kan Senec and many a philosophre / Biwaillen tyme more than gold in cofre."
Other instances of Chaucer's use of the pun may be noted in the allusions to Lancaster, Richmond, Blanche, and John of Gaunt in the *Book of the Duchess* (1316 f.):

A long castle with walles white
Be seynt Johan on a ryche hil;\(^{90}\)

in the expression *hert-huntynge* in the same poem (1313), which seems to show a play on *hart* and *heart*;\(^{91}\) in the description of Criseyde as *makeless* (Tr. 1, 172), meaning that she is "peerless" but also "husbandless"; as well as in such words as *lyght* in the *Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse* (3), *ars-metrike* in the *Summoner's Tale* (III, 2222), and *taillynge* in the *Shipman's Tale* (VII, 434), which most certainly would have produced chuckles from Chaucer's readers or hearers because of their double-entendre.\(^{92}\)


\(^{91}\) A suggestion by Preston, op. cit., p. 66, n.

The different medieval rhetorical devices which have been shown in this chapter to embody the principle of figurative comparison through resemblance, connection, and contrast vary considerably in their effectiveness as vehicles for the creation of poetic imagery, for such colors as *translatio*, *allegoria*, and *similitudo* are in this respect quite obviously of much greater importance than most of the other figures. Yet only a full survey can demonstrate the wide variety of patterns which medieval rhetoric provided Chaucer for the expression of images. These figurative colors are not, of course, the exclusive property of medieval writers and of the ancients from whom they were derived; they are, on the contrary, figures which have been employed by poets in all periods of literature and many of them are forms common to language in general. Indeed, except for their Latin names, most of the terms which have been described and illustrated here would not be unfamiliar today. Bringing attention to this point is not to imply that one finds Geoffrey de Vinsauf and Matthieu de Vendôme talking like Middleton Murry and G. Wilson Knight; it simply emphasizes the fact that the tradition behind Chaucer's figurative language is a universal one and that it is not at all anachronistic to speak of Chaucer's accomplishment in modern critical terminology.

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92 Commenting on figurative language, Stanford, Greek Metaphor, p. 92, goes so far as to say that "modern rhetoric has made little advance beyond the methods and theories of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian."
CHAPTER III
THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE SUBJECT MATTER
IN CHAUCER'S IMAGERY

Much of the subject matter in Chaucer's imagery reflects the variety of sights and sounds of the English countryside and the ordinary experiences of fourteenth-century life. Because Chaucer characteristically employs conversational style and because his language "is rooted in the speech of what was still (allowing for expanding trades) a predominantly rural community," images of this kind—even the most homely and proverbial—are generally appropriate in all his work and in the mouths of all his characters. Indeed, it is in no way unnatural for the Knight, the pilgrim of highest social rank, to preface the telling of his tale with the figure:

I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,
And wayke been the oxen in my plough,
(\textit{Kn}, I, 886 f.)

for the Nun's Priest to remark on the argument concerning predestination and free will:

... I ne kan not bulte it to the bren,
(\textit{NPT}, VII, 3240)

and for Chaucer himself to say of Criseyde's unfaithfulness:

... bothe Troilus and Troie town
Shal knotteles throughout hire herte slide,
(\textit{Tr}, V, 768 f.)

But even though the multiplicity of subject matter from common life and nature is appropriate throughout his poetry, Chaucer has in some cases exercised a marked degree of selection as to the particular spheres from which the familiar materials are drawn. Moreover, he varies his imagery largely derived, the choice of materials in the various poems is by no means dependent on his primary sources, Chaucer takes over images directly from his models when they suit his purposes. But as Kléber, \textit{Das Bild bei Chaucer}, pp. 335-412, demonstrates, at times he omits figures, while in other instance he adds or substitutes, frequently drawing upon other literary sources or upon proverbial materials and less often creating images of his own. His selection of subject matter must therefore be attributed to his own taste and his artistic purposes.

\footnote{1}{Speirs, \textit{Chaucer the Maker}, p. 15. Elaborating on this point, Speirs, p. 17, says: "The impression that French was still the language of the Court in Chaucer's time has somehow become established. But English, the speech of the great body of the English folk in their village and market-town communities, must already before Chaucer's time have been the speech also of the gentlefolk as a whole in manor-house and monastery, castle and Court. The evidence of this is Chaucer's poetry itself. His English poetry implies the audience—the exceptionally cultivated audience it was composed for," And in another place, pp. 20-21, Speirs observes: "Chaucer's poetry implies that his English community was comparatively a homogeneous community in which folk of diverse 'degrees' (the Knight and the Plowman) were interdependent and intimate, as by comparison persons in the modern classless mass are isolated... The scholarly and courtly Chaucer is a member of his whole contemporary English community for the purpose of imaginative creation in language he had the same advantage as Shakespeare; his cultivated English is rooted in the speech—concrete, figurative, proverbial—of the agricultural English folk." For an account of the rural aspects of the London of Chaucer's day, see G. G. Coulton, \textit{Chaucer and His England} (London: Methuen and Company, 1908), pp. 114-117.}

\footnote{2}{Here it must be stressed that although Chaucer's imagery is largely derived, the choice of materials in the various poems is by no means dependent on his primary sources, Chaucer takes over images directly from his models when they suit his purposes. But as Kléber, \textit{Das Bild bei Chaucer}, pp. 335-412, demonstrates, at times he omits figures, while in other instance he adds or substitutes, frequently drawing upon other literary sources or upon proverbial materials and less often creating images of his own. His selection of subject matter must therefore be attributed to his own taste and his artistic purposes.}
considerably the number of figures in which he makes use of learned matter. In the present chapter an attempt will be made to determine the extent to which Chaucer selects the materials in his imagery to suit the character of the individual poems and in the case of the Canterbury Tales the occupation, social status, and personal traits of the various narrators.3

The earliest of Chaucer's poems to show a consistent selection of materials in the figures is the strongly original but unfinished House of Fame, a dream vision in which the poet is carried by a golden eagle to Fame's palace. In this work Chaucer has chosen his subjects to reflect the buoyant, comic tone of the poem and to suggest

3 Throughout this survey the classification of subject matter will be made entirely upon the content in the vehicle of the images.

4 Critics have frequently called attention to various aspects of originality in this work. Says Tatlock: "It is not merely that as regards source it is among the most independently-imagined of Chaucer's narrative poems. It shows a general freedom of self-expression, of roguish humor, combined with remarkable composure and poise; in this poem he has left the French bondage behind." Development and Chronology of Chaucer's Works, p. 38. See also Roland M. Smith, "'Mynstralcie and Noyse' in the House of Fame," MLN, LXV (1950), 521-530, and Kemp Malone, Chapters on Chaucer, pp. 42-60.
or emphasize the unstable character of the goddess.5

Clearest and most direct in their reference to Fame's instability and deceptiveness are several images which appear in the form of symbol. Of these, one notes first the rock of ice upon which Fame's House is built and the melting of famous names engraved upon it:

*hit was every del
A roche of yse, and not of stel.
Thoughte I, "By seynt Thomas of Kent!
This were a fable fundament
To bilden on a place hye.
He ought him lytel glorifye
That hereon bilt, God so me save!"

Tho sawgh I al the half ygrave
With famous folkes names fele,
That had iben in mochel wele,
And her names wild yblowe.
But wel unnethes koude I knowe
Any lettres for to rede
Hir names by; for, out of drede,
They were almost ofshowed so
That of the lettres oon or two
Was molte away of every name,
So unfamous was woxe hir fame.
But men seyn, "What may ever laste?"
Thoo gan I in wyn herte caste
That they were molte away with hete,
And not away with stormes bote.

5Although the Eagle explains that Jupiter in his grace wishes to give Chaucer "some disport and game" for his labor and devotion to the God of Love and is sending him to Fame's House where he can hear many wonderful and diverse tidings of love (HF, II, 596-608), the poem devotes most attention to the fickleness of Fame in connection with "reputation" in general. Only two images are closely associated with the motif of love tidings. As noted earlier (pp. 55-56, above), there are the beryl walls of the castle (HF, III, 118n) and the ruby constituting the "see imperioII" of the goddess (HF, III, 1361 f.), which are symbolic of love.
For on that other syde I say
Of this hil, that northward lay,
How it was written ful of names
Of folkes that hadde grete fames
Of olde tyme, and yet they were
As freshe as men had written hem here
The selue day ryght, or that houre
That I upon hem gan to poure.
But wel I wiste what yt made;
Hyt was conserved with the shade
Of a castel that stood on high—
Al this wrytynge that I sigh—
And stood eke on so cold a place
That hete myghte hit not deface.

(FE, III, 1129-2264)

Fame’s deceptiveness is also symbolized by the character
of the beryl wall of the castle

That shoone ful lyghter than a glas
And made wel more than it was
To semen every thing, ywis,
As kynde thyng of Fames is.

(FE, III, 1289-1292)

Again, her changeable, erratic nature is suggested by the
way she varies her size:

... alther-first, soth for to saye,
Me thoughte that she was so lyte
That the lengthe of a cubite
Was lengere than she seemed be,
But thus sone, in a whyle, she
Hir tho so wonderliche streighte
That with hir fet she erthe roighte,
And with hir hed she touched hevene,
Ther as chyrien sterres severe.

(FE, III, 1367-1376)

The idea of instability is further conveyed by the whirling
of the house of tidings which is a part of Fame’s domain:
And ever mo, as swyft as thought,
This queynete hous aboute wente,
That never mo hyt stille stente;

(HF, III, 1924-1926)

and by the flimsy material of which it is constructed:

Al was the tymber of no strengthe,
Yet it was founded to endure
While that hit list to Aventure.

(HF, III, 1980-1983)

But most of the imagery in the House of Fame suggests instability through subject matter which is associated with air or noise. That Chaucer connected these elements with Fame may be noted in this passage which occurs when the Eagle and Chaucer are approaching Fame's House:

"Maistow nat heren that I do?"
"What?" quod I. "The grete sour,"
Quod he, "that rumbleth up and doun
In Fame's Hous, ful of tydynges,
Both of feir speche and chidynges,
And of fals and soth compounded.
Herestow wel; hyt is not rouned.
Herestow nat the grete swogh?" ...
"Nay, dreed the not, therof," quod he;
"Hyt is nothing will byten the;
Thou shalt non harm have trewely."

(HF, II, 1024-1045)

Thus Fame is represented as no more substantial than air; she embodies merely conflicting wind and noise.

Book II, which begins the main action of the poet, contains an impressive series of images drawn from materials belonging to or associated with air, though the primary
purpose of these is to emphasize the vast distances of space through which the Eagle and the poet make their journey. At the onset Chaucer tells how he was snatched up by the Eagle:

... with hys grimmaw pawes stronge
Within hys sharpe nyalles longe,
Me, felyng on a swap he bente,
And with hys sourc ayes up wente,
Me caryinge in his clawes stark.
As lyghtly as I were a larke,
Now high, I can not telle yow.

(II, 541-547)

Here the comparison of the poet with a lark gives not only a feeling of lightness and buoyancy, but also association with air since larks, like eagles, are usually thought of as belonging to the regions of the skies. As the journey continues, the poet is borne so far into the heavens that all the world seems no more "than a prikke" (II, 907). At this point the Eagle compares their height with that attained by three legendary figures famous for their adventures in the upper air:

... "for half so high as this
Mas Alexandre Macedo;
Ne the kyng, Daun Scipio.
That saw in drem, at poyn devys,
Helle and erthe and paradys;
Ne eke the wrecche Dedalus,
Ne his child, nyce Ykarus,
That fleigh so highe that the hote
Hys wynnes malt, and he fel wete
In myd the see, and ther he dreynte.

(II, 914-924)
Directing the poet’s attention to the Milky Way, the Eagle adds to the associations with the heavenly regions by explaining that this "Galaxie" once was

... ybrent with hete,
When the sonnes sone, the rede,
That highte Photon, wolde lede
Algate hys fader carte, and sye.
The carte-hors gone wel espye
That he koude no governaunce,
And gone for to lepe and launce,
And beren hym now up, now doun,
Til that he sey the Scorpioun,
Which that in heven a sygne is yit.
And he, for ferde, loste hys wyt
Of that, and let the reynes gon
Of his hors; and they anoon
Gonne up to mounte and doun descende,
Til bothe the eyr and erthe brende;
Til Jupiter, loo, atte laste,
Hym slow, and fro the carte caste.

(II, 940-956)

But the most sensitive and imaginative image relating to the aeronaut experience is given by the poet:

Tho gan y loken under me
And beheld the ayerissh bestes,
Cloudes, mystes, and tempestes,
Snowes, hayles, reynes, wyndes,
And th'engendrynge in hir kyndes,
All the way thrugh which I cam.

(II, 964-699)

He follows this with a figure cited from learned materials:

And theo thoughte y upon Boece,
That wret, "A thought may flee so hye,
Wyth fetheres of Philosophye,
To passen everych element;
And whan he hath so fer ywent,
Than may be seen, behynde hys bak,
Cloude." ...

(II, 972-978)
With the pattern of air imagery in such manner established, figures referring in one way or another to air and space, and hence indirectly to the instability of Fame, appear throughout the remainder of the poem. Of these, two are drawn from heavenly bodies. Before Fame's palace Chaucer sees musicians playing upon various instruments, "Moo than sterres ben in hevene" (III, 1254). Later, he sees Fame give each tiding duration,

Somme to waxe and wane sone,  
As doth the faire white mone.  

(III, 2115 f.)

Two other images refer to space. The Eagle sets Chaucer down as near the castle "As men may casten with a spere" (III, 1048). And in his description of the castle, Chaucer says that it stood so high upon a rock that "Hier stant ther non in Spayne" (III, 1117).

Association with air possibly occurs in the transparency and brightness of the rock on which the castle is situated, "For hyt was lyk alum de glas" (III, 1124). Likewise, the beryl of the castle walls "shoone ful lyghter than a glas" (III, 1289). Elements such as snow, smoke, and wind, which belong to the air and heavens, appear in several images. Fame's castle is as full of windows "As flakes falle in grete snowes" (III, 1192). The poet says that when Folus blew his trumpet
... such a smoke gan out wende
Out of his foule trumpes ende,
Blak, bloo, grenyssh, swartish red,
As doth where that men melte led,
Loo, al on high from the tuel.

(III, 1645-1649)

The movement of wind is suggested by this figure of spreading fire:

... Thus north and south
Went every tydyng from mouth to mouth,
And that encreas ever moo,
As fyre is wont to quyke and goo
From a sparke spronge amys,
Til a citee brent up ys.

(III, 2075-2080)

In connection with wind should also be mentioned Bolus,
the god of winds, who figures somewhat as a personification
all through the third book of the poem.

Associated in some degree with air, too, are a pair
of images which direct attention toward the skies. The
hall of Fame's palace, says Chaucer, was as full

Of hem that writen olde gestes,
As ben on trees rokes nestes.

(III, 1515 f.)

And the house of tidings--itself an airy wicker structure
"shapen lyk a cage" (III, 1985)--

... hath of entrees
As fele as of levee ben in trees.

(III, 1945)
Further, several images refer to living creatures belonging to the air. Fame has as many eyes

As setheres upon foules be,
Or weren on the bestes foure
That Goddis trone gunne honoure,
As John wrrt in th' Apocalips.

(III, 1382-1385)

Upon her feet she has "partriches wynges" (III, 1392), which are symbolical of her speed in spreading rumor. In this group also may be included the personified tidings, "the wvnred wondres," which Chaucer says

... faste fleen
Twenty thousand in a route,
As Eolus hem blew aboute.

(III, 2118-2120)

These images associated with air and space not only emphasize the unstable character of the goddess Fame, but also reflect the buoyant mood of the poem, which deals with marvels witnessed in a domain of the skies. No less telling in effect is the large number of auditory images which likewise relate to the goddess and at the same time fit the comic tone of garrulity and noisiness.

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6 Robinson, op. cit., p. 895, n. 1368 ff., notes that the use of partriches wynges is possibly due to Chaucer's mistranslation of Virgil's "pernicibus alis" (Aeneid, IV, 180) or to a manuscript which read "perdicibus." The correct translation, with presté wynges, appears in Tr, IV, 661.
Among the latter, one notes first of all the pedantic Eagle, who as a fable-like character may be regarded as an image himself. As the bird of Jupiter, "the god of thunder" (II, 603), it is natural that he is given to noisy loquaciousness. To make clear to Chaucer how stories travel through the heavens to the House of Fame, he gives a long-winded lecture on the nature of sound waves (II, 765-863), explaining that sound is only "air ybroken," which moves in steadily widening circles, like ripples in water, until it reaches the goddess. Then he teaches the poet a lesson in sky geography (II, 913-959) and begins a discourse on astronomy, but Chaucer rebels at that. As characteristic of this bird's noisy sophistication, one may note the highly artificial metaphor he employs in explaining Jupiter's reason for sending Chaucer to hear love tidings:

Synth that Fortune hath mad amys  
The fruit of al thyn hertys rente  
Lanquishe and eke in pount to broste.

(III, 2016-2018)

And the sentence which contains this figure (III, 2001-2026) embraces over twenty other lines.

The personified goddess Fame, who is described as having as many tongues "as on bestes heres" (III, 1390), also makes long speeches. But hers are noisy in a vulgar, rather than in a pedantic, manner. For illustration, one may note this part of her answer to a group of petitioners:
"Fy on yow," quod she, "everychon!
Ye masty swyn, ye yd el vrechches,
Ful of roten, slowe techches!
What? false theves! wher ye wolde
Be famous good, and nothing wolde
Deserve why, ne never ye roughte?
Men rather yow to hangen oughte:
For ye be lyke the sweyte cat
That wolde have fissh; but wostow what?
He wolde nothing wete his clowes.
Yvel thrifte come to your jowes,
And eke to myn, if I hit graunte.
Or do yow favour, yow to avaunte!"

(III, 1776-1798)

Next to be considered are a few figures which are suggestive of or refer to the sounds of musical instruments or singing. The Eagle tells Chaucer that in the House of Fame he will hear

No love-dayes and acordes
Than on instrumentes be cordes.7

(II, 496 f.)

In describing the sights and sounds in Fame's palace, Chaucer says:

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7The word *cordes* in this figure probably means "strings" rather than "chords," the gloss given by Skeat, *op. cit.*, V, 57, and others; for, as J. S. Colvert points out, the musical chord was apparently unknown in the fourteenth century. See "Reference to Music in Chaucer's House of Fame," *MLN*, LXIX (1954), 239-241. There seems no reason, however, to consider the comparison as referring to the strings of one instrument, as Colvert does. Since medieval instruments had relatively few strings, the figure is much stronger if thought of as referring to the strings of all instruments taken collectively.
Of songes, ful of armonye
I herde aboute her trone ysonge,
That all the paleys-walles ronge!

(III, 1396-1398)

Fame commands her messenger to bid Solus

... bringe his clarioun,
That is ful dyvers of his soun,
And hyt is cleped Cleere Laude,

(III, 1573-1575)

and also his other clarioun "That highte Sklaundre in every town" (III, 1580). And when Solus blew Sklaundre in answer to a group of petitioners:

Allas, thus was her shame yronge,
And glitteles, on every tonge.

(III, 1655 f.)

Much stronger in appeal are the images which Chaucer draws from the sounds of inanimate nature. Approaching the House of Fame, the Eagle asks Chaucer what "the grete swoogh" is like, to which the poet replies:

"Peter! lyk betynge of the see,
... ayen the roches holowe,
Whan tempest doth the shippes swalowe;
And lat a man stonde, out of doubte,
A myle thens, and here hyt route;
Or elles lyk the last humblynge
After the clappe of a thundringe,
Whan Joves hath the air ybethe."

(II, 1034-1041)
Chaucer refers to thunder in two other images. One of these is in connection with his being snatched up by the Eagle (II, 534), and the other describes the blast from Solus' trumpet:

... out his trump of gold he brayde
Anon, and sette hyt to his mouth,
And blew it east, and west, and south,
And north, as lowde as any thunder.

(III, 1678-1681)

The noise of water—this time a rushing river—also appears again when Chaucer says that from the house of tidings

... com so grete a noyse
That, had it stonden upon Cyse,
Men myghte hyt han herd esely
To Rome, y trowe sikerly.

(III, 1627-1630)

A further image in this group is from the wind. Solus with his "blake clarion" began to blow a sound "As lowde as beloweth wynd in helle" (III, 1803).

Bees and bears provide the subject for two auditory images. In his description of the great company of petitioners entering Fame's hall, Chaucer says:

I herde a noyse aprochen blyve,
That ferde as been don in a hive
Ayen her tyme of out-fleynge;
Syght such a maner murmurynge,
For al the world, hyt semed me.

(III, 1521-1525)
And he tells that Fame's messenger found Folus holding the winds "in distress"

That they gone as heres sore
He bond and pressed hem so sore.

(III, 1588 f.)

A sound image possibly exists also in the Eagle's remark to the poet: "Nyt is nothing will byten thee" (II, 1044) since it suggests that the noise from Fame's palace is like the roaring of wild beasts.

Several images are taken from the sounds of battle. The figure in which the Eagle arrives like a cannon ball emphasizes primarily his swiftness, but it also carries the suggestion of great noise:

... never was ther dynt of thonder,
Ne that thynge that men calle soulden,
That smot somtyme a tour to powder,
And in his swithe comynge brende,
That so swithe gan descende
As this foul....

(II, 534-540)

The suggestion of noise is also present in this reference to gunfire:

... Folus gan this trumpe for to blowe,
As al the world shulde overthrowe,
That throughout every regioun
Wente this foule trumpes soun,
As swifte as pelet out of gonne,
Whan fyr is in the poudre ronne.

(III, 1639-1654)
Again, Chaucer says concerning the great sound which came from the house of tidings:

... the noyse which that I herde,
For al the world, ryght so hyt ferde,
As dooth the rowtynge of the ston
That from th'engyn ys leten gon.

(III, 1931-1934)

And he calls up another sort of battle sound when he tells that in the House of Fame he saw musicians

... that maken blody soun
In trompe, beme, and claryoun;
For in fight and blod-shedyng
Ys used gladly clarionyng.

(III, 1239-1242)

One other image perhaps contributes something to the general effect of noisiness. Chaucer says that he heard "a greet noyse" in the corner of the hall where men told love tidings, for people leapt and climbed upon one another

And troden fast on others heles
And stampen, as men doon aftir eles.

(III, 2153 f.)

Contrasting rather sharply with these buoyant and noisy images of the House of Fame are the more delicate, tranquil images of the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women, the tone of which is set by the lovely lady Alcestis, who is symbolized by the daisy and who in turn probably
represents allegorically Chaucer's patroness, the Queen of England. At the beginning of the poem, Chaucer tells of his passion for the daisy, which he presents first as a symbol of the whole of nature:

... when that the month of May
Is comen, and I here the foules synge,
And that the floures gynnen for to sprynge,
Perwel my be, and my devocioun!
Now have I thanne eek this condicioun
That, of al the floures in the mode,
Thanne love I most these floures white and rede,
Swiche as men callen daysyes in our toun.
To hem have I so gret affecioun,
As I seyde erst, whanne comen is the May,
That in my bed ther daweth me no day
That I nam up and walkynge in the mede
To seen this flour ayein the sonne sprede,
Whan it upryseth erly by the morwe.
That blissful sighte softneth al my sorwe,
So glad am I, whan that I have presence
Of it, to doon it alle reverence,
As she that is of alle floures flour,
Fulfilled of al vertu and honour.
(36-54)

Continuing the personification of the daisy, Chaucer says that in the evening when the sun begins to set he runs

To seen this flour, how it wol go to reste,
For fere of nyght, so hateth she derknesse.
(62 f.)

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8 For discussion of the convention of the daisy or marguerite symbolism and its influence on Chaucer, see John L. Lowes, "The Prologue to the Legend of Good Women as Related to the French Marguerite Poems, and to the Filostrato," PMLA, XIX (1904), 593-682. References to discussions of the topical allegory have been given above, p. 51, n. 41.

9 References here and elsewhere in this discussion are to Text F, which is slightly richer in figurative expression than Text G.
Then through a series of metaphors, the flower to which he is so devoted is gradually transformed into what is probably the Queen herself:

She is the clernesse and the verray lyght
That is in this derke world me wynt and ledeth.
(84 f.)

... ye ben verrayly
The maistresse of my wit, and nothing I.
(87 f.)

Be ye my gide and lady sovereyne!
(94)

This waking worship of the daisy is followed by a dream vision in which Chaucer, lying in a meadow to adore "The emperice and flour of floures alle" (185), sees the God of Love (possibly to be identified with King Richard) approaching and leading by the hand a beautiful queen who looks like a daisy:

... she was clad in real habit grene.
A fret of gold she hadde next her heer,
And upon that a whit corowme she beer
With flourouns smale, and I shal nat lye;
For al the world, ryght as a dayesye
Ycorouned ys with white leves lyte,
So were the flowrouns of hire coroune white.
For of o perle fyn, oriental,
Hire white coroune was ymaked al;
For which the white coroune above the grene
Made hire lyk a daysie for to sene,
Considered eke hir fret of gold above.
(214-225)
Thus the lady in green is the daisy, or the daisy is she, that the poet learns later is Alcestis, the queen who, because of her "grete goodnesse," died in the place of her husband and was turned into a daisy (511-513). And, as Speirs aptly puts it, "she, who is both the daisy and Alcestis and perhaps the Queen of England, is herself a symbol; a symbol of the courtly ideal of womanhood, the most exalted earthly (as distinguished from heavenly) ideal—devotion to which made life courteous, gracious, and serene."¹⁰

Throughout the Prologue the materials which Chaucer employs in his figurative expression reflect the fresh beauty, the serenity, and the devotion to love embodied in this lovely lady. Among the beautiful objects which serve this purpose is the rose, the flower which the daisy had replaced as the conventional symbol of the lady in courtly love poetry. Chaucer tells that he arose early to watch the daisy unfold "Agayn the sonne, that roos as red as rose" (112). Another image comes from flower petals. In praising Alcestis, the God of Love says:

... also many vertues hadde shee  
As smale florouns in hir corowne bee.  
(528 f.)

Again, embroidery is used in an exquisite figure. To watch the daisy open, the poet kneels:

Upon the smale, softe, swote gras,
That was with floures swote embrouded al.

(118 f.)

In two instances gold occurs, first in the description of the God of Love: "His gilte heer was corowned with a sonne" (230); and later in the ballade in praise of the lady: "Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere" (249). The sun, which appears along with gold in the former, is also the subject of a further image. In his ballade to Alcestis Chaucer says:

For as the sonne wole the fyr disteyne,
So passeth al mv lady sovereyne.

(274 f.)

The images of the Prologue appeal also to sweet sounds and odors as well as to lovely sights. There is the suggestion of music in this passage in which Chaucer declares his devotion to the daisy:

My word, my werk is knyt so in youre bond
That, as an harpe obesieth to the hond
And maketh it soune after his fyngerynge,
Ryght so mowe ye oute of myn herte bringe
Swich vois, ryght as yow lyst, to laughe and pleyne.

(89-93)

The sweet scent of spring flowers is called up by the lines:
... Zepherus and Flora gentilly
Yaf to the floures, softe and tenderly,
Hire swoote breth, and made hem for to sprede,
As god and goddesse of the floury mode.
(171-174)

In another place Chaucer says that the flowers which cover
the grass are

Of swich swetnesse and swich odour overal,
That, for to speke of gomme, or herbe, or tree,
Comparisoun may noon ymaked bee.
(120-122)

One notes also this fine olfactory image (apparently of
Chaucer's own making) which Alcestis employs in her defense
of Chaucer:

Envie is lavendere of the court alway,
For she ne parteth, neither nyght ne day.
(358 f.)

The mood of open air tranquility which characterizes
the poem as a whole is present especially in the pastoral-
like image which Chaucer employs in remarking that his
subject has already received attention by courtly poets:

For wel I wot that ye han her-biform
Of makyng ropen, and lad away the corn.
And I come after, glenyng here and there,
And am ful glad yf I may fynde an ere
Of any goodly word that ye han left.
(73-77)

Grain provides the material for one further image. Chaucer
says to his readers:
... ne wene nat that I make
In preysing of the flour agayn the leef,
Ne more than of the corn agayn the sheef.
(188-190)

The courtesy and pity exemplified in Alcestis by her intercession for Chaucer, who has written heresies against Love's law, and the light penance she imposes upon him are emphasized by the God of Love's statement that "pite renneth soone in gentil herte" (503). This association of pity with nobility—a favorite sentiment of Chaucer's—is found also in an earlier image in connection with the birds, who repent their trespasses against Love:

Al founde they Daunger for a tyme a lord,
Yet Pitee, thurgh his stronge gentil myght,
Forgraf, and made Mercy passen Ryght,
Thurgh innocence and ruled Curtesye.
(160-163)

The devotion to love, which is symbolized by Alcestis and the God of Love, by the daisy, and by the birds who sing "Blessed be Seynt Valentyn" (145), also finds expression in imagery transferred from Christianity. It will be noted first of all that Chaucer's title shows such a transfer of meaning, since in medieval times the word legend was used to denote a saint's life. The lives of the good women which

11It is repeated in almost identical form in KnT, I, 1761; MarchT, IV, 1986; SqT, V, 479; and the idea recurs in MLT, II, 660.
the Prologue introduces are of course saintly for the God of Love and his votaries rather than for the authorities of the Christian Church. The God of Love's command that Chaucer begin the lives with Cleopatra (566) shows clearly that the good women are those who have achieved supreme goodness by giving their all, even life itself, for Love and are thus saints of Cupid.

Instances of imagery carrying religious associations appear in the God of Love's remark that Alcestis is his "relyke, digne and delytable" (321) and in Chaucer's statement describing the God of Love himself: "... aungelyke hys wynges gan he sprede" (168). More significant, however, is the death and resurrection symbolism. This is first mirrored in the night and day opposition of the daisy, which "so hateth derknesse" (63). Chaucer says that on the first day of May he arose very early,

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With dredful hert and glad devocioun,
For to ben at the resuerecioun
Of this flour, whan that yt shoulde unclose.
(109-111)
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The idea of death and rebirth recurs in the passage which celebrates the triumph of spring over winter:

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12One notes also that the birds "humblely songen hir repentynge" (156) for their unfaithfulness and that the poet must "repenten" (339) for his "heresye" (330) and do "penance" (479); but such instances are probably without figurative connotation.
As John Speirs points out, the fowler, a familiar figure in the medieval countryside—since snaring birds for food was a necessity for village communities in winter—has acquired in this passage "some of the value of Death and the Devil. He betrays the birds with his 'sophistrye'—false, subtle arguments—as the Devil betrays the souls of men with his nets and snares." Here the poet "can rejoice at their escape from death and the winter, and can realize a correspondence between their escape and that of the soul from the Devil. With the spring also man himself escapes from the fowler's necessity of snaring the birds, and himself escapes, as they do, from winter and death and the fowler." Finally, the resurrection motif is symbolized by Alcestis, who for love underwent death and rebirth. The God of Love asks Chaucer:

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13 op. cit., p. 89.
"Hastow nat in a book, lyth in thy cheste,  
The grete goodnesse of the quene Alceste,  
That turned was into a dayesye;  
She that for hire housbonde chees to dye,  
And eke to goon to helle, rather than he,  
And Ercules rescowed hire parde,  
And broght hir out of helle agayn to blys?"

The Christian implications of this imagery are of course obvious, but they are important to the theme of the poem only insofar as they are a part of the structure of courtly love, whose cult, though developing in "the shadow of the church," was "rooted in the lusts of the flesh and fed by the love literature of the ancients." All the strands of the resurrection symbolism, as well as most of the other imagery of the poem, then, are gathered up and reflected in the lovely Alcestis, whom Chaucer presents as the supreme example of gracious courtly womanhood.

To a great extent in the House of Fame and to a somewhat less degree in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women, the imagery refers to objects and experiences of Chaucer's environment. This tendency toward the use of realistic materials becomes in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales the dominant feature of the imagery. Here Chaucer is not dealing with fantasy, as in the two earlier

14 See Kemp Malone, Chapters on Chaucer, p. 82.
poems, but with the life of actual fourteenth-century men and women. In reporting what ostensibly he, as one of the pilgrims, learned at the Tabard or on the journey, Chaucer uses almost entirely images which are suited to the flow of ordinary conversation. And to give a sense of the diversity of the actual life represented, he chooses the subject matter of the figures from the widest possible mixture of spheres.

Learned materials appear in only a very few images, the most notable of which are the mythological "Zephirus" and the astrological terminology for dating the pilgrimage employed in the opening passage:

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What that Aprille with his shoures soote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the roote
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertue engendred is the flour;
When Zephirus eek with his sweet breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne....
(I, 1-8)
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In these lines the learned terminology and the complex development of the personifications constitute what the rhetoricians term "high style." As Kemp Malone observes, a man such as the Host--whom Chaucer makes object to figures of this kind--"would indeed have had trouble in under-

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15See Cl Prol, IV, 16-20.
standing Chaucer's opening lines, where ordinary rainwater is called the liquor by virtue of which the flower is engendered, and where only a bookish man could follow with ease.\textsuperscript{16} Besides the figures of the beginning lines, there is one further image from learned matter. This occurs in the portrait of the Franklin, who so delighted in dining well that Chaucer calls him "Epicurus owene sone" (I, 336).\textsuperscript{17}

Standing in sharp contrast with these bookish images are those whose subject matter comes from homely scenes and objects connected with agriculture. One notes here the lively farmyard figure in which Chaucer tells of the Host's activites on the morning of departure:

\begin{quote}
Up roos oure Hoost, and was oure aller cok, 
And gadrede us to gidre alle in a flok.  
(I, 823 f.)
\end{quote}

Also suggesting the farmyard is the proverbial image expressing the Monk's opinion on hunting:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Op. cit.}, p. 145. But, as Malone points out, this high style holds for only eleven lines, after which Chaucer skilfully descends to the level of common speech.
\textsuperscript{17}According to Chaucer's \textit{Boece}, III, pr. 2, 88-93, Epicurus "juggid and establissyd that delyt is the soverayn good, for as moche as alle othere thynges, as hym thoughte, hyrefta awaye joye and myrthe from the herte."
\end{quote}
Farm animals appear in several colorful images. The Miller had a wart on the top of his nose on which stood a tuft of hairs as "Reed as the bristles of a sowes cuys" (I, 556), and his herd likewise "as any sowe ... was reed" (I, 552). Of the Pardoner, Chaucer says: "A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot" (I, 688). A few lines later he adds: "I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare" (I, 691). Farm implements provide the subject for a pair of images. The horse of the Clerk was "As leone ... as is a rake" (I, 287), while the Miller's herd was "brood, as though it were a spade" (I, 553). Three other images contain objects associated with the farm. The Franklin's silk "gipser" hung at his girdle as "whit as morne milk" (I, 358), and the Pardoner

[... hadde heer as yelow as wex,
But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex.
(I, 675 f.)]

Closely connected with rural life are the great variety of outdoor images drawn from sights of earth and sky. Chaucer, of course, is often regarded as a poet of spring and sunshine;

18. According to traditional belief, a hen whose feathers have been plucked does not lay any eggs. Skeat, Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, V, 21, n. 177, quotes Tyrwhitt on this point.
May is his favorite month. In the General Prologue, the new beauty of the earth is pictured in the Squire, who "was as fresh as is the month of May" (I, 92) and whose coat was embroidered to resemble a meadow "Al ful of freshe floures, whyte and reede" (I, 90). Flowers appear also in images applied to other pilgrims. The Friar's neck, Chaucer tells his readers, was as white "as the flour-de-lys" (I, 238) and the Franklin's beard as white "as is the dayesye" (I, 332). Although Chaucer seldom draws images from winter or night, both of these subjects are represented here. The former one notes in this passage relating to the Franklin:

> Withoute hawe mete was nevere his hous
> Of fissh and flessh, and that so plentevous,
> It snowed in his hous of mete and drynke;
> (I, 343-345)

the latter, in the lines describing the Friar:

> ... in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,
> His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
> As doon tho sterres in the frosty nyght. 16
> (I, 266-268)

Besides these inanimate objects of nature, Chaucer also gives attention to birds and wild animals which were familiar sights in fourteenth-century England. Of the

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16 One further image is probably to be associated with the cold season: The Monk's palfrey "was as brown as is a berye," I, 307.
Squire, he says:

So hooe he lovede that by nyghtertale
He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngele.
(I, 97 f.)

The Summoner is described as being as "hoot ... and lecherous
as a sparwe" (I, 626), a bird traditionally associated with
lecherousness in classical literature; 20 but Chaucer's
contemporaries would probably have called to mind the image
of an English sparrow. A further image makes use of
another common English bird, though it refers to one that
has been cared and trained to talk. The Summoner, who has
picked up two or three Latin terms in court where he serves,
but is unaware of their sense, is like a jay that "Has
clopen 'Watte' as well as kan the pope" (I, 643). A native
bird is referred to also in this figure applied to the
Summoner: "Ful prively a fynch oke koude he pulle" (I, 652),
which Kittredge shows is an indecent expression meaning:
he could "have a concubine." 21 Chaucer twice draws images

20Robinson, op. cit., p. 768, n. 626, cites Pliny,
Hist. Nat., X, 36, and Juvenal, Sat., IX, 54 ff. In the
Parliament of Fowls, 351, Chaucer speaks of the sparrow
as "Venus sone."

21See "Chauceriana," LT, VII (1910), 475-477. See
also H. B. Woolf, "The Summoner and His Concubine." ELI,
LVIII (1953), 118-121.
from wild animals common to the English rural life. The Miller's beard, he reports, "as any fox ... was reed" (I, 552). Of the Pardoner, he says: "Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare" (I, 694).22

The sphere of nature is further represented by images containing living things from the waters. The Monk placed no value on the text which says

... that a monk, whan he is recchelees,
    is likened til a fissh that is waterless,--
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystro.
(I, 178-181)

In the following line, Chaucer adds: "But thilke text beeld he nat worth an oystre" (I, 183). Along with the images from birds and animals appear some figures drawn from people. In his bearing, Chaucer's Knight was "As meeke as is a mayde" (I, 69). Apologizing for the realism of his reporting, the poet remarks that "The wordes moote be cosyn to the dece" (I, 743). In one instance there is a possible reference to an actual person. As J. M. Manly points out, the line "Ther koude no wight pynche at his wrytyng" (I, 326) in the description of the Sergeant of the

22 One other animal figure appears in the General Prologue--also in connection with the Friar--but it is realistic primarily in the sense that it is taken from the current coin of daily speech: "... with feyned flaterye and japes, / He made the person and the peple his apes," I, 705 f.
Law may very well contain a pun on Thomas Pynchbek, a sergeant whom Chaucer could have had some personal reason for satirizing.\textsuperscript{23}

Another group of images suggests various industries and occupations which were thriving in Chaucer's England. Perhaps reminiscent of the smelting carried on in Kent—the shire where the poet was living while at work on the Canterbury Tales—are two figures which refer to furnaces. The Miller's mouth, Chaucer relates, "as greet was as a greet forneys" (I, 559).\textsuperscript{24} Again, he says of the Monk:

\begin{quote}
His eyeen stepe, and rolynge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed.
\end{quote}

(I, 201 f.)

One of the figures applied to the Pardoner suggests the blacksmith shop:

\begin{quote}
He moste preche and wel affile his touge,
To wynne silver, as he ful wel koude.
\end{quote}

(712 f.)

In the portrait of the Summoner appears an image connected with the alehouse:

\end{quote}

\begin{quote}24\textit{In connection with this figure, Skeat, Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, V, 48, n. 559, states that "the weald in Kent" was a great smelting district in Chaucer's time, "its wood answering to our coal."}
\end{quote}
A garland hadde he set upon his heed
As greet as it were for an ale-stake. 25
(I, 686 f.)

The bakery is perhaps suggested in the figure contained in these lines on the Pardoner:

His walset lay biforn hym in his lappe,
Bretful of pardoun, comen from Rome al hoot.
(I, 686 f.)

That is, the pardons are all hot from the quaestorum oven.
The figure which states that the Parson did not have "a spiced conscience" (I, 826) might also be associated with a cook's shop, though it may just as well relate to food in general. One further sort of work or profession is referred to. In the statement that the Clerk of Oxford

... was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,
(I, 297 f.)

the word philosophre not only has its ordinary meaning, but denotes at the same time a person who practices alchemy.

Weapons of warfare--a familiar sight to Englishmen of Chaucer's period--are used in several images. Chaucer

25 A bush of ivy or a garland of flowers wreathed on a hoop suspended from a pole called the ale-stake was the customary sign for a drinking place in Chaucer's day. See Skeat, op. cit., V, 54, n. 666, 667.
tells that the Wife of Bath wore a hat "As brood as is a bokeler or targe" (I, 471); and of the Summoner he says: "A bokoleer hadde he maad hym of a cake" (I, 668). The Yeoman had at his side a "gay daggere" which was "Harneised wel and sharp as point of spere" (I, 113 f.) Besides these weapons, one other suggestion of battle appears in an image. To the Pardoner's singing, the Summoner

... bar to hym a stif burdoun;
Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun. 26
(I, 673 f.)

But more generally and more closely related to the lives of people of fourteenth-century England than the objects and sounds of warfare were matters of church and religion--a fact which is exemplified by the occasion of the poem and by the sizable number of clerics included in the band of pilgrims. Hence it is natural and appropriate that Chaucer employs a significant amount of imagery which pertains to religion. His figures from this sphere contain a rather wide variety of subjects. One fine image calls to mind the familiar sounds of the bell from the church tower. When the Monk rode,

... men myghte his brydel heere
Gynglen in a whislynge wynd als cleere
Ank eek as loude as dooth the chapel belle.
(I, 169-171)

26In the HF, III, 1240 f., Chaucer refers to the use of the "trompe" in "fight and blod-shedynge."
A bell figures also in an image used in the description of the Friar:

Of double worstede was his semycopre,
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.

(I, 262 f.)

In another instance church services supply the subject matter of an image. At the onset of the journey the Host remarks:

"Ye woot youre forward, and I it you recorde. If even-song and morwe-song accordre, Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale." 27

(I, 829-831)

Again, Chaucer draws images from such Christian conceptions as the soul and hell. If the Summoner found a good fellow, he would teach him to have no fear

... of the ercedekenes curs,
But if a mannes soul were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde ypunysshed be.
"Purs is the ercedekenes helle," seyde he.

(I, 655-658)

Associated with religious belief also is this figure employed in the portrait of the Monk: "He was nat pale as a forpyned goost" (I, 205). Two images refer to persons connected with Christianity, one of whom is the patron

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27"Even-song and morwe-song" could of course be given a more general interpretation, but since Vespers and Matins are both regular Church offices, it seems reasonable to assume a religious connotation.
saint of hospitality. In the description of the Franklin, Chaucer says:

An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
Seint Julian he was in his contree.

(I, 339 f.)

Of the Friar, Chaucer reports:

... he was nat lyk a cloysterer
With a threbare cope, as is a povre scoler,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.

(I, 259-261)

Several further images derive Christian coloring through association with religious writings and art. One notes the traditionally religious images in this passage describing the Parson:

This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte.
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,
And this figure he added eek therto,
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a prest take keep,
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oughte a preest ensample for to yive,
By his clennesse, how that his sheep sholde lyve.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre
And ran to Londoun unto Seinte Poules
To seken hym a chaunterie for soules,
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
But dwelte at hoom, and kepeth wel his folde,

28St. Julian, one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages, "was a figure more legendary than historical, said to have died about 313 A.D." See Robinson, op. cit., p. 761, n. 340.
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie;
He was a shepherde and noght a mercenairie.

(I, 496-514)

Although the references in these figures are to familiar English sights, the associations which they carry with them are perhaps more religious than local in character. The images of "the sheep," "the shepherd," and "the wolf" of course have their ultimate source in the Bible; and the proverb about "rusting" gold is also perhaps Biblical.

Chaucer's readers would most certainly have been well acquainted with imagery of this sort through sermons and Biblical commentary. Also perhaps worthy of mention in connection with the religious imagery of the General Prologue is the apparently symbolical motto Amor vincit omnia (I, 162) which is etched on the face of the Prioress' brooch. Although originally this motto in Virgil's Eclogues referred to profane love, it was early adopted by the Church and given religious interpretation. In the fourteenth century, however, the motto was again

29 See Matt., IX, 35; VII, 15.

30 Kittredge says the source may be Lamentations, IV, 1, as interpreted in Gregory's Pastoral Care. See "Chaucer and the Roman Carite," MLN, XII (1897), 113-115. Kittredge further points out that the figures of gold and iron and of the shiten shepherd and the clene sheep have parallels in the late twelfth-century Roman de Carite.
sometimes employed in the original sense. What it symbolizes in the characterization of the Prioress seems to be best answered by J. L. Lowes, who states:

> Now it is earthly love which conquers all, now heavenly; the phrase plays back and forth between the two. And it is precisely that happy ambiguity of the convention—itself the result of an earlier transfer—which makes Chaucer's use of it here ... a master stroke. Which of the two does "amor" mean to the Prioress? I do not know; but I think she thought she meant love celestial.\(^{31}\)

Further, it will be noted that Chaucer draws one image from religious art, this occurring in the statement that the Summoner "hadde a fyr-reed cherrubynnes face" (I, 624). The cherubim that Chaucer refers to here are not the "infant" form of modern times, but of "the second order of angels of the Dionysian hierarchy,"\(^{32}\) who in medieval art were conventionally painted with faces as red as fire.\(^{33}\)

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\(^{31}\)Convention and Revolt, p. 66.

\(^{32}\)See Bowden, op. cit., p. 272, n. 13.

\(^{33}\)See Skeat, op. cit., V, 52, n. 624. Contributing also to the variety of subject matter in the images are a few instances which do not fit well into any of the categories discussed above. The Wife of Bath knew well the "remedies of love," for she "koude of that art the olde daunce," I, 476. The Summoner liked "for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood," I, 635. The Prioress had eyes as "greye as glas," I, 152. The Monk's bald head "shoon as any glas," I, 198. The Manciple "sette hir alle cappe," I, 586; that is, he deceived them all. And the Miller "hadde a thombe of gold," I, 563, which is a proverb meaning: "he was honest as millers go." See Robinson, op. cit., p. 767, n. 563.
These images which Chaucer takes from learning, agriculture, nature, people, industry, occupations, warfare, and religion constitute a colorful mixture altogether appropriate to the actuality and variety of the contemporary English life which the Canterbury pilgrims represent. A similar mixture of materials—though usually with somewhat less variety—is fittingly continued in the imagery of the links between the tales and in the tales themselves. In some instances, however, Chaucer selects a proportionately large number of images from spheres which are especially appropriate for a speaker in the links or for the character of a tale and its teller.

Among the cases of the latter sort is the Knight’s Tale, which contains a rather large amount of imagery pertaining to warfare, a subject well adapted not only to a tale of chivalry whose main action arises as a result of war and which includes a duel and a great tournament, but also to the narrator who has spent much of his life as a soldier in the field of battle.34 In studying the images connected with this subject, one may consider first a figure which refers to warfare in general. Arcite asks Juno how long, through her cruelty, she will "werreyen Thebes the citee" (I, 1544), the word werreyen being used figuratively

34 See Gen Prol, I, 47-67.
to mean "oppose." Again, Arcite employs a battle term in a figurative sense when, having to leave the realm of Theseus and Emelye, he says to the still imprisoned Palamon: "Thyn is the victorie of this aventure" (I, 1235). Images from the pain and slaughter of battle are rather numerous, though many of these come from the conventional language of courtly love poetry. After seeing Emelye for the first time, Palamon remarks:

"... I was hurt right now thurghout myn ye Into myn herte, that wol my bane be." (I, 1096 f.)

And when Arcite looked upon Emelye,

... hir beautee hurte hym so, That, if Palamon was wounded sore, Arcite is hurt as muche as he, or moore. And with a sigh he seyde pitously: "The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly. Of hire that rometh in yonder place." (I, 1114-1119)

In another place Palamon says:

"... Venus sleeth me on that oother syde For jalousie and fere of hym Arcite." (I, 1332 f.)

Later, Arcite remarks: "Ye sleen me with youre eyen, Emelye!" (I, 1567). Of Arcite, who is freed from prison, but banished from Athens, the narrator says: "The deeth he feeleth thurgh his herte symte" (I, 1220). Pictured in the temple of Venus are
The fiery strokes of the desirynge
That loves servanztz in this lyf enduren.

(I, 1922 f.)

Weapons employed in battle provide the subject for
several images. Upon hearing Arcite’s avowal of love for
Emelye, Palamon

... thoughte that thurgh his herte
He felte a coold swerd sodeynliche glyde.

(I, 1574 f.)

In the great tournament King Emetreus,

... for al his strengthe,
Is born out his sadel a swerdes lengthe.

(I, 2645 f.)

Arcite remarks:

... to sleen me outrely,
Love hath his firing dart so brennyngly
Ystiked thurgh my trewe, careful herte.

(I, 1563-1565)

And the narrator states that Arcite, for love, became thin
and "drye as is a shaft" (I, 1362), the term shaft denoting
the wooden part of an arrow.

Blood, fire, and the sound of the trumpet—all of
which are associated with battle—appear in figures.

Palamon says that Juno, through jealousy

"... hath destroyed wel ny al the blood
Of Thebes with his waste walles wyde."

(1330 f.)
As Emelye watched the brands burning, at their ends ran out "As it were blody dropes many oon" (I, 2340). On the morning of the tournament there could be heard

Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes,
That in the batailie blowen blody sounes.

(I, 2511 f.)

The narrator states concerning Palamon, who must remain in prison:

... the fyr of jalousie up starte
Withinne his brest, and hente him by the herte. 35

(I, 1299 f.)

Of Emetreus, the King of India, he says: "His voys was as a trompe thonderynge" (I, 2174).

Also connected with warfare are several images which pertain to prison and prisoners. Duke Theseus remarks:

Why grucchen we, why have we hevynnesse,
That goode Arcite, of chivalrie the flour,
Departed is with duetee and honour
Out of this foule prisoun of this lyf?

(I, 3058-3061)

The binding of captives or prisoners with chains is suggested in two images. Duke Theseus says that with the "faire cheyne of love" the First Mover

"... bond
The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond
In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee."

(I, 2991-2993)

35 For other images which refer to fire, see I, 1502; I, 2318-2321; I, 2383-2386; I, 2493 f.; I, 2861 f.
And Palamon apostrophizes:

... "O cruel goddess that govern this world with byning of your word eterne ..."
(I, 1303 f.)

Persons associated with battle, too, are used in figures. As Arcite is dying, he says: "Fare wel, my sweete fo, myn Emelye!" (I, 2780). The description of the early morning when Arcite goes to the grove to honor May refers to a messenger:

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The bisy larke, messager of day,
Salueth in hir song the morwe gray.
(I, 1491 f.)
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Another figure contains the name of a Trojan hero famous for his prowess in battle. When Arcite died,

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So greet a wepyng was ther noon certayn,
Whan Ector was ybroght, al fressh yslayn.
(I, 2831 f.)
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It will be noted further that Mars, "the stierne god armypotente" (I, 2441), who occupies a major place in the mythological machinery of the story, is also represented in the figures. Concerning Duke Theseus, the narrator says:

"... after Mars he serveth now Fane" (I, 1682). And Emetreus, king of India, he states, "Cam ridynge lyk the god of armes, Mars" (I, 2159).

The idea of strife is present even in the charming flower image used to describe the fair Emelye. She was fresher, the narrator says,
... than the May with flowers newe—
For with the rose colour stroof hire hewe.

(1, 1037 f.)

Further, a number of images are drawn from wild animals which are known for their fierceness in fighting. Palamon, upon hearing Arcite declare his love for Emelye, "As fiers as leon pulled out his sword" (1, 1598). When Palamon and Arcite meet for their duel,

The chaungen gan the colour in hir face,
Right as the hunters in the regne of Trace,
That stondeth at the gappe with a sper,
Whan hunted is the leon or the bore,
And hereth hym come rasshynyng in the greves,
And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
And thynketh, "Heree cometh my mortal enemy;
Without faille, he moot be deed, or I;
For outher I moot aseen hym at the gappe,
Or he moot aseen me, if that me mysheappe,"—
So ferden they in chaungynge of hir hewe,
as fer as everich of hem oother knewe.

(I, 1637-1648).

Of the duel, the narrator remarks:

Thou myghtest wene that this Palamon
In his fighyng were a wood leon,
And as a cruell tigre was Arcite;
As wilde bores gone they to smyte,
That frothen whit as doon for ire wood.

(I, 1655-1659)

And when Duke Theseus comes upon the scene,

He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme, as it were bores two.

(I, 1698 f.)
Though at first severe with the duellers, Duke Theseus, moved by the weeping of the ladies, says to himself:

... "Fy
Upon a lord that wo'll have no mercy,
But been a leon, bothe in word and deed."
(I, 1773-1775)

Later, it is said of King Emetersus, who comes to take part in the tournament, that "as a leon he his lookynge caste" (I, 2171). Again, in the tournament,

Thor was no tygre in the vale of Calymopheye, When that his whelp is stole when it is life, So cruel on the hunte as is Arcite For jalous herte upon this Palamon, No in Belmarye ther rys so fel leon, That hunted in, or for his hunger wood, No of his praye desireth so the blood, As Palamon to slayn his foo Arcite. (I, 2626-2633)

A further image is taken from a mythological animal noted for its fierceness. Of Lycurgus, king of Thrace, the narrator says: "... lik a grifphon looked he aboute" (I, 2133). Besides these images referring to wild and mythological animals, there is an image from hounds which are presented in struggle. When the imprisoned Palamon and Arcite both fall in love with Emelye, Arcite describes their plight thus:

"We stryve as dide the houndes for the boor;
They foughte al day, and yet bier part was noon.
Ther cam a kyte, whil that they were so wrothe,
And baar away the boon bitwixe hem bothe."
And therefore, at the kynges court, my brother, 
Ech man for hymself, ther is noon oother. 
Love, if thee list, for I love and ay shal; 
And soothe, leve brother, this is al." 
(I, 1177-1184)

Hence a rather large part of the imagery in the Knight's Tale helps to reflect the character of the story and is also of a kind such as one might expect from a soldier narrator.

Rather careful selection of imagery is found again in the Miller's Tale and the Reeve's Prologue and Tale, the materials being drawn exclusively from the immediate range of village and rural life depicted in the stories and experienced by the common men who serve as narrators.

In the Miller's Tale several images are taken from sights and sounds associated with domestic life. Absolon paid no attention to the blacksmith's joking remarks, for

He hadde moore tow on his distaf
Than Cerveys knew....
(I, 3774 f.)

The narrator says of Alisoun:

Ther nys no man so wys that koude thenche
So say a popelote....
(I, 3253 f.)

after being tricked by Alisoun, Absolon "weep as dooth a child that is ybote" (I, 3757). The narrator describes
Absolon's hair as curled "And strouted as a fanne large and brode" (I, 3315). Probably to be connected with domestic life are two images referring to heat and cold and to light. After Absolon had been japed, his "hoote love was coold and al yqueynt" (I, 3754). Describing Absolon's situation in respect to Alisoun, the narrator says:

By cause that he fer was from hire sight,  
This nye Nicholas stood in his light.  
(I, 3395 f.)

Such objects as people, the body, life and amusement appear in several figures. Nicholas is described as

... sleigh and ful privee,  
And lyk a mayden make for to see.  
(I, 3201 f.)

Absolon, intending to kiss Alisoun's lips, "hath kist hir nether ye" (I, 3852). So much in love was Absolon with Alisoun that "To looke on hire hym thoughte a myric lyf" (I, 3344). When Nicholas and Alisoun went to bed, "Ther was the revel and the melodye" (I, 3652). Along with these images which refer to life and merriment are a few from sickness and death. After being tricked by Alisoun, Absolon "was heeled of his maladie" (I, 3757). When the carpenter looked into Nicholas' room, the latter

... sat evere capyng upright  
As he had kiked on the newe moone.  
(I, 3444 f.)
Alisoun says: "I woot right wel I nam but deed" (I, 3296) when she considers what will happen if her husband learns of her love affair with Nicholas. Later, upon being told about the coming flood, "she ferde as she wolde deye" (I, 3606). And the narrator tells that

The deye sleep, for wery bisynesse,  
Fil on this carpenter ...  
(I, 3643 f.)
as he waited in the tub.

A few images refer to trapping and hunting. Of the carpenter, who has married a young wife, the narrator says: "... he was fallen in the snare" (I, 3231). Apparently to be associated with hunting is the figure in the lines which state that Alisoun

... loveth so this hende Nicholas  
That Absolon may blowe the bukkes horn.  
(I, 3386 f.)

The image which describes Alisoun as "upright as a bolt" (I, 3264) likewise may have association with hunting, the word bolt denoting a cross-bow bolt. 36

36 But the cross-bow was also a weapon of warfare, a subject appearing in the image which states that Alisoun's brooch was "as brood as is the boss of a bokeler." I, 3266.
One image is connected with trade. When the carpenter, thinking the flood had come, cut the cord and fell with the tub,

... he foond neither to selle,
Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the celle
Upon the floor....
(I, 3821-3823)

Another refers to money. Alisoun's complexion was brighter "Than in the tour the noble yforred newe" (I, 3256). Gold, coal, and pitch provide a subject for a small number of images. Of Absolon, the narrator states that "Crul was his heer, and as the gold it shoon" (I, 3314). The night when Absolon appeared at Alisoun's window was as dark "as pich, or as the cole" (I, 3731). And Alisoun's collar was "Of col-blak silk" (I, 3240).

A few images refer to roads and ships. Having climbed into the kneading tubs, Alisoun, Nicholas, and the carpenter "seten stille wel a furlong way" (I, 3637). Alisoun was "Long as a mast" (I, 3264). Nicholas says to the carpenter concerning the flood:

... if thou werken wolt by good conseil,
I undertake, withouten mast and seyl,
Yet shal I saven hire [Alisoun] and thee and me.
(I, 3531-3533)

Religious belief and the Bible supply the materials for a number of figures. The narrator remarks of Nicholas' singing: "Ful often blessed was his myrie throte" (I, 3213).
Alisoun tells Absolon to go away from her window and let her sleep "a twenty devel way" (I, 3713). Four images contain references to Noah or to Noah and his wife.

Nicholas says he has learned through astrology

That now a Monday next, at quarter nyght,
Shal falle a reyn, and that so wilde and wood,
That half so greet was nevere Noees flood.

(I, 3516-3518)

He says that if the carpenter follows his counsel, then they will be lords of all the world "as Hoe and his wyf" (I, 3582). Nicholas will reveal no more about the coming flood than is needed for the carpenter "To han as greet a grace as Noe hadde" (I, 3560). Later, the carpenter imagines

... that he may see
Noees flood come walwynge as the see
To drenchen Alisoun....

(I, 3615-3617)

But the most memorable images in this tale are those which are drawn from nature and the English countryside. Two instances refer to weather. Nicholas remarks of Noah:

"Hym hadde be levere, I dar wel undertake,
At thilke tyme, than alle his wetheres blake
That she hadde had a ship hirself allone."

(I, 3541-3543)
Attempting to carry off the joke on Absolon,

This Nicholas anon leet flee a fart,
As greet as it had been a thunder-dent.
(I, 3806 f.)

Referring also to inanimate nature is the figure in which the carpenter sees Nicholas sitting in his room "ay as stille as stoon" (I, 3472).

A rather large number of images come from trees, herbs, flowers, and fruits. Alisoun was "moore blisful" to look upon "Than is the newe pere-jonette tree" (I, 3247 f.). Nicholas was

... as sweete as is the roote
Of lycorys or cetewale...
(I, 3206 f.)

The narrator says of Absolon, who had been japed: "Of paramours he sette nat a kers" (I, 3756). Absolon wore a gay surplice "As whit as is the blosme upon the rys" (I, 3324), while Alisoun "was a prymerole, a piggesnye" (I, 3268). Again, the narrator states of Alisoun:

Ful smale ypullen were hire browes two,
And tho were bent and blake as any sloo.
(I, 3245 f.)

And her mouth, he says, was as sweet as "hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth" (I, 3262).37

37One further image from the plant world occurs in the remark that Absolon "ne roghte nat a bone" (I, 3772) for the blacksmith's joking.
Birds are also rather well represented. Absolon, calling to Alisoun, says:

"What do ye ...  
My faire byrd, ...  
(I, 3698)"

and in another instance: "Spek, sweete bryd, I noot nat where thou art" (I, 3805). In the description of Alisoun, the narrator states:

But of hir song, it was a loude and yerne  
As any swalwe sittynge on a berne.  
(I, 3257 f.)

Absolon sings to Alisoun, "brokkyng as a nyghtyngale" (I, 3377). Of his longing for Alisoun, Absolon remarks:
"lik a turtel trewe is my moornynge" (I, 3706). Two images refer to barnyard fowls. Absolon's eyes were "greye as goos" (I, 3317); and Nicholas tells the carpenter that if he makes the necessary preparations for the flood, then he will swim as merily "As dooth the white doke after hire drake" (I, 3576).

Particularly noteworthy are the images drawn from animals, most of which are young animals belonging to the farmyard. Alisoun

... koude skippe and make game,  
As any kyde or calf folwynge his dame.  
(I, 3259 f.)
In the same descriptive passage the narrator says: "Wynsynge she was, as is a joly colt" (I, 3263). Again when Nicholas attempted to kiss her, Alisoun "sproong as colt dooth in the trave" (I, 3263). Telling of his longing for Alisoun, Absolon says: "T moorne as dooth a lamb after the tete" (I, 3704). The narrator states that Alisoun was "softer than the wolfe is of a wether" (I, 3249). In another figure he says:

Fair was this yonge wyf, and therwithal
As any wozele hir body gent and smal.
(I, 3233 f.)

There is also the humorous animal image in which the narrator remarks that Absolon, for love, would have liked to eat up Alisoun:

I dar wel seyn, if she hadde been a mous,
And he a cat, he wolde hire hente anon.
(I, 3346 f.)

Several further images mention items which suggest the farm or rural life. Alisoun wore "A barmclooth eek as whit as morne milk" (I, 3236). The carpenter calls Alisoun "his honye deere" (I, 3617), and Absolon asks: "What do ye, honye-comb sweete Alisoun?" (I, 3698). Alisoun's mouth, the narrator says, "was sweete as bragot or the meeth" (I, 3261).
The imagery of the *Miller's Tale*, then, contains variety of commonplace materials comparable to those in the *General Prologue*, but unlike those in the latter there are no images more learned than the familiar references to Noah and his wife and no instances of high style. Although the subject matter shows no specific connection with the Miller, still it is of a sort which he would have known well, and it is altogether fitting for a story of common village life.

The imagery employed by the Reeve in the *Prologue* to his tale is drawn not merely from the rural background in general, as is the case in the *Miller's Tale*, but for the most part from subjects connected directly with his office as reeve and with details of his individual life. He is referring to things he would naturally have on his mind when he remarks of his old age: "Gras tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage" (I, 3868); and when he boasts that although the power to gratify his physical desires is gone, yet he has "alwey a coltes tooth" (I, 3888).

In connection with these figures one recalls Chaucer's statement in the *General Prologue* (I, 597-601):

His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayereye,  
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, his pultrye  
Was hooly in this Reves governyng,  
And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng,  
Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age.
Possibly showing association with the Reeve's "rekenynge" or account, which was presumably in writing, is the image: "This white top writeth myn olde yeris" (I, 3869). In another instance, where the Reeve says:

"... in oure wyl ther stiketh evere a nayl, To have a hoore heed and a grene tayl, As hath a leek ..."

(I, 3877-3879)

the figurative use of the word nayl brings to mind the fact that he "was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter" (I, 614). Moreover, the comparison "as hath a leek" is associated with farming, as is also this figure in which the Reeve compares his old age with the medlar:

"Myn herte is also mowled as myn heris, But if I fare as dooth an open-ers. That ilke fruyt is every lenger the wers, Til it be roten in mullok or in stree. We olde men, I drede, so fare we: Til we be roten, kan we nat be rype."

(I, 3870-3875)

Perhaps suggesting the farm and also carpentry is this figure which the Reeve used in connection with his quarrel with the Miller:

"He kan wel in myn eye seen a stalke, But in his owene he kan nat seen a balke."

(I, 3919 f.)

Reference to the Reeve's old age appears to be made in metaphorical use of hoppen in the passage: "We hoppen
alway whil the world wol pype" (1, 3876), which may be interpreted to mean "he and others like him will dance but will do so lamely."38

The Reeve, who seems especially fond of figurative language, employs in his Prologue several further images which draw materials from spheres well within his range of experience, but which are perhaps a little less specifically related to his occupation than those given above. Because the Miller has told a tale at the expense of a carpenter, the Reeve remarks:

... "ful wel koude I yow quite
With bleryng of a proud milleres ye,
If that me liste speke of ribaudye."
(I, 3864-3866)

Speaking of the desire which remains in old men, he says:

"Yet in oure ashen olde is fyr yreke,
Foure gleedes han we, which I shal deyse,—
Avantynge, liyng, anger, coveitise;
Thise foure sparkles longen unto elde,
Oure olde lemes mowe wel been unweelde,
But wyl he shal nat faillen, that is sooth."
(I, 3882-3887)

38See Brooks Forehand, "Old Age and Chaucer's Reeve," PMLA, LXX (1954), 988. Forehand points out that although KS hoppen (from OE Hoppan) is usually glossed "to dance," John K. Clark Hall, in his Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary (3rd ed., Cambridge: The University Press, 1931), adds to OE hoppan also the meaning "to limp" and cites this passage in Aelfric: "Sum man gesette his feowen man on fetera. He saet lunge on pam bendum on gat he bestael ut mid his stafe hoppende," Rim. 2. 21, 417.
Notable also are the figures that refer to liquor and the chiming of bells in this passage where the Reeve speaks of old age and death:

"As many a year as it is passed henne
Syn that my tappe of lif biron to renne,
For sikerly, when I was borne, anon
Death drough the tappe of lyf and leet it gen;
And evry sithe hath so the tappe yronne
Til that almost al empty is the tonne.
The streem of lyf now droneth on the chymhe.
The selie tonce may wol rymer and chymbe
Of wrecchednesse that passed in full yore;
With olde folk, save dotace, is namoonel"  
(1, 3808-3828)

Perhaps Chaucer has nowhere selected the materials of his images more fittingly than in the lines spoken by the Reeve in his prologue.

The tale which follows—relating how two Cambridge students put a cheating miller to shame—likewise contains a considerable number of images whose subject matter is closely related to the narrator. Several of these refer to farm animals such as the Reeve had under his supervision. The two clerks, Aleyn and John, after chasing their horses, are as "Seyy and weet, as boost is in the poyn" (I, 4107). The narrator says:

"This milere hath so wisely bibbed ale
That as an hors he snorteth in his sleep
So of his tayl blynde he took no keen.
(1, 4122-4124)"
Thinking that he is in bed with the other clerk, Alwyn remarks: "Thou John, thou eyes-bred awake" (I, 1262). Of the fighting between Alwyn and the miller, the narrator says: "They value as doon two pignes in a poke" (I, 1736). Also associated with the country estate is the figure which says of the miller: "As any peac he was proud and say" (I, 2026).

Feeding these domesticated animals and fowls, the Tovye's fames contain references to wild animals and birds familiar to country life. Starting to run after the escaped hores, John says: "I in ful wish, God want, as is a ror" (I, 1036). The miller's wife "was proud, and part as in a pye" (I, 2954), and "As any say she light was and joyes" (I, 1651). One proverbial figure comes from Falconry: John assures the miller that for their night's lodging he and Alwyn

... will payen traveyly atte fulls.  
With empty band men may no huletes tulle.  
(I, 1833 C.)

Several further images from commonplace subjects seem rather well adapted to the tale and its narrator. While Alwyn is with the miller's daughter, John says of himself: "I lye as a draff-sak in my bod" (I, 1206), the term draff-sak meaning a sack full of chaff. The miller's wife "was as dyme as water in a diche" (I, 2644). And in another place, the narrator tells that "she was somel snoterlich"
which seems to compare her reputation with bennathy clothing. That the warden at Cambridge made much to do over his stealing of grain and flour "sette the millere nat a tare" (I, 1000), all of these images suggest items which are closely associated with the t OPERA'S occupation. One figure must be connected with his work as a carpenter. Of the miller, who has drunk deeply of all, the narrator remarks: "We hath this miller vanquished his heed" (I, 117). The remaining images, though showing no special connection with the t OPERA, contain the same mixture of generally appropriate realistic subject matter that has been noted in the tale of the Miller. 33

The LIFE OF FAULK PREHISTORIC, like the t OPERA'S, contains a large proportion of images which are closely connected with the speaker's life and interests. The household, a sphere well known to same aline:am through her

33From the human body, sickness, and death come the following: "... yet shall I bless his ye," I, 1001; "Yet kan a millere make a clesken hord," I, 1059; "A miller for [cresnileurs] upon their bodies falls," I, 1172; "... I saw but dead," I, 1039. From domestic life: "With him he yaf full many a pane of bran," I, 1171; "... but the children play," I, 1058. From music and religion: "He yaf bar his a burson, a fulstreac," I, 1172; "... swith a compli in ystel bren alle," I, 1171. From other spheres: "... ever sprye as glad," I, 1171; "... the miller's dochter bate upright," I, 1171; "This John 11th stille a mustard way or two," I, 1171; "His name was hoo- delyous Turkyn," I, 1211; "To was his joly whistelle wel past," I, 1154.
Five marriage, provided the subject of many of the figures.

Several of these refer to cookery, food, and drink.

Telling how she repaid her fourth husband, who had a "paragon," the Wife says:

... I made cold sweet cheese
That in his own greed I made him fry
For anger, and for very jealousy.

(III, 117-118)

In another frame she says: let saints

... be breed of small children,
And let us prey on them hourly-hunted;
And yet with hourly-hunted, Mark it. He lane,
Our Lord Jesus Christ preferring to a man.

(III, 117-118)

When her husband was angry, she would tell him:

Ye shall be born at pasture in pale,
And have a sweet-spiced conscience.

(III, 117-118)

Of her old husbands, for whom she only pretended an appetite, she says: "... In bacon had I never delit!"

(III, 117-118). Bacon is also used in another figure. Relating how she governed her old husbands, the Wife remarks:

The bacon was not set for her, I knowe:
That none may be in fayce at Dumnow. 10

(III, 117-118)

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10 Robins, ed. cit., p. 803, n. 219, says: "At Dumnow, near Chelmsford in Essex, a flitch of bacon was offered to any married couple who lived a year without quarrelling or repenting of their union. For an account of the revival of this custom in recent years, see A. L. Henle, "The Dunnow Flitch Trials of 1659," HEC, xvi (1902), 128-131.
To the Gardener, who says that her words have frightened him about marriage, the Wife replies:

"Ahyde! ... my tale is nat bigonne. May, thou shalt drynken of another tonne, Or that I go, shal savoure wors than ale. And when that I have teold thee forth my tale Of tribulacion in marriage, Of which I am expert in al wyn are, This is to say, myself have been the whippe,-- Than maystow ches whether thou wilt sippe Of thilke tonne that I shal abroche. Be war of it, or then to my approche. (III, 169-178)

This imagery taken "from ale or wyn is associated with one of the Wife's special pleasures, for she tells later that she liked to dance and sing when she "had drunke a draught of sweete wyn" and that even had she been Metellius' wife, he would not have frightened her "for drynke" (III, 457-463).

Several further images refer to objects which would have been found in fourteenth-century households. Arguing that not everyone can be expected to keep virginity, Dame Alisoun says:

... wel ye knowe, a lord in his houshold, He bath hat every vessel al of gold; Somme been of tree, and done his lord servyse. (III, 59-61)

Again, she rebukes her husband for his jealousy with these words:


Ye shall have quernie night smack at eve
He is to drink a nogard that wolde warne
A man to lighte a candle at his lanterne;
Ye shall have never the lasse light, purdee.

(III, 332-335)

And concerning her husband's accusations, she remarks:

"Thus selstow, olde barbel-ful of lyest!" (III, 302).

In a number of cases the Wife's images are drawn
from animals and insects which are associated with the
household. Of her husband's complaints, she states:

Thou saydest this, that I was lyk a cat;
For whose wolde songs a catte skyn,
Thanne wolde the cat wel dwelone in his in;
And if the catte skyn be slyk and ray,
She wol nat dwelone in house half a day,
But forth she wolde, or any day she dawed,
To shewe her skyn, and soon a-caterwaved.
This is to saye, if I be ray, sire shrewes,
I wol renne out, my bawd for to shewe.

(III, 348-356)

In another instance she rebukes her husband thus:

Thou comest hoom as dronken as a mous
And prechest on thy bench....

(III, 26 f.)

Relating how she had selected a fifth husband before the
fourth one died, she remarks:

I holde mouses herte nat worth a leek
That hath but eon hole to storte to
And if that faile, thanne is al yde.

(III, 572-574)
One of the Wife's figures refers to the talking bird that tells the husband of the wife's lover. A wise wife, says Dame Alisoun, if she knows what is best for her, will "Bere him on bond that the cow is wood" (III, 232). To emphasize how she occupied her time with vigils, preachings, miracle plays, and weddings while her husband was in London, the Wife says of her beautiful scarlet clothes:

"Thise worres, ne thise motthes, ne thise myttes, Upon my peril, frote her never a deel."

(III, 560 f.)

Besides being a housewife, Dame Alisoun is a cloth maker, an expert in one of the newest and most important industries of Chaucer's time.

"Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt."

(Gen Prol, I, 447)

One of the Wife's images seems rather closely related to her occupation. As a circumlocution for sex, she says:

---

St. Michael-juxta-Bathon, the locality from which the Wife came, was a parish largely devoted to weaving, and as J. M. Manly points out, "wherever the cloth industry flourished in England, women were prominent in it." Canterbury Tales (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1928), p. 527. But, according to Robinson, op. cit., p. 764, n. 448, the praise of the Wife's expertness "is perhaps to be taken ironically, for the reputation of the cloth made in Rath was not of the best."
"For peril is both the fyr and tow t'assemble" (III, 89), the word tow denoting the thread or yarn which is used for weaving. Several other figures have to do with selling and buying; and may therefore he regarded as springing from her interest in business. Women, she says, drive hard bargains with their husbands:

With danger out of our fare, we hold dear the ware,
And to greet cheap is held at little price;
This knoweth every woman that is wise.

(III, 521-524)

Explaning how she managed her old husband to her own profit, she states:

And therefore every man this tale I tell,
Wynn who so may, for all is for to sell....
For wynnynge would I all his lust endure.

(III, 413-416)

And a few lines later she tells how she paid her old husbands with chiding: "... by my trothe, I quitte hem word for word" (III, 422); "I ne owe hem nat a word that it nys quit" (III, 425). In another place she says:

An housbond I wol have, I wol nat lette,
Which shal be ... my dettour.....

(III, 154 f.)

42 The word dette is twice used figuratively, but the metaphorical element is very weak: "... man shal yelde to his wyf hir dette," III, 130; "whan that hym list come forth and paye his dette," III, 153.
Because Dame Alisoun, in intervals of making cloth and making love, has been on many pilgrimages and presumably in the company of learned people and because she has been married to an Oxford clerk who read aloud to her from books, it is not at all surprising that she draws upon learned materials for some of her figurative language. In one instance she refers to historical fiction. The tomb of her fourth husband is

... nost so curius
As was the sepulcre of hym Daryus,
Which that Appelles wroghte subtilly;
It nys but wast to burye hym preciously.

\[\text{(III, 497-500)}\]

The other learned images which the wife employs come from classical mythology and astrology. To a husband who would spy on her gadding about, she would say:

Sire olde fool, what helpeth thee to spyen?
Toogh thou preye Argus with his hundred yen
To be my ward-cors, as he kan best,
In feith, he shal nat kepe me but me lest.

\[\text{(III, 357-360)}\]

In another instance she remarks: "... after wyn on Venus moste I thynke" (III, 464). There is also the rather extended

\[\text{43 The description of Darius' tomb appears in the Alexandreid, a vast poem in Latin written about 1200 A.D. by Philippe Gualtier de Chatillon, a canon of Tournay. See Lounsbury, Studies in Chaucer, II, 353-355.}\]
passage in which she tells that her marriage to young Jankin was fated, for her planets Venus and Mars had control over her:

For certes, I am al Venerien
In feelyng, and myn herte is Marcien.
Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse,
And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardynesse;
Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars therinne.
Allas! allas! that evere love was synne!
I folwed ay myn inclinacioun
By vertu of my constellacioun;
That made me I koude noght withdrawe
My chambre of Venus from a good felawe.
Yet have I Martes mark upon my face,
And also in another privy place.

(III, 609-620)

She employs astrological imagery likewise in explaining why clerks do not praise women:

The children of Mercurie and of Venus
Been in hir wirkyng ful contrarius;
Mercurie loveth wysdam and science,
And Venus loveth ryot and dispence.
And, for hire diverse disposicioun,
Sch falleth in othere exaltacioun.
And thus, God woot, Mercuric is desolat
In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltat;
And Venus falleth ther Mercurie is reysed.
Therfore no womman of no clerk is preysed.
The clerk, whan he is oold, and my noght do
Of Venus werkis worth his olde sho,
Thanne sit he doun, and writ in his dotage
That wommen kan nat kepe hir mariage!

(III, 697-710)

Although a rather large portion of the imagery in the Wife's preamble seems closely related to her background and character, no such selection of materials is to be
found in her story. Indeed, the only further tale which contains a large number of images especially appropriate to the poem and its narrator is the Nun's Priest's Fable of the cock and the hen.

In this tale the narrator creates the atmosphere of learning necessary for the mock heroic style by setting against the humble scene of the poor widow's yard a background of imagery suggesting the courtly romance, classical story, and biblical lore. One notes first the mock heroic brilliance of the figures describing Chauntecleer:

His coomb was redder than the syn coral,  
And patailled as it were a casel wal;  
His hyle was blak, and as the jeet it shoon;  
Lyk asurer were his legres and his toon;  
His nayles whitter than the lylye flour,  
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.  
(VII, 2659-2664)

Here the splendid comparisons produce a burlesque in which the cottage yard becomes a court, the hen-house a castle, and the cock a knight or prince of a romance. The royal aspect of Chauntecleer appears later in the figures: "He looketh as it were a grym leoun" (VII, 3179) and "Trus roial, as a prince is in his halle ..." (VII, 3184).

Again, association with the romance and courtly poetry comes through the passage:

... Chauntecleer so free  
Son murior than the mermayde in the see.  
(VII, 3269 f.)
Except for these two strongly literary animal figures of
the lion and the mermaid, Chaucer quite fittingly draws
the images in this story of chicken and animal characters
almost entirely from the life of man. Carrying forward
the suggestion of the romance is this image in which the
narrator remarks ironically on the authenticity of his tale:

This storie is also trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake.
(VII, 3211 f.)

The background of learning is present in the description
of the fox, where the narrator delivers an apostrophe to
similar traitors of antiquity:

O false mordrour lurkynge in thy den!
O newe Scariot, newe Senylon,
False dissymulour, o Greek Synon,
That brughtest Troye al outryly to sorwe.
(VII, 3226-3229)

Later, the Nun's Priest mourns Chauntecleer's capture in a
series of noble apostrophes involving learned subjects. In
the first he evokes destiny:

---

The lion is used in literary comparisons everywhere.
In the English Romaunt of the Rose, 677-684, occurs this
figure containing the mermaid: "Swich sweete song was hem
among / That me thought it no briddis song, / But it was
wondir lyk to be / Song of mermaydens of the see, / That,
for her syngyn is so clere, / Though we mermaydens clepe
hem here / In English, as is oure usaunce, / Men clepe hem
sereyns in Frounce."

O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
Allas, his wyf no roghte nat of dromes!
And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.
(VII, 3338-3341)

Then he exclaims to the goddess of Love, whose servant
Chauntecleer is:

O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Syn that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy servyce dido al his powerr,
Moore for delit than world to multiplye,
Why woldestow suffre hym on thy day to dye?
(VII, 3342-3346)

And he apostrophizes Geoffrey de Vinsauf, whose skill in
rhetoric he needs to chide Friday fittingly:

O Gaufred, deere maister soverayn,
That whan thy worthy kyng Richard was slayn
With shot, compleynedest his deeth so score,
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy looro
The Friday for to chide, as diden ye?
For on a Friday, soothly, slayn was he.
Thanne wolde I shewe yow how that I koude pluye
For Chauntecleres drede and for his peyne.
(VII, 3347-3354)

The capture of Chauntecleer is further lamented by a group
of comic learned exempla, the first of which is an outcry
by his seven wives:

Certes, swich cry me lamentacion,
Was nevere of ladyes maad whan Ylion
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd,
Whan he hadde hent kyng Prisam by the berd
And slayn hym, as seith us Eneydos,
As muden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sights.
(VII, 3355-3361)
Next, Pertelote wails like the queen of ruined Carthage:

But sovereignty dame Pertelote shghte,
Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
Whan that her housbonde hadde lost his lyf,
And that the Romayns hadde brend Cartage.
She was so ful of torment and of rage
That wilfully into the fyre she storte,
And brende hirself with a stedefast herte.

(VII, 3362-3368)

Finally, the hens mourn like the Roman senators' wives:

O woeful hennes, righ so criden ye,
As whan that Nero brend the citee
Of Rome, cryden senatours wyves
For that hir husbondes losten alle hir lyves;
Withouten gile this Nero hath hem slayn.

(VII, 3369-3373)

To prepare his listeners for Chauntecleer's escape, the narrator employs a further image from learning:

Now, good men, I pray yow herkneth alle;
Low, how Fortune turneth sodeynly
The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!

(VII, 3402-3404)

The atmosphere of learning created by these images, however, not only contributes to the mock-heroic quality of the poem, but also reflects the well-stored, lively, humorous mind of the jolly narrator, "This sweete preest, this goodly man sir John" (VII, 2820), who is as well acquainted with "Bauyn Burrel the Asse" (VII, 3312-3316) as with the works of "Bishop Bradwordyn" (VII, 3340-
324). Likewise fitting for both the tale and the teller is the image in lighter vein which compares the uproar in the widow's yard to the contemporary peasant riots:

"Sortes, he Jakke Straw and his woynce
He made seuerely shottes half so shrille
Than that they wolden any floeryng kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
(VII, 3294-3297)

But besides these instances which have been noted, there are other traces in the tale which connect the narrator more specifically with religion. Chauntecleer's voice, he says,

... was sunder than the muske ceron
On mease-jace that in the chirophon,
(VII, 2851 f.)

and

Wel sikeret was his crowying in his lourge
Than is a clocke or an abbe orphange.
(VII, 2853 f.)

As a mild retaliation for Portelete's sarcasm, Chauntecleer remarks:

For al so siker as In principio,
Salier est hominis confusio,
(VII, 2163 f.)

of which the first line means "as surely as gospel truth," in principio referring to the first words of the Gospel of
St. John. Other scenes refer to devils and angels. To allay Chauntecleer's fears, the fox says:

"Now, squire, I were worse than a foend, if I be yow wolde harm or viljagry!"
(VII, 3266 f.)

A few lines later he flatters Chauntecleer by saying:

"... surely, ye have as many a stevene as any sumblim intoth in heaven."
(VII, 3291 f.)

Again, the Priest relates that the company chasing the fox "polden as a bende doon in behel" (VII, 3380).

Further, the apostrophe identifies the fox with famous betrayers, noted above. In connection with learning, contains the epithet "O newe Scarlet" (VII, 3377), which refers to Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ.

The imagery in the Nun's Priest's Tale, like that in the tales told by the Knight, the Miller, and the Reeve, therefore seems to help characterize the teller, though one cannot be sure, of course, that such was Chaucer's conscious purpose, for in each instance the selection of materials is equally as well adapted to the character of the tale itself as to the narrator. In any event, one must

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1 See Robinson, op. cit., p. 250, n. 3268.
not interpret the evidence here as strengthening the view that the tales were merely four speeches expressing directly or indirectly, the characters of the several persons.\textsuperscript{16} Nevertheless, Chaucer often makes skillful adaptations; and the incantation of these four stories, and particularly of the \textit{degree} and the \textit{Knight's Tale}, strongly suggests that he had in mind not merely the story but the narrator as well.

The imagery of the remaining tales and links, though containing a mixture of subject matter more or less generally suited to the characters of the poem and to the conversational language of the narrators, shows no marked degree of special selection. Yet in several of these appear certain instances that are notable for their appropriateness. Well adapted to the \textit{Merchant's} bitterness toward marriage\textsuperscript{17} and to the bitterness of his tale is the imagery in this passage suggested by the \textit{Song of Songs}, which, though beautiful in itself, becomes hideous when spoken by January to May:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Virtuodoo, Chaucer and His Poetry}, p. 155. As \textit{Top!alone}, \textit{Chaucer on Chaucer}, p. 231, aptly observes, "If this was actually Chaucer's intention, one can only say that he failed to carry it out."

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{The Merchant's voice}, see \textit{March Prab.} 75, 1917-1918.
\end{quote}
"Run up, my wife, my love, my lady! And,
the rustler Very is loud, my down creates;
The winter is soon with all his presses west.
Chair forth now, with these open columns
For neither been my breast, than is won;
The ravish is encloes, all abouts;
Love, soul, my white sponset, out of doubt
Thus hast be wounded in my heart, 0 wife!
To spot of thee ne knew I all my left.
Lor both, and let to taken some disporr;
I choose thee for my wife and my content.
" (11, 317-318)

However, the appearance of mysteries in the 

Take notice to subject appropriate to a popular person 

and expressing the sympathy real moral imitation:

A clouton, tell of succeeding;
A scene first of some condition
A current of some magnificum,
The cloutone and, loth as with his blood awrayed

A cloutone, on thee wed odds we played
0, while a man how many violations
Folowed of excess, and of incontinence...
And the cloutone throte, the lesser mouth,
Folows that eat and west and north and south.
In order. In cy, in water, men be unmake
To set a cloutone, dower, note, and demour

O wedde; 0 holy! O stigmata soul,
Fulfilled of dastardly and of corruption!
At either ends of thee foul in the son,
Yet best labour and cost is thee to praise
These coopers, how they stamp, and streyne, and prynde,
And turnen substance into accident,
To fulfill all thy liberes talents!
Out of the hard ond bowels break they
The many, for they caste nothe away
That may ye through the sad, softe, and sweeto.

(11, 534-542)
As Spielis observes, gluttony is visualized in these passages "as parts of the body that have taken on a kind of independent life of their own as in the fable of the rebellious members." As he continues to apostrophize, the Pardoner portrays drunkenness realistically as a drunk man:

O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy brecch, soul arrow to embrace,
And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
As thou saydest ay "Sampsoun, Sampsoun!"
(VI, 551-554)

Similarly fitting are the apostrophes venerating the Virgin in the Prologue to the saint's legend told by the Second Nun:

(VII, 457-480)

Similarly fitting are the apostrophes venerating the Virgin in the Prologue to the saint's legend told by the Second Nun:

---

Thow haide and hoonen, dochter of thy Sone,
Thow sale of mercy, synful soules cure,
In whom that God for bountee sheere to wone,
Thow humble, and feign over every creature,
Thow nobledest so far southe soure nature,
That he denyleth the Malere hadde of bynde
Hys Sone in blode and flesh to clothe and vynle.

Withynse the cloistre blissful of thy cycis
Took mannes shap the eternal love and peere,
That of the tryne compas lord and cyle is,
Whom ersthe and see and hevone, out of reline,
My hevone; and thow Virgine vrenelose,
Saint of thy body--and dweltest mayden pare--
The Creator of every creature.
(111, 36-40)

Finally, the picture of Jesus in the Franklin's Tale,
though having no special appropriateness for the poem as
a whole, would be a very congenial image to the hospitable
narrater in whose house "it snowed ... mowe and drynke":

And this was, as thys bookes me remembre,
The colde, frosty season of December,
Phoebus wax old, and howed lyk latten,
That in his hoohe declynation
Shoon as the burned gold with stromes brighte;
But new in Capricorn shone he lichte,
Where as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel seye.
The bitter frosten, with the sleet and snow,
Destroyd hath the grene in every yer;
Janus sit by the fyr, with double bend,
And drynketh of his bydle born the wyn;
Bifors hym start browen of the turked swyn,
And "Nowel" crieth every lusty man.
(v, 1243-1255)

This investigation shows, then, that, although
Chaucer's imagery characteristically contains a mixture of
subject matter more or less appropriate to his informal,
conversational style, in a considerable number of instances
the particular choice of spheres appearing in the images
is appreciably influenced by the character of the poems
and possibly in some cases by the occupation and social
status of the narrators. It has been demonstrated that
much of the imagery in the House of Fame reflects the
buoyant, noisy tone of the poem and the unstable character
of the goddess Fame. Again, a large number of delicate,
tranquil images in the Prologue to the Legend of Good
Women mirror the qualities of the lovely daisy queen, while
the colorful mixture of richly varied spheres of subject
matter in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales helps
to give a sense of reality to the diverse characters
representing contemporary English life. Further, the imagery
in the Reeve's and Wife of Bath's prologues reflects the
background and occupation of the speakers and thus contributes
to their self-characterization. In several of the tales--
the Knight's, the Miller's, the Reeve's, and the Nun's
Priest's--the materials in the images are found to be
especially fitting not only to the character of the stories,
but to the narrators as well.

That Chaucer does not everywhere select his images
for some reason of particular appropriateness is, of
course, typical of his practices in general. As Kemp
Malone aptly observes, "Chaucer refused to be hampered by
what the Germans called systemzwang. He was willing to be reasonably systematic, but not vigorously so.\footnote{Op. cit., p. 166.} In his use of imagery, a certain amount of irregularity goes well with his colloquial style. Yet, as this inquiry demonstrates, in a sizable number of instances the choice of particular materials in his imagery contributes significantly to the artistic achievement of the poems.
CHAPTER IV

CHAUCER'S TREATMENT OF DERIVED IMAGERY

That Chaucer could create strikingly original images of his own is attested by such examples as

"And on the ground, which is my moodres gate,
I knockke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
And seye 'Leeve mooder, leet me in'"

(PardT, VI, 729-731)

"For y am sorwe, and sorwe ys y."

(BD, 597)

Allas, Fortune! it was greet crueltee
Swiche briddes for to putte in swich a cage!

(MkT, VII, 2413 f.)

And as the newe abayysed nyghtyngale,
That stynteth first whan she bygynneth to synge,
Whan that she hereth any herde tale,
Or in the hegges any wight stirynge,
And after siker doth hire vois out ryngo,
Right so Criseyde, whan hire drede stente,
Opned hire herte, and tolde hym hire entente,

(Tr, III, 1233-1239)

But instances of this kind constitute only a very small part of Chaucer's entire range of imagery; for Chaucer, like other poets of his time, characteristically seeks to achieve originality in his figures, not through the invention of something absolutely new, but through fusing individuality and vitality into images drawn from other poets and from conventional and proverbial sources. It is therefore the object of this essay to point out and
illustrate the various methods which Chaucer employs in taking over these derived materials. Since scholars have made a very thorough exploration of the extent of Chaucer's borrowings, most of the preliminary detective work necessary for study of this sort has already been done.¹ Particularly is the present examination indebted to Klaeber's Das Bild bei Chaucer, which gives literary sources and parallels for a large number of Chaucer's figures, and to Whiting's Chaucer's Use of Proverbs, which lists his proverbial and conventional expressions.²

In studying the images which Chaucer draws from other writers, one finds that there are instances which merely give a more or less faithful reproduction of the model. Short examples of this sort occasionally translate the source figure almost word for word. For Ovid's line "Mitius inveni quam te genus omne ferarum" (Heroides, X, 1),³ one

¹References to the most significant studies showing the relationship of Chaucer's poems to their sources have been given on pp. 2 and 4, above.

²Citations of sources and parallels pointed out by Klaeber have been designated in this essay by K after line references to Chaucer or to his models. Similarly, citations from Whiting's collection of traditional expressions are referred to by W.

³All lines from the Heroides are quoted from Heroides and Amores, ed. and trans. Grant Showerman, the Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947).
notes Chaucer's "meker than ye fynde I the bestes wilde" (LGW, VI, 2198 [K, p. 7]); for Dante's "sua disianza vuol volar sans' ali" (Paradiso, XXXIII, 15), Chaucer's "Lo, his desir wol fle withouten wynges" (Tr, III, 1263 [K, p. 201]); and for Ovid's "reddebant nomen concava saxa tuum" (Heroides, X, 22), Chaucer's "The holwe rokkes answerde hire anayn" (LGW, VI, 2193 [K, p. 374]).

At times Chaucer also reproduces extended images closely, though he never renders these word for word. Examples of this kind are more numerous in the Troilus than elsewhere, a good illustration occurring in the simile of the flowers awakening in the morning:

But right as floures, thorugh the cold of nyght Iclosed, stoupen on hire stalke lowe, Redresseth hem ayen the sonne bright, And spreden on hire kynde cours by rowe, Right so gan tho his eighen up to throwe This Troilus, and seyde, "O Venus deere, Thi myght, thi grace, yheried be it here!" (II, 967-973)

For these lines Boccaccio has

Quali i fioretti, dal notturno gelo Chinati e chiusi, poi ch 'l sol gl'imbianca, Tutti s'apron diritti in loro stelo Cotal si fe' di sua virtude stanca Troilo allora, e riguardando il cielo, Incomincio come persona franca:

---

Lodato sia il tuo sommo valore,  
Venere bella, e del tuo figlio Amore.  
(Filostrato, II, 80 [K, p. 351])

Chaucer's treatment of the image of the wild bull describing Troilus' madness is quite similar. For Boccaccio's lines:

Ne altrimenti il toro va saltando  
Or qua or la, dappoi c'ha ricevuto  
Il mortal colpo, e misero mugghiando  
Conoscer fa qual duolo ha conceputo,  
Che Troilo facessse, nabisando  
Se stesso, e percutendo dissoluto  
Il capo al muro, e con le man la faccia,  
Con pugni il petto e le dolenti braccia,  
(Filostrato, IV, 27)

Chaucer gives

Right as the wylde bole bygynneth sprynge,  
Now her, now ther, idarted to the herte,  
And of his death roreth in compleynynge,  
Right so gan he aboute the chaumbre sterte,  
Smytyng his brest ay with his fistes smerte;  
His hed to the wal, his body to the grounde  
Ful ofte he swapte, hymselfen to confounde.  
(IV, 239-245 [K, p. 351])

Again, one may note Chaucer's beautiful image of the trees stripped of their leaves in winter:

And as in wynter leves ben biraft,  
Ech after other, til the tree be bare,  
So that ther nys but bark and braunche ilaft,

---

5 All lines from the Filostrato are quoted from N. E. Griffin and A. B. Myrick's The Filostrato of Giovanni Boccaccio: A Translation with Parallel Text (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1929). It will be noted that Boccaccio has borrowed his figure from Dante, Inferno, II, 127-132.
Lith Troilus, byraft of ech welfare,  
Ibouneden in the blake bark of care,  
Disposed wood out of his wit to breyde,  
So sore hym sat the chaungyng of Criseye.  
(IV, 222-231)

Here Chaucer has turned from his primary source, the  
Filostrato, to reproduce Dante's lines:

Come d'autunno si levan le foglie  
l'una appresso dell'altra, fin che 'l ramo  
vede alla terra tutte le sue spoglie,  
similmente il mal seme d'Adamo  
rittansi di quel lito ad una ad una,  
per cenni come augel per suo richiamo.  
(Inferno, III, 112-117)

As a further instance of close reproduction one may consider  
the passage:

And as the hriddes, whanne the sonne is shene,  
Deliten in hire song in leves grene,  
Right so the wordes that they spake yfeere  
Delited hem, and made hire hertes cleere,  
(IV, 1132-1435)

for which one finds in Boccaccio:

E si some l' uccel di foglia in foglia  
Nel nuovo tempo prende dilletanza  
Del canto suo; cosi facean costorc,  
Di molte cose parlando fra loro.  
(Filostrato, IV, 138 [K, p.351])

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Chaucer's indebtedness to Dante for this image is  
pointed out by Bernhard ten Brink, who notes that Dante took  
it from Virgil (Aeneid, VI, 309 f.). See Chaucer Studien  
(Munster: Adolph Russell's Verlag, 1870), pp. 82-83.
Commenting on Chaucer's handling of this image, Raymond Proctor observes that while the English lines "lack the definition of the Italian di foglia in foglia," they have "the slightly uniform beauty of late Gothic leaves in stone."7

Such examples clearly demonstrate that Chaucer sometimes follows his models faithfully. Yet in these cases his reproductions are not merely slavish imitations, for they have a quality that is distinctively their own. Much of the vitality which he achieves in translations of this kind—as in his translations, paraphrases, and adaptations in general—springs of course from the peculiar powers of his English, which are distinct from the powers of Latin, Italian, or French.8

In all of the examples cited up to this point, the adaptations have been almost exactly of the same length as their models. It is by no means usual, however, for Chaucer to reproduce his sources that strictly. In a relatively few cases he shortens an image in taking it over. As an instance, one notes that Ovid's lines:

\[ \text{... cruor emicat alte} \\
\text{non aliter quam cum vitiato fistula plumbo} \\
\text{scinditur et tenui stridente foramine longas} \]

7 Chaucer, p. 59.
8 Cf. Speirs, Chaucer the Maker, p. 29.
eiaculatur aquas atque ictibus aera rumpit

(Metamorphoses, IV, 121-124)

are reduced to

The blood out of the wounde as brode sterete
As water, when the conduit broken is.

(LGW, II, 851 f. [K, p. 356])

Further adaptations which show this kind of treatment may be observed in Chaucer's use of "The fyr of love ... brende hym ..." (Tr, I, 436, 440) for Boccaccio's

L' ardenti fiamme amorose, ma quale
In disposta materia o secca o mezza
S' accende il fuoco, tal nel nuovo amante
Messe le parti acceser tutte quante,

(Filostrato, I, 40 [K, p. 357])

and of his "Fro hennes rood my blisse and my solas" for Boccaccio's

Di quinci usci colei che mi conforta,
Di quinci usci la mia suave vita.

(Filostrato, V, 58 [K, p. 356])

But much more typical of Chaucer's practices are the instances in which he extends the source figure. For illustration one may quote the image describing Blanche:

---

That as the someres sonne bryght
Ys fairer, clerer, and hath more lyght
Than any other planete in heven,
The moone, or the sterres seven,
For al the world so hadde she
Surmounted hem alle of beaute,
Of manner, and of comlynesse
Of stature, and of wel set gladnesse,
Of goodlyhede so wel besseye,
(BD, 821-829)

which is an expansion of these lines from Guillaume de Machaut's Le jugement dou roy de Behainrne (286-290):

Si en choisi entre les autres l'une
Qui, tout aussi com li solaus la lune
Veint de clarte,
Avoit elle les autres seurmonte
De pris, d'onneur, de grace et de biaute.10

Fansler has shown this image to be conventional.11 But it is certain that Chaucer took over other parts of Machaut's poem in the Book of the Duchess and therefore reasonable to assume an indebtedness here as well.12 In a similar manner Chaucer increases the figurative element in Machaut's passage:

10 Here and subsequently quotations from Machaut are from Oeuvres de Guillaume de Machaut, ed. Ernest Hoeffner, Société des anciens textes français (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1908-1921), 3 vols.

11 Chaucer and the Roman de la Rose, p. 88.

12 See G. L. Kittredge, "Chauceriana," MP, VII (1910), 466.
Car le droit estate d'innocence
Ressamble proprement la table
Blanche, polie, qui est able
A recevoir sans nul contraire
Ce qu'on y vuet peindre et pourtraire.

(Remede de Fortune, 25-30)

to

Paraunter I was thorto most able,
As a whit wal or table,
For hit ys redy to cacche and take
Al that men wil theryn make,
Whethir so men will portreye or Peynte,
Be the werkes never so queynte,

(BD, 779-784)

the rime of table and able clearly establishing the matter of source.\(^3\) Noticeably expanded also is the adaptation of Boccaccio's words describing Criseide:

... la quale
Si bella e si angelica a vedere
Era, che non parea cosa mortale,

(Filostrato, I, II)

where Chaucer changes the negative assertion that she appeared not to be a mortal to the positive statement that she was like a thing immortal and then drives the fact home by the addition of a beautiful couplet:

So aungelik was hir natif beaute,
That lik a thing immortal semed she,

\(^3\)See Skeat, op. cit., 1, 482, n. 779.
As doth an hevenyshe perforfit creature,  
That down were sent in scornynge of nature.  
(Tr, I, 102-105)

As a further example, it may be observed that Chaucer's version of Troilus' complaint:

"O wery goost, that erreest to and fro,  
Why nyltow fleen out of the wofullest  
Body that evere myghte on grounde go?  
O soule, lurkyng in this we, unreste,  
Fie forth out of myn herte, and lat it breste,  
And folowe alway Criseyde, thi lady dere,  
Thi righete place is now no lenger here;  
(Tr, IV, 302-308)

shows both extension and improvement over Boccaccio's lines, which for sake of variety are quoted here from the Griffin-Myrick translation: "O soul unhappy and dismayed, why fleest thou not from the wretchedest body alive? O dejected soul, flee forth the body and follow Cressida" (Filodrato, IV, 34).

While it is thus typical of Chaucer to extend the images he takes over from other writers, it is no less characteristic of him to add specific details which make his borrowings more exact and concrete. For illustration, one may compare Ovid's simile:

Ut solet a magno fluctus languescere flatu,  
sad tamen a ventu, qui fuit, unda tumet,

with this passage from the Legend of Lucress, in which the addition of concrete details is designated by underlining:

And as the sea, with tempest al toshake,
That after, when the storm is al age,
Yit wel the water quappe a day or two,
Ryte so, thogh that hire forme were absent,
The plesaunce of hire forme was present.

(LOW, V, 1765-1789 [K, p. 359])

Again, if Klauber is right in his assumption that Ovid's figure:

''... lyk betynge of the se,''
Quod y, ''aven the rokke holowe,
Whan tempest doth the shippes swalowe;
And lat a man stonde, out of doubte,
A myle thens, and here hyt route,''

(HF, II, 1034-1038 [K, p. 358])

the specific touches which Chaucer adds are particularly noteworthy. A good example of this method of treatment may

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15 All citations from Ovid's Fasti are to the edition of Sir James George Frazer, The Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931).
also be observed in his adaptation of the *exemplum* of the caged bird, which in Chaucer's Middle English version of the *Consolation of Philosophy* appears thus:

And the janglynge hrid that syngeth on the heghe braunches (that is to seyn, in the wode), and after is enclosed in a streyt cage, although that the pleyinge bysynes of men yeveth hem honyed drynkes and large metes with swete studys, yit nathelyes yif thilke bruyde skypynge out of hir streyte cage seith the agreable schadwes of the wedes, sche defouleth with hir feete hir metes ischad, and seketh mornyynge onyly the wede, and twytereth desyrynge the wode with hir swete voys.  

*(Poece. III, met. 2, 23-35)*

In the *Squire's Tale* (*V, 610-617* [K, p. 358]) one finds

Men loven of propre kynde newefanfelsenes,  
As briddes doon that men in cages fede.  
For though thou nyght and day take of hem hode,  
And strawe hir cage faire and softe as silk,  
And yeve hem sugre, hony, breed and milk,  
Yet right anon as that his dore is uppne,  
He with his fet wol spurne adoun his cuppe,  
And to the wode he wole, and wermes etc.*17

---

16 The corresponding passage in Latin reads: "Quae canit aitis garrula ramis/ Ales caueae clauditur antro; / Huic liect inlita pocula nelle / Largasque dapes dulci studio / Ludens hominum cura ministret, / Si tamen arto saliens textc / Nemorum gratas uiderit umbras, / Sparsas pedibus proterit escas, / Siluas tantum maesta requirit, / Siluas dulci uoce susurrat." This and subsequent citations from the Latin version of the *Consolation* are to the edition of H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand, The Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926).

For another instance where Chaucer includes individual details which are lacking in his model, one may observe the golden figure:

But swich an ese therwith they hire wroughte,
Right as a man is esed for to fele,
For ache of hcd, to clawen hym on his heele.

(Tr, IV, 726-728)

Comparison with Boccaccio’s lines:

... e non era altro che grattarla
Nelle calcagne, ove 'l capo prudea,

(Filostrato, IV, 85 [K, p. 361])

shows readily how much Chaucer’s additions have strengthened the irony of the Italian.

As illustrated in the preceding examples, the details which Chaucer adds are of various sorts. Worthy of special mention, however, are the numerous adaptations in which he gives his images more definite character by the inclusion of particular local references. Such is the case when he renders Jean de Meun’s line: "Je cruit estre certain qu’il ont bonnes pastures". (Testament, 1072)18 by the more vigorous "It is a gentil pasture ther thou goost" (MkT Prol, 1933) and when he reproduces Ovid’s "todidem, quot messias aristas ... gerit" (Metamorphoses, XI, 614 f.) as "[Moo] than ever cornes were in graunges" (HF, II, 696 [K, p. 360]). Another

example may be observed in the double comparison in the
Knight's Tale (I, 2626-2634), where two local phrases are
added:

Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgophage,
Whan that hir whelp is stole whan it is lite,
So cruel on the hunte as is Arcite
For jelous herte upon this Palamon.
Ne in Belmarye ther nys so fel leon,
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ne of his praye desireth so the blood
As Palamon to sleen his foe Arcite,
The jelous strokes on hir helmes byte.

For these lines Chaucer apparently leans upon this passage
in the Teseide (VIII, 26 [K, p. 359]):

Ma qual la leonessa negli ircani
boschi, per li figlius' che nel covile
non trova, se con movimenti insani....
mugghiando, corre e per monti e per piani ...
cotal correndo Diomede andava....19

One may consider here too the verses:

For al the feld nas but of sond
As smal as man may se yet lye
In the desert of Lybye,

(ⅡF, I, 487-489)

19All quotations from the Teseide in the present essay
are from the edition of Salvatore Battaglia, Autori Classici
e Documenti di Lingua Publicati dalla R. Accademia della
which, if suggested by Dante's lines:

Lo spazzo era una rena arida e spessa,
non d' altra foggia fatta che colei
che fu da pie di Caton gia soppressa,
(Inferno, XIV, 13-15 [K, p. 360])

show a certain measure of annotation in giving the specific
locality in place of the phrase "once trod by the feet of
Cato."

Although it is the general rule with Chaucer to make
his images more concrete than his models, there are times
when his reproductions have less specific form. Among
these may be included the simile: "As she an emperoures
doghter were" (CLT, IV, 168), which renders Petrarch's
"ceu Romani principis filia" (Letter III, Epistolae Seniles,
XVII, 70 [K, p. 361]), and the lines:

[She] ... quoke for fere, pale and pitously,
Ryght as the lamb that of the wolf is biten,
(LGW, III, 2317 f.)

which are used for Ovid's

illa tremit velut agna pavens, quae saucia cani
ore excussa lupi nondum sibi tuta videtur.
(Metamorphoses, VI, 527 f.[K,p.9])

---

Petrarch's letter is given in Sources and Analogues
of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, ed. W. F. Bryan and Germaine
Dempster (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941),
pp. 296-330.
Again, if Klaeber is right in assigning Dante's passage:

\[
\text{Ma è senti' sonare un alto corno,}
\text{tanto ch' avrebbe ogne tuon fatto fioco,}
\text{(Inferno, XXXI, 12 f.)}
\]

as the source for Chaucer's statement that Eolus set his trumpet to his mouth and blew it "as lowde as any thunder" (HF, III, 1681 [K, p. 361]), one notes less boldness in the English adaptation. Figures receiving such treatment occur so seldom, however, that they are of little importance in the study of Chaucer's practices in general.

Most interesting and perhaps most significant of the images which Chaucer derives from other writers are those cases where he takes a mere hint or suggestion from a model and gives it individual development. But in dealing with instances of this kind, one must freely admit that unless the suggestion comes from a known source which Chaucer is following in a poem or shows some fairly close parallel feature with a specific model, the matter of indebtedness or influence is often open to question. Therefore, even though the present discussion has sought to limit itself to the more obvious and probable instances, the examples chosen to illustrate this method of treatment are in some cases necessarily subject to qualification.

In considering the very large number of images which Chaucer develops from hints, one may note first the Knight's words:
I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,
And wayke been the oxen in my plough,
(KnT, I, 886 f.)

which appear to have been suggested by the simple figure
contained in this passage from the Roman de la Rose:

Ne vous vueil or plus cis tenir,
A mon propos dei revenir,
Ou' autre champ me couvient arer.
(21215-21217)\textsuperscript{21}

Similarly, from Guillaume Deguilleville's epithet for
Mary: "[Tu es] de salu porte" (Le Pelerinage de la Vie
Humaine, 15),\textsuperscript{22} Chaucer makes "Haven of refut, of quiet,
and of reste" (ABC, 14) and then carries the idea of navi-
gation further with the line: "Help, lady bright, er that
my ship tobreste!" (ABC, 16 [K, p. 362]). Where Nicholas
Trivet, in his Life of Constance, has "le membre au diable,
la soudaine,"\textsuperscript{23} again he takes a slight suggestion and
creates the much more vigorous

O serpent under femynynytee,
Lyk to the serpent depe in helle ybounde.
(MLT, II, 360 f.)

\textsuperscript{21}Chaucer's probable indebtedness here is noted by Skeat,
op. cit., V, 62, n. 885. Line references to the Roman de la
Rose here and in subsequent citations are to the edition of
Ernest Langlois, Société des anciens textes français (Paris:

\textsuperscript{22}The line reference here is to the edition found in

\textsuperscript{23}Originals and Analogues of Some of Chaucer's Canterbury
Tales, Chaucer Society, 2nd Ser., No. 5 (London: Humphrey
Milford), p. 11.
A little later he echoes the same thought in the verses:

But this scorpioun, this wikked goost,
The sowdanesse, for al hire flaterynge,
Caste under this ful mortally to stynge.

(MLT, II, 404-406 [K, p. 362])

Further, one notes that the rather fine personification which appears in the passage where Chaucer says that he will not tell

... how the ground agast was of the light,
That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright

(KnT, I, 2931 f.)

seems to be prompted by Boccaccio's lines:

e all luce, in quel giammai non stata,
in poco d'ora si die larga entrata,

(Teseide, XI, 21)

though Chaucer may also have in mind

Donde la terra sconsolato pianto
ne diede....

(Teseide, XI, 25)

and

[Cerri ... ] che d'ombra eterna ricuoprono il volto
del tristo suolo....

(Teseide, VII, 31 [K, p. 364])

All the above examples illustrating Chaucer's treatment of suggestions deal with short passages. Instances which show more extended development are equally numerous.
The image from the *House of Fame* (II, 534-539):

But never was ther dynt of thonder,
Ne that thyng that men calle fouder,
That smot somtyme a tour to powder,
And in his swifte comynge brende,
That so swithe gan descende
As this foul ... 24

seems to show a combination of influences. Chaucer probably was thinking not only of Dante's lines:

>Poi mi parea che, poi rotata un poco,
   terribil come folgor discendesse,
   *(Purgatorio*, IX, 28 f.)

but of Boethius' "ne the way of thonder-leit, that is wont to smyten hye toures" (*Boece*, I, met. 4) and Machaut's

>... la foudre
Qui mainte ville mist en poudre
*(Le jugement dou roy de Navarre*, 301 f. [K, p. 393])

as well. From a weak hint concerning the nature of fire in Boethius: "Certes, yif that honour of peple were a natureel yifte to dignytes, it ne myghte nevere cesen ... to don his office; right as fyre in every contre ne stynteth nat eschaufen and to ben hoot" (*Boece*, III, pr. 4,

2Chute, *Geoffrey Chaucer of England*, p. 111, observes that this image constitutes "perhaps the first use of artillery for literary purposes in English."
Chaucer develops the following impressive image:

Taak fyr, and ber it in the derkest hous
Bitwix this and the mount of Kaukasous,
And lat men shotte the dores and go thanne:
Yet wole the fyre as faire lye and brenne
As twenty thousand men myghte it bholde;
His office natureel ay wol it holde,
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye.

(WBT, II, 1139-1145)

The addition of the name "Kaukasous," as Skeat points out, was possibly suggested to Chaucer by another passage in Boethius which mentions "the montaigne that highte Caucasus" (Boece, II, pr. 7, 70-71). In a further example it will be observed that Chaucer takes a hint from the arrangement of details rather than from the subject matter of the image. In the place of Dante's threefold figure of the man between two foods, the lamb between two wolves, and the dog between two hinds:

Intra due cibi, distanti e moventi
d' un modo, prima si morria di fame,
che liber 'uomo l' un recasse ai denti;
si si starebbe un agno intra due brame
di fieri lupi, egualmente temendo;
si si starebbe un cane intra due dame:
per che, s' i' mi tacea, me non riprendo,
dalli miei dubbi d' un modo sospinto,
poi ch' era necessario ne commendo,

(Faradise, IV, 1-9)

he substitutes the figure of iron between two magnets:

25 The Latin version has "... ab officio suo quoquo
gentium mullo modo cessarent, sicut ignis ubique terrarum
nunquam tamen calere desistit...."

26 See op. cit., V, 320, n. 1140.
Right as, betwixen adamantines two
Of even myght, a piece of yren set
He hath no myght to move to ne fre--
For what that son may talle, that other let--
Forde I, that nyste whether me was bet.
To entre or leve, til Affrycan, my guide,
Me bente, and shof in at the gates wide.

([F., 168-169])

Images based on mere hints and suggestions from a model are readily discovered in the Troilus, where Chaucer patterns his poem rather closely upon a known primary source. A striking example appears in this passage describing the beauty of Crisyele, in her "widwes habit blak":

Was never yet seyn thyne, to ben prayed dores,
Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre.

([I., 174. 1.])

For this figure Chaucer seems to have combined ideas from several different contexts of the Italian. Mention of Crisyele's dark habit and beauty occurs in the lines:

... non fu giammni
Sotto candide vele in brunna vesta
Si bella donna ...  
(Dilestrare, 1, 26)

Chaucer's indebtedness to Dante for this image is pointed out by J. L. Lowes, who notes that the lines in Chaucer following the simile: "And seyle, lit stonden! written in thy face, / Thy error, though thou telle it not to me," L. 168, closely paraphrase "the immediately succeeding words in Dante—'thyn error! larking back to 'li
miel dubbi' of Dante's figure." See "Chaucer and Dante," FL, XIV (1917), 122-133.
and of her brightness in

... ed esse sola
Piu ch' altra facea lieta gran festa,
  (Filostrato, I, 19)

while the metaphor of the "star" is observed in

A cui Troilo disse: donna bella,
Sola sperganza e ben della mia mente,
Sempre davanti m' e stata la stella
Del tuo bel viso splendido e lucente.
  (Filostrato, III, 29)

A more obvious, but nevertheless ingenious instance of borrowing of this kind occurs in the passage where Troilus first saw Criseyde. From Boccaccio's words:

Per caso avvenne cho in fra la gente
L' occhio suo vago giunse penetrado
La dov' era Criseida paciente,
Sotto candido velo in bruna vesta
Fra l' altre donne in si solenne festa,
  (Filostrato, I, 26)

Chaucer takes the idea of Troilo's wandering eyes lighting upon Criseida and, as Professor Kirby has observed, develops it into a conceit of richer courtly quality:

And upon case bifel that thorugh a route
His eyen percede, and so depe it wente
Til on Criseyde it smot and ther it stente.
  (I, 271-273)

See Preston, op. cit., p. 60, who cites two further instances of the "star" image: Filostrato, IV, 143; V, 44.

See Kirby, op. cit., p. 248.
One may note also the fine stanza in which Troilus, standing on the walls and gazing toward the Greek camp, fancies that the sweet air comes from Criseyde:

"And hardly this wynd, that more and more
Thus stoundemele encresseth in my face,
If of my ladys depe sikes soore.
I prewe it thus, for in noon other place
Of al this town, save onliche in this space,
Fele I no wynd that sowneth so lik peyne:
It seyeth, 'Alas! why twynned be we tweyne?'
(V, 673-679)

the suggestion for this passage coming from the idea of Criseida's sighs in the Italian lines:

... ed cio che soffiarsi
Sentia nel viso, si come mandati
Sospiri di Criseida solea darsi
A creder fosser, dicendo sovente:
O qua o quivi e mia donne paciente.
(Filostrato, V, 70)30

A further case in point may be seen in Chaucer's use of the words:

... questi l' avra il cuore
Col parlar tratto, cive il suo amore,
(Filostrato, VII, 27)

for creating the much more concrete image:

"This Diomede hire herte hath, and she his....
This Diomede is inne, and thow art cute."
(V, 1517, 1519 [K, p. 363])

30 Ibid., p. 270.
Images such as these, which can be definitely traced to a specific source, demonstrate most conclusively Chaucer's skill in giving individual development to ideas and suggestions derived from another writer. But in the Troilus, as elsewhere, Chaucer employs figures from works other than his main source, and these, too, often appear to receive the same kind of treatment, though it is not always possible to establish the models with complete certainty.

An instance of the latter sort is found in the figure:

This Troilus in teris gan distille
As licour out of a lambic ful faste,
(IV, 519 f.)

which seems to be suggested by these lines from the Roman de la Rose (6382 f.):

Je vois maintes fois que to plores
Cum alambic sus lutel.

Fansler, who cites this probable source, notes the superiority of the English figure for the reason that "it seems more appropriate to speak of a person distilling tears than to speak of an alembic weeping."31 Another passage in the Roman (7549-7554):

Li mariniers qui par mer nage,
Cerchant mainte terre sauvage,
Tout regart il a une estaile,

31 Chaucer and the Roman de la Rose, pp. 94-95.
Ne cueurt il pas toujourz d'un veile,
Ainz le treschange mout souvint,
Pour eschever tempeste ou vent,

may have given Chaucer the idea for Troilus' beautiful apostrophe:

"O sterre, of which I lost have the light,
With herte soore wel oughte I to biwaille,
That evere derk in torment, nyght by nyght,
Toward my deth with wynd in sterre I saille.
(V, 638-641)32

As a further example one notes the lovely lines indicating that Troilus and Crisyde spent three years in felicity:

The gold-ytressed Phebus heighe on-lofte
Thries hadde alle with his bemes clene
The snowes molte, and Zephirus as ofte
Ibrought ayeyn the tendre leves grene,
Syn that the son of Ecuba the queene
Bigan to love hire first for whom his sorwe
Was al, that she depart sholde a-morwe,
(V, 8-14)

which are probably derived from this passage in the Teseida (II, 1):

Il sol avea due volta dissolute
le nevi en gli alti poggi, e altrettante
Zeffiro aveva le frondi rendute

32See Miss Cipriani, PMLA, XXII (1907), 582. Robinson, op. cit., p. 946, n. 638, suggests, however, that Chaucer's figure of the voyage is possibly due to a misreading of the Filostrato, V, 62: "disii porto di morte," Chaucer perhaps taking "porto" to be the noun for "harbor" instead of the verb meaning "I carry." But even if he made this mistake, the apostrophe would still be a splendid example of a figure developed from a slight suggestion.
Even though the sources of such images cannot be accepted with absolute certainty, Chaucer's individual treatment of many definitely known models makes it reasonable to assume that he has employed the same methods of adaptation in these cases.

Having examined Chaucer's methods of taking over images from definite and from highly probable sources, one turns now to consider his adaptation of conventional figures and proverbial sayings, which appear too frequently for specific models to be assigned. In this category come a very large number of Chaucer's short images, many of which are found again and again in the romances and other early French and English poems. Often Chaucer employs such figures as "trewe as stel," hair "lyk gold," and "still as stoon" merely to mark time or serve as literary "padding." Still his poetry is full of instances where he uses short conventional images with splendid artistic effect. One may

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33 See Robinson, p. 945, n. 8.

34 Fansler, op. cit., p. 87, remarks concerning these short figures: "...we may use a hackneyed comparison to express the futility of the search for their source: it is like looking for a needle in a haystack."
note the fine simplicity and melody of the figure in these lines which describe the two clerks when they return from the chase after their horses:

Wery and weet, as beest is in the reyn,
Comth sely John, and with hym comth Alcyn,

(RvT, I, 4107 f. [W, p. 157])

and of the image in the last line of this passage where Grisilde entreats her husband not to force her to return home naked:

"Ye koude nat doon so dishonest a thyng,
That thilke wombe in which your children leye
Sholde biforn the peple, in my walkyng,
Be seyn al bare; wherefore I yow preye,
Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye,

(ClT, IV, 876-880 [W, p. 177])

In a number of instances Chaucer gains a fine effect by a heaping up of short figures of this kind, the supreme instance of which occurs in his brilliant portrait of Alisoun, the carpenter's sprightly young wife:

Fair was this yonge wyf, and therwithal
As any wezel hir body gent and smal.
A ceynt she werede, barred al of silk,
A barmclooth eek as whit as morne milk
Upon hir lendes, ful of many a goore.
Whit was hir smok, and broyden al bifoore
And eek bihynde, on hir color aboute,
Of col-blak silk, withinne and eek withoute....
Ful smale ypullen were hire browes two,
And tho were bent and blake as any sloo.
She was ful moore blisful on to see
Than is the newe pere-jonette tree,
And softer than the wolle is of a wether.
And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether....
But of hir song, it was as loude and yerne
As any swalwe sittynge on a berne.
Therto she koude skippe and make game,
As any kyde or calf folwynge his dame.
Hir mouth was sweete as bragot or the meeth,
Or hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
Wynsyne she was, as is a joly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
A brooch she baar upon hir lowe coler,
As brood as is the boos of a bokeler.
Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye.
She was a prymerole, a piggesnye,
For any lord to leggen in his bedde,
Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.

(MillT, I, 3233-3270)

In this passage all of the images except those of the
"newe pore-jonette tree" and the "primerole" or "piggesnye"
are popular figures, but Chaucer has thus transformed them
into something distinctive, fresh, and original. Again,
one may note these lines in which Constance addresses the
Cross, lines which, as Raymond Preston observes, are "made
up of conventional imagery," but are among Chaucer's "best
exhibition verses":

"O cleere, or welful auter, hooly croys,
Reed of the Lambes blood ful of pitee,
That wesh the world fro the olde iniquitee,
Me fro the feend and fro his claws kepe,
That day that I shall drenchen in the depe.

Victorious tree, proteccioun of trewe,
That oonly worthy were for to bere
The Kynge of Hevene with his woundses newe,
The white Lamb, that hurt was with a spere,
Flemere of feendes out of hym and here
On which thy lymes feithfully extenden,
Me kepe, and yif me myght my lyf t'amenden."

(MLT, II, 451-462)35

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35See op. cit., p. 203.
Occasionally Chaucer achieves a touch of originality by turning images of the most conventional sort to humorous purposes. In a passage from *Troilus and Criseyde* (II, 904-907), for example, he refers to the sun as "the dayes honour," "the hevenes ye," and "the nightes foo" and then explains: "al this clepe I the sonne."36

In the preceding instances Chaucer has used short conventional images effectively in more or less their original form. Sometimes, however, he achieves a degree of individuality by presenting them with small modifications or additions. One finds that for the much worn simile "trewe as stel," which occurs in several places in his poems (*PF*, 395; *Tr*, V, 381; *LGW Prol* F, 334; *LGW*, IV, 2426 [*W*, p. 174]), he employs the metaphor "love of stel" (*HF*, II, 683; *Tr*, IV, 325). Similarly, instead of telling that Troilus came forward into battle "fiers as leon," he conveys the idea by the line: "And in the feld he pleyde the leoun" (*Tr*, I, 1074). Again, Chaucer may substitute a more specific term in a figure, as may be observed in his use of "For al so siker as In Principio" (*NPT*, VII, 3163) for the familiar "soth as gospel," the Latin phrase being

36 For a similar instance, see *FrankT*, V, 1015-1018.

37 For this simile, see *KnT*, I, 1598 (*W*, p. 66).
the first words of the Gospel of St. John. 38 Many times he adds small touches which make the figure more concrete. For the simile "meek as Hester," one notes the lines:

 stressed
Queen Ester looked neyere with swich an eye
On Assuer, so meke a look hath she,
(MerchT, IV, 1744 f [K, p. 422])

where special reference is made to the banquet at which Hester obtained her request. 39 As further instances of this kind of treatment one may observe that the figure "coy as is a mayde" (LGW, IV, 1548 [W, p. 167]) is expanded to

"Ye ryde as coy and stille as doth a mayde
Were n e v / e  espoused, sitiynge at the bord,"
(Cl Prol, IV, 2 f.)

and that "bright as any day" (MillT, I, 3310 [W, p. 159]) is rendered

And she as fair as is the bryghte morwe,
That heleth syke folk of nyghtes sorwe.
(LGW, III, 1202 f.)

There are instances in which Chaucer repeats the same short figure in a considerable number of variations, as in

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38 See Klaeber, op. cit., p. 422, and Robinson, op. cit., p. 860, n. 3163.

his use of the traditional "as fain as fowl of a fair day."\textsuperscript{40} Arcite, the Knight relates, has gone to his inn "as fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne" (KnT, I, 2436). When the monk claims the merchant as a cousin, the latter

\begin{center}
... seith nat ones nay,
But was as glad therof as fowel of day.
\textit{(ShipT, VII, 37 f.)}
\end{center}

The merchant and his wife are as glad of the monk's visit "As fowel is fayn whan that the sonne up riseth" (ShipT, VII, 51). "Was nevere brid gladder agayn the day" (CYT, VIII, 1342) than was the priest to learn alchemy. Hoping for Criseyde's return, Troilus remarks:

"For was ther nevere fowel so fayn of May
As I shal ben, whan that she comth in Troie."
\textit{(Tr, V, 425 f.)}

And the poet exclaims, in the \textit{Complaint of Mars} (1 f.):

\begin{center}
Gladeth, ye fowles, of the morwe gray!
Lo! Venus, rysen among yon rowes rede!
\end{center}

Likewise, the figure: "Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf

\textsuperscript{40}See W. W. Skeat, \textit{Early English Proverbs} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 94, no. 223. In subsequent references this work will be indicated by \textit{EE Pr.}
be stills" (MLT, VII, 31.10) occurs in several forms:

Let be the chafe, and writ vel of the corn.

(LEG, Procl 6, 529)

But yet, I soye, what cy leth the to wyte
The drath of storyes, and forges the corn?

(LEG, Procl 6, 731 f.)

No list nat of the chaif, ne of the stree,
Maken so long a tale as of the corn.

(MLT, II, 701 f.)

Besides these adaptations in which Chaucer makes
only slight changes and additions, one notes a great many
conventional figures showing much more extensive modifica-
tion or expansion. An instance of this kind appears in
the passage where the love-sick Aurelius is compared with a
wounded man:

His hest was hool, without for to sene,
But in his herte y fwas the arwe keen,
And wy kowe that of a surseam
In surgerie is perillous the cure,
But men myghte touche the arwe, or some therby.

(FrancIL, V, 1111-1115)

Höfner, op. cit., p. 100, observes that this image
is very old, possibly having its basis in Jeremiah, XXIII,
28, and St. Matthew, III, 12. Robinson, op. cit., p. 861,
n. 3443, calls attention to the parallel in the Roman de la
Rose, 11216: "J'en l'ais le grain e preing la paillo," and
also cites Jean de Meun's Testament, 2167 ff.
Through the addition of the surgical realism Chaucer distinguishes this figure from the hundreds of others which deal with the cruel darts of love. That Virginia is "as white as a lily" and as "red as a rose" the reader learns in the passage:

For right as she [Nature] kan peynte a lily white
And red a rose, right with swich peynture
She peynted hath this noble creature.

(PhysT, VI, 32-34)

This conventional rose and lily imagery occurs again in a figure which Chaucer makes memorable through the addition of personification:

Emelye, that fairer was to sene
Than is the lylie upon his stalke grene,
And frescher than the May with floures newe——
For with the rose colour stroof hire hewe,
I noot which was the fyner of hem two.

(KnT, I, 1035-1039)

For the widely used figure of "flowering hair," which usually appears in brief form such as "Trente an ou

42 Robinson, op. cit., p. 829, n. 1113, states that the word sursanure is used "with reference to the first line of the De Amore: 'Vulneror, et claustum porto sub pectore telum' (ed. Baudoin, Paris, 1874)."

43 Examples of the juxtaposition of the rose and the lily to describe beauty are common. Robinson, op. cit., p. 832, n. 32-34, cites the Roman de la Rose, 1624-16244; and Fansler, op. cit., p. 89, calls attention to King Horn, 15-16; the Roman de Guillaume de Dole, 696-697; and Machaut's rondeau "Blanche com lys, plus que rose vermeille."
quarante prent sa teste florir," Chaucer gives the finely executed image:

"Though I be hoor, I fare as doth a tree
That blosmeth er that fruyt ywoxon bee;
And blosmy tree nys neither drye ne deed.
I feel me nowhere hoor but on my heed;
Myn herte and alle mylymes been as grene
As laurer thurgh the yeer is for to sene."

(MercH, IV, 1461-1465 [W, p. 177])

The traditional comparison "as bold as blind Bayard"
likewise provides him with the basis for a vigorous figure:

"Ye ben as boold as Bayard the blynde,
That blonderth forth, and peril casteth noon.
He is as bold to renne agayn a stoon
As for to goon hisides the weye.
So faren ye that multiplie, I seye."

(CYT, VIII, 1413-1417 [W, p. 156])

The treatment here, with its strong alliterative sinew, well demonstrates how close to earth Chaucer's imagery sometimes comes.

Occasionally Chaucer develops a suggestion from popular sources into a full epic simile. A striking

\(^{14}\) Jean de Meun, Testament, 166, as quoted by Klaeber, op. cit., p. 421. Klaeber points out that this image appears frequently in the chansons de geste. Robinson, op. cit., p. 819, n. 1461-1466, cites the parallel in Eustache Deschamps, Miror de mariare, 117-125.

\(^{15}\) See EE Pr, p. 122, nc. 288.
example occurs in the passage where the idea of "proud Bayard" is applied to the proud Troilus humbled by love:

As proude Bayard gynneth for to skippe
Out of the weye, so pryketh him his corn,
Til he a lasshe have of the longe whippe;
Than thynketh he, "Though I praunce al byforn
First in the trays, ful fat and newe shorn,
Yet I am but an hors, and horses lawe
I moot endure, and with my freres drawe."

So ferde it by this fierce and proude knyght.

(Tr, I, 218-225 [W, p. 196])

The hint for this image may have come from the proverbial comparison noted in connection with the preceding example, or it may have come merely from the name Bayard itself, which is a traditionally poetic and allusive title for any horse, its associations going back to the famous bay-colored steed given to Renaud by Charlemagne. But whether Chaucer had in mind the one or the other of these conceptions, or perhaps both, the figure illustrates well his highly original handling of traditional materials. Another notable instance of this sort may be observed in the extended simile which is based on the well-known phrase "to fish for the loved one." Here God is represented as the fisherman and the loved one as the fish caught:

Hit semeth he hath to lovers enmyte,
And lyk a fissher, as men alday may se,
Baiteth hys angle-hok with some plesaunce,

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46 See Robinson, op. cit., p. 926, n. 218.
Til many a fissh ys wood til that he be
Sedes therwith; and then at erst hath he
Al his desir, and therwith al myschaunce;
And thogh the lyne breke, he hath plesaunce;
For with the hok he wounded is so sore
The he his wages hath for evermore.

(Mars, 236-244)

In cases like these epic similes Chaucer seems to
take only a small hint or a basic idea from a popular
source and to develop it independently into a long image.
At times, however, he expands a figure by combining ideas
from several conventional models. This method of develop­
ment is well illustrated in his excellent one-stanza
apostrophe against the thoughtless and fickle mob:

"O stormy peple! unsad and evere untrewel!
Ay undiscreet and chaungynge as a fane!
Delitynge evere in rumbul that is newe.
For lyk the moone ay swe xe and wanel
Ay ful of clappyng, deere ynogh a jane!
Youre doom is false, your constance yvele preeveth;
A ful greet fool is he that on you leeveth."

(CIT, IV, 995-1061 [W, p. 103])

The first splendid line of this passage is apparently of
Chaucer's own invention, but, as Whiting shows, the other

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47 Chaucer presents this idea in simple form in Tr,
II, 328 (W, p. 183): "... Than have ye fisshed fayre!" See
also Tr, V, 771-777, where the figure appears again with
considerable elaboration.

48 Ten Brink, History of English Literature, II, 123,
makes the interesting suggestion that these lines may refer
to the "grand reception prepared for Richard in London on
November 10, 1387, by the same citizens who only a few
months previously had sided violently with his opponents,
and whose party they were soon afterward again to join...."
short figures are based on popular images which Chaucer employs elsewhere in his poems. The simile "chaungyng as a fane" is obviously a variation of

... as a wedercok, that turneth his face
With every wind ye fare;

(Against Women Inconstant, 12 f [W, p. 177])

the figure "lyk the moone ay wexe ye and wane," a parallel of

Somme to wexe and wane sone,
As doth the faire white mono;

(HF, III, 2115 f. [W, p. 168])

and the phrase "deere ynogh a jane," a modification of
"deere ynogh a mite" (Tr, IV, 684; LGW, II, 741 [W, p. 188]),
the words "jane" and "mite" both designating a small coin.

A further instance in which Chaucer combines conventional figures appears in the lines on the theme of time spoken by the Host in the Introduction to the Man of Lawe's Tale (II, 20-31):

"Lordynges, the tyme wasteth nyght and day,
And steleth from us, what pryvely slepynghe,
And what thurgh necligence inoure wakynghe,
As dooth the streem that turneth nevere agayn,
Descendynge fro the montaigne into playn.
Wel kan Senec and many a philosophre
Biwaillen tyme moore than gold in cofre;
For 'los of catel may recovered be,
But los of tyme shendeth us,'quod he.
It wol nat come agayn, withouten drede,
Namoore than wole Malkynes maydenhede."
Chaucer thus creates a highly effective passage of imagery by bringing together the commonplace comparison of the passing of time to a river, the allusion to Seneca, and the reference to the proverbially wanton Malkyn, the last of these adding a distinctively English note to his representation. Although combinations of this kind are most readily perceived in extended passages, they also appear now and then in short images, as may be seen in the lovely lines describing the Cave of Sleep, where a stream

Came rennynge fro the clyves doun,
That made a dedly slepynge soun.

(BO, 161 f.)

The figure "dedly slepynge soun" Chaucer seems to have created by combining the idea of "the dede slep," which occurs in the Book of the Duchess (127), Troilus and Criseyde (II, 924), and the Miller's Tale (I, 3643), with the conception of "sleepy sounds," employed in the House of Fame (I, 70) as "slepy thousand sones" and by Gower in his Confessio

45 Although Chaucer could have derived this figure on time from the Roman de la Rose, 375-376: "Con l'eve qui s'avale toute, / N'il n'en retourne arriere goute," there seems little reason for assuming a specific source. Robinson, op. cit., p. 793, n. 20, remarks: "These observations on the passage of time, often with the comparison to the river, were commonplace or even proverbial. Cf. CIT, IV, 118f.; also RR, 361 ff. (Rom, 369 ff.); Ovid, Met., XV, 179 ff.; Seneca, Ep. I, i, 1; XIX, viii, 32; and the Latin proverb, 'Transit ut aqua fluens tempus et hora ruens.'" The phrase "Malkynes maydenhede" is cited as proverbial by Skeat, EE Pr, p. 43, no. 104.
Amantis (IV, 2731 [W, 270]) as "slepis noise." Instances such as these show that Chaucer's handling of commonplace materials is sometimes so ingenious as to give the effect of entirely new images.

Finally, there remains to be considered the very large number of figurative proverbs which are found throughout Chaucer's poems. Frequently these are employed with good effect in what is more or less their original form. As an illustration one may cite the Wife of Bath's remark that she gave her earlier husbands grounds for complaint, but stifled their remonstrances by complaining first:

"Whose that first to mille cometh, first grent" (WB Prose, III, 385 [W, p. 93]). Examples may be noted also in the passage where Chaucer refuses to tell all the details of the wedding of Cleopatra and Antony, "for men may overlafe a ship or barge" (LGW, I, 621 [W, p. 45]), and in the lines in which he tells how avid a reader he is and then excuses himself by saying:

For out of olde feldes, as men seyth,  
Cometh al this newes corn from yer to yere.  
(PP, 22 f. [W, p. 39])

Chaucer's most interesting use of proverbs as imagery, however, is to be found in the rather large number of examples

in which he takes over the central idea of a traditional saying and develops it into a much more detailed and concrete figure. This type of treatment is observed in the following passage on governesses, which may refer to John of Gaunt's household, and particularly to Katherine Swynford:

A thief of venysoun, that hath forlaft
His likerousnesse and al his olde craft,
Kan kepe a forest best of any man.
(PhysT, VI, 83-85 [W, p.110])

Here the underlying idea seems to correspond to the proverb: "Set a thief to catch a thief." Another instance is noted in these lines on the mutability of human fortunes:

O sodeyn wo! that ever art successor
To worldly blisse, spreynyd with bitternesse;
Th' ende of the joye of our worldly labour;
Wo occupycyth the fyn of our gladnesse,
(MLT, II, 421-425 [W, p. 90])

the ultimate source of which, according to Skeat, is Proverbs, XIV, 13 (Vulgate Version): "Rsisus dolore miscabitur,

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52 See EE Pr, p. 109, no. 259.
et extrema gaudii luctus occupat." 53 The same idea is stated briefly in the Troilus (IV, 826): "The end of bliss by sorrow it occupieth," and again in the Nun's Priest's Tale (VII, 3205): "For ever the latter end of joye is wo."

In the Troilus especially Chaucer has used proverbial sayings as the basis for extended images. 54 A notable instance is observed in the passage where Pandarus elaborates the idea that "a great tree hath a great fall":

"Thow hark herc-ayoun: when that the stordy oak, On which men hakketh ofte, for the nones, Received hath the happy fallyng strook, The great swieg doth it come al at ones, As don tisse rokkes or thisse milnestones; For swifter cours comth thyng that is of wighte, When it descendeth, than don thynges lighte." (II, 1360-1386 [W, p. 58]) 55

One may note also these lines in which Chaucer reminds his readers that it was through sorrow that Troilus' joy had come:

O, sooth is seyd, that heled for to be As of a fevre, or other gret siknesse.

53 EE Pr, p. 86, no. 193.
54 Whiting, op. cit., p. 49, finds in regard to Chaucer's use of proverbs in general that this poem contains a greater proportion of such material than anything else he wrote.
55 See EE Pr, p. 72, no. 172.
Men meste drynke, as men may ofte se,
Ful bittre drynke; and for to han gladnesse,
Men drynken ofte payne and gret distresse.

(III, 1212-1216 [W, p. 74])

the basic idea of which apparently comes from the proverb:
"Bitter pills may have sweet effects."

In a further striking example Chaucer seems to make use of the proverbial phrase "to harp on one string." Instructing Troilus in the art of letter-writing, Pandarus says:

"For though the beste harpoure upon lyve
Wolde on the beste sowned joly harpe:
That evere was, with alle his syngras fyve,
Toucha ay o strong, o ay o wervul harpe,
Were his nayles paynted nevere so sharpe
It sholde maken every wight to dulle,
To here his glee, and of his strokes fulle."

(II, 1030-1036 [W, p. 57])

Through the use of specific particulars like those observed in the above examples Chaucer is thereby able to develop popular maxims into highly effective figures of speech.

Such an examination of Chaucer's images in relation to their literary and proverbial sources shows, then, that his treatment includes widely diverse methods of adaptation. As has been demonstrated, these range all the way from the occasional instances in which images are shortened to the

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56 See EE Pr, p. 76, no. 183.
57 See EE Pr, p. 70, no. 167. Skeat cites the parallel passage from Horace, De arte poetrin, 355 f.: "... Citharoedus / Ridetur chorda qui semper oberrat eadem."
large number in which they are greatly extended, from those that closely reproduce a model to those that give independent development to a mere hint or suggestion, from the few which render a figure less specific to the many that are made more definite. But whatever method Chaucer employs, the effect is rarely artificial and unrealistic. One reason for his success lies, of course, in the peculiar powers of his English language. Moreover, it will be noted that the subjects of the images, though borrowed, are usually of a sort which he might have drawn from actual experience and observation. These considerations, together with the unaffected movement of his verse, largely account for the naturalness of his derived figures. The striking individuality which he so often achieves in his treatment, however, results in large measure from his numerous additions of concrete details, which often give his images a stronger degree of immediacy, vividness, and realism than is found in their models.

Through the various methods of adaptation which have been considered here, Chaucer thus infuses new life and individuality into the old. As James Russell Lowell perceptively observed more than three quarters of a century ago: "He is original not in the sense that he thinks and says what nobody ever thought and said before, and what nobody can ever think and say again, but because he is
always natural, because, if not always absolutely new, he is delightfully fresh...."57

CHAPTER V

THE IMAGERY IN CHAUCER'S PORTRAITS

1. The Imagery Exclusive of the Canterbury Tales

Although various occasions in Chaucer's poems evoke poetic imagery, its use is nowhere more apparent than in the portraits of his men and women. And it is with the images occurring in descriptive passages of this kind that the present essay is concerned. The purpose of this discussion will be to consider the particular function of the figures of speech and symbolic details in Chaucer's portraits.

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The term portrait is employed in the present study to denote the feature by feature description of a character known to the Middle Ages as the effictio. Authorized by the rhetoricians as a device for poetic amplification, this mode of description was employed widely by medieval poets in every genre of verse composition, the portraits normally occurring when characters first appeared in the action of a story, or when an account of their beauty could explain the attraction of one character for another. Illustrations of the effictio are given by Geoffrey de Vinsauf, Poetria nova, 563 ff. (Faral, Les arts poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe siècle, pp. 214 ff.) For a detailed study of the origin, theory, and use of the portrait in medieval poetry, see Louis A. Haselmayer, Jr., "Chaucer and Medieval Verse Portraiture," unpubl. Yale diss., 1938. For Chaucer's use of the portrait, as well as comment on its origin, see Le Chanoine Looten, Chaucer: ses modèles, ses sources, sa religion, Mémoires et travaux publiés par des professeurs des facultés de Lille, fascicule XXXVIII (Lille: A L'Economat des Facultés Catholiques, 1931), pp. 99-142.

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and to trace the development of his technique in this use of imagery through the successive poems.²

Because of the uncertainty of Chaucer's authorship of the only existing Middle English translation of the Roman de la Rose, images from this poem have not been used in these essays as testimony of Chaucer's practices.³ But even though the Romaunt is of doubtful authenticity, it is not disputed that Chaucer made a translation of the French poem early in his poetic career.⁴ A glance at the imagery in some of the descriptions of the allegorical figures in The Romaunt of the Rose may therefore be instructive as an indication not only of what Chaucer's earliest practices may have been, but also of the basis of a technique which he seems to have taken over from Guillaume de Lorris and which, after being developed, helped to produce the famous portraits of the Canterbury pilgrims.

²Of course the greater number of Chaucer's writings can be arranged in only a probable order. The present study follows the arrangement adopted in Robinson's Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer.

³See p. 2, n. 1, above.

⁴The belief that Chaucer translated the Roman de la Rose rests upon his own testimony in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women, F, 329.
Of special interest for its use of imagery is the passage picturing the lovely maiden Ydelnesse:

Hir heer was yelowe of hewe
As ony basyn scoured newe;
Hir flesh [as] tendre as is a chike,
With bente browis smothe and slyke;
And by mesure large were
The openyng of hir yen clere;
Hir nose of good proporciooun,
Hir yen grey as is a faucon....
Hir nekke was of good fasoun
In length and gretnesse, by resoun,
Withoute blayne, scabbe, or royne;
Fro Jerusalem unto Burgoyne
Ther nys a fairer nekke, iwys,
To fele how smothe and softe it is;
Hir throte, also whit of hewe
As snowe on branche snowed newe.
(539-558)

One may also consider these lines describing Beaute:

Full well thewed was she helde,
Ne she was derk ne broun, but bright,
And clere as the mone lyght,
Ageyn whom all the sterres semen
But smale candels, as we demen.
Hir flesh was tendre as dew of flour;
Hir chere was symple as byrde in bour;
As whyt as lylye or rose in rys,
Hir face gentyl and tretys.
(1008-1016)

In these portraits from the *Romaunt* (and there are others quite similar in method) short conventional similes, all of which are derived from the French, are what principally promote the clear visualization of the personified figures.⁵

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⁵Cf. Speirs, *Chaucer the Maker*, p. 37.
Because the translator has followed Chaucer's characteristic practice of giving some of the images more concrete form than the French source figures, certain commentators have taken this as evidence of Chaucer's authorship. As instances of this kind of treatment, one may note the use of

Hir heer was as yelowe of hewe
As ony basyn scoured newe

for "Cheveus ot blonz come une bacins" (Roman de la Rose, 527), of "Hir flesh was tendre as dew on flour" for "Tendre ot la char come rosee" (Roman de la Rose, 999), and of "Hir cheer was symple as byrde in bour" for "Simple fu come une esposee" (Roman de la Rose, 1000). While at first glance, such treatment seems rather strongly convincing, still it must be remembered that the differences noted here are differences which apply in some measure to English and French poetry in general. As Raymond Preston has observed, "where the French is content with the quality, English wants the thing; and when the French gives it, is still not satisfied. So it must have a basin scoured newe, or dew on a flower, or a bride in her bower." But whether or not Chaucer is the author of the Romaunt, this much seems certain: from the French poem he would have become acquainted with the practice of using imagery freely to give clear pictures of a character's physical appearance.

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6See Speirs, op. cit., pp. 36-38.
7Chaucer, pp. 22-23.
From the allegorical figures of the *Romaunt of the Rose*, one passes on to consider the portraits in the poems of undisputed authorship. The first of these is found in the *Book of the Duchess* (1369-70), where the bereaved knight in black gives a two-hundred-and-seventy-line description of the young duchess Blanche, the "gode faire White." The most detailed of all Chaucer's efforts of this kind, it is in some respects typical portraiture, employing old techniques and showing conspicuous indebtedness to several poems of Machaut. Yet despite its conventional and borrowed materials, no one reading it can fail to visualize the duchess as a real woman, an individual. Indeed, John Livingston Lowes describes this passage as "a Portrait of a Lady unmatched ... save by Dante in medieval literature," and the same note of praise is echoed in the remarks of Speirs, who says that "though the poem is an elegy, it is the living girl Blanche, whose image—very characteristically of Chaucer—we remember from the poem, the first in a series of vivid Chaucerian women."

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8 See Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry*, pp. 64-65.
Part of Chaucer’s success in this portrait results from the natural arrangement employed for enumerating Blanche’s charms. Instead of following a set and ordered cataloguing, as is often the method in medieval portraits, "the whole description," as Kittredge has pointed out, "is so broken up ... as to produce precisely that effect of artless inevitableness that the occasion requires. The mourning knight is not describing his lady: he is giving voice to his natural recollection—not of her nature, now of her beauty, now of her speech—spasmodically, in no order, as this or that idea rises in his agitated mind." While this plan of presenting the details accounts for the naturalness Chaucer has achieved even in a courtly and aristocratic treatment, still it does not account for the clarity of the picture, the realization of the duchess' effect on other people and her reaction to them. For his success in these matters one must look primarily to his use of poetic imagery.

The knight begins by telling that one day he came upon a company of ladies playing and dancing and noticed one among them who surpassed all in beauty:

"... as the someres sonne bryght
Ys fairer, clerer, and hath more lyght
Than any other planete in heven,
The moone, or the sterres seven,
For al the world so hadde she

11Chaucer and His Poetry, p. 66."
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Surmounted hem alle of beaute,
Of maner, and of comlynesse,
Of stature, and of wel set gladnesse,
Of goodlyhede so wel beseye—
Shortly, what shal y more seye?"

(821-830)

Then relating how he observed her dance "so comlily," carol
and sing so sweetly, laugh and play so womanly, he says he
indeed supposed

"... that evermor
Nas seyn so blysful a tresor."

(853 f.)

The knight now proceeds to describe the duchess' particular features, mentioning first the color of her hair, over which he dwells lovingly:

"For every heer on hir hed,
Soth to seyne, hyt was not red,
Ne nouther yelowe, ne broun hyt nas,
Me thoghte most lyk gold hyt was."

(855-858)

He lingers also over the manner of her glances and her eyes. Her look was frank; it drew and held the attention of others:

"Therto hir look nas not asyde,
Ne overthwert, but beaszt so wel
Hyt drew and took up, everydel,
Al that on hir gan beholde."

(862-865)

But her eyes were not too wide open:

"... were she never so glad,
Hyr lokynge was nat foly sprad,
Ne wildely, thogh that she pleyde;
But ever, me thoght, hir eyen seyde,
'Be God, my wrathe ys al foryive!'"

(873-877)
This trait, taken from Machaut, gives Blanche the look of a medieval portrait of a lady, for, as Kittredge observes, "apparently it was the fashion for ladies to let their eyelids droop a little, with what used to be called the languishing look." But "we cannot doubt that it was true to life in the case of the Duchess Blanche," since the knight adds to Machaut's statement the protest that this was not affectation in his lady:

"Hyt was hir owne pure lokyng
That the goddess, dame Nature,
Had mad hem opene by mesure,
And close...."

(870-873)\(^\text{12}\)

The beauty of her face was such that he lacks English and wit to describe it, but this much he dares say: she

"Was whit, rody, fressh, and lyvely hewed,
And every day hir beaute newed.
And negh hir face was alderbest;
For certes, Nature had swich lest
To make that fair, that trewly she
Was hir chef patron of beaute
And chef ensample of al hir werk,
And moustre; for be hyt never do derk,
Me thynketh I se hir ever moo."

(905-913)

Her speech was soft and healing:

"And which a goodly softe speche
Had that swete, my lyves leche!"

(919 f.)

And it was free from scorn, incapable of harming anyone, and frank:

\(^{12}\text{See op. cit., pp. 65-66.}\)
... hir symple record
Was founde as trewe as any bond,
Or trouthe of any mannes hond.
(934-936)

His lady's smooth, white throat, as the knight now remembers it, "semed a round tour of yyvoyre" (946).

In her playing, the duchess not only taught the torches to burn bright; she was herself the torch from which all might borrow brightness:

"Therto she koude so wel pleye,
Whan that hir lyste, that I dar seye,
That she was lyk to torche bryght
That every man may take of lyght
Ynogh, and hyt hath never the lesse.
Of maner and of comlynesse
Ryght so ferde my lady dere;
For every wight of hir manere
Myght cacche ynogh, yif that he wolde,
Yif had eyen hir to beholde."
(961-970)

After these lines the knight praises the lady's charm in a series of richly connotative figures which are thoroughly medieval in their extravagance:

"... I dar swer wel, yif that she
Had among ten thousand be
She wolde have be, at the leste,
A chef myrour of al the feste,
Thogh they had stonden in a rowe,
To mennes eyen that koude have knowe.
For wher-so men had pleyd or waked,
Me thoghte the felawashyppe as naked
Withouten hir, that sawgh I oones,
As a corowne withoute stones.
Trewly she was, to myn ye,
The soleyn fenix of Arabye;
For ther livyth never but oon,
Ne swich as she ne knowe I noon."
(971-984)
The duchess' virtues equal her beauty and grace. As for her goodness, the knight declares that she

"Had as much debonairte
As ever had Hester in the Bible
And more, yif more were posseyble."
(986-988)

And to speak of "trouthe,"

"... she had so moche hyr del--
And I dar seyn and swere hyt wel--
That Trouthe hymself, over and al
Had chose hys maner principal
In hir, that was his restyng place."
(1001-1005)

Finally, the knight ends the description with the statement:

"For certes she was, that swete wif,
My suffisaunce, my lust, my lyf,
Myn hap, myn hele, and al my blesse,
My worldes welfare, and my goddesse,
And I hooly hires and everydel."
(1037-1041)

In this portrait one finds that images are employed to promote clear visualization of such physical features as hair, face, and throat in a manner similar to that in the descriptions of the personifications of the Romaunt. But Chaucer has included other items—general appearance, playing, dancing, goodness, "trouthe"—and has used figurative language for these as well. One notes too that he makes use not only of short figures such as are typical in the personifications, but of more extended images and that there is also greater variety in the rhetorical
patterns. All of these matters show the influence of Machaut, from whom most of the imagery in the portrait of the duchess is derived. In a few instances Chaucer's figures are so obviously literary as to seem artificial and unrealistic:

Hyr throte, as I have now memore,  
Semed a round tour of yvoyre.  
(945 f.)

Trewly she was, to myn ye,  
The soleyn fenixe of Arabye.  
(981 f.)

But as conventional as they are, on the whole the images succeed amazingly well in helping to bring to life the beauty and charming character of the duchess Blanche.

The House of Fame (1379-80), generally held to be the next in order of time of Chaucer's longer poems, contains only one portrait, which is that of the lady Fame. Drawing upon Virgil (Aeneid, IV, 176-183) for most of his details, Chaucer employs not only figures of speech but also symbolic details in portraying the appearance and character of the goddess. Sitting enthroned in the hall of her palace, she was seen by Chaucer as a wonderful "femynyne creature" of ever varying size—a detail which symbolizes her instability.

and her capriciousness in dispensing notoriety or renown:

For alther-first, soth for to seye,
Me thoughte that she was so lyte
That the lengthe of a cubite
Was lengere than she semed be.
But thus sone, in a whyle, she
Hir tho so wonderliche streighte
That with hir fet she erthe reighte,
And with hir hed she touched hevene,
There as shynen sterres sevne.

(III, 1368-1376)\(^{14}\)

Her hundreds of eyes, which suggest that she is aware of all that happens in the lives of men, Chaucer pictures by the use of the double comparison:

... as feele eyen hadde she
As fatheres upon foules be,
Or weren on the bestes foure
That Goddis trone gunne honoure,
As John writ in th'Apocalips.

(III, 1381-1385)

Here the mention of birds and of the horses of the Apocalypse brings to mind the swiftness by which Fame receives rumor through the great distances of air and space which separate her domain from the earth. Next, Chaucer employs a simile which emphasizes the "femynyne" aspect of the goddess, connecting her appearance in some degree with the ladies of the courtly poems:

\(^{14}\) The qualities symbolized here in Fame have been taken over from the goddess Fortune, whom Chaucer later mentions as Fame's sister (1547). On this point, see Howard R. Patch, "Chaucer and the Lady Fortune," MLR, XXII (1927), 360.
Hir heer, that oundy was and crips,  
As burned gold hyt shoon to see.  

(III, 1386 f.)

But he goes on to add that she

Had also fele upstonding eres  
And tongues, as on bestes heres.  

(III, 1389 f.)

a statement which again suggests her prodigious powers in receiving rumors and spreading fame. Her swiftness is further symbolized in the lines:

And on hir fet woxen saugh y  
Partriches wynges redely.  

(III, 1391 f.)

the partridge being remarkable for its great speed in running with outstretched wings.15 As a last touch, the dependence of men upon the goddess for great fame is emphasized by the passage:

Tho was I war, loo, atte laste,  
As I myne eyen gan up caste,  
That thys ylke noble quene  
On her shuldres gan sustene  
Bothe th'armes and the name  
Of thoo that hadde large fame:  
Alexander and Hercules,  
That with a sherte hys lyf les!  

(III, 1410-1414)

15 See Skeat, op. cit., III, p. 276, n. 1390. As noted on p. 95, above, Chaucer seems to have blundered here, taking Virgil's pernicibus as having the same sense as perdicibus.
Although there are elements in this portrait which suggest that the goddess is alive, the personification does not function as a living person until later in the poem, when she dispenses notoriety and renown and particularly when she vents her rage upon the petitioners who want an undeserved reputation. But Chaucer achieves all that he apparently seeks to accomplish in her portrait, namely, a clear picture of her physical appearance and a suggestion of her character. Moreover, it should be noted that symbolism—used here for the first time in the portraits—is henceforth to be an important device in Chaucer's character sketches.

In the fragment *Anelida and Arcite* (1372-1380) there appears a brief idealized portrait of young Queen Anelida, which makes use of a few images. To stress her beauty, Chaucer states that she was fairer "then is the sonne shene" (73) and that "Nature had a joye her to behelde" (80). And to indicate her remarkable "stidfastnesse" or constancy, he remarks that "She passed hath Penelope and Lucrese" (82).

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16 The date of the *Anelida* is highly conjectural. While its metrical form and its use of the *Teseide* suggest that it was composed after the *House of Fame*, it appears to be the first of Chaucer's works to make use of the Italian poem and was almost certainly written before the *Knight's Tale*. See Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 355 and 897, and Tatlock, *The Development and Chronology of Chaucer's Works*, pp. 83 ff.

17 Penelope and Lucretia are also used as examples of constancy in the *Book of the Duchess*, 1081 f., in a passage which, as Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 899, n. 82, points out, seems to go back to the *Roman de la Rose*, 8605 ff.
According to Frederick Tupper, Anelida, Queen of "Ermony" (72), is to be identified with the Countess of Ormonde (born Anne Welle), since the name Ormonde was sometimes Latinized to Ermonia; but this allegorical interpretation lacks any substantial evidence. 18

The Parliament of Fowls (1381-82) contains nothing that can properly be called a portrait. In Troilus and Criseyde (1385), which follows, the portrayal of the characters proceeds slowly through action, conversation, and descriptive touches dispersed here and there through

18 Tupper sets forth his theory in "Chaucer's Tale of Ireland," PMLA, XXXVI (1921), 186-222. He contends that the Countess of Ormonde's husband, James Butler, who was a d'Arcy on his mother's side, is represented by Arcite. Because of the fact that Butler had two illegitimate sons, Thomas and James le Botiller, born in the eighties, he infers that Butler was guilty of such infidelity as is condemned in the poem. Scythia, according to Tupper, represents Ireland; Thebes, the English Pale; Theseus stands for Lionel; Hippolyta for Elizabeth de Burgh, Countess of Ulster; Emily for Maud Ufford, half-sister of Elizabeth and wife of the Earl of Oxford; and Creon possibly for the Earl of Desmond, Lionel's successor as viceroy. In refutation of this theory, Robinson, op. cit., pp. 897-898, remarks that the fact that the story follows Boccaccio in all essentials makes Tupper's whole explanation "as unnecessary as it is unlikely."

"Bastardy," Robinson points out, "was not so rare in the English court of Chaucer's time as to give one much confidence in the selection of this particular instance. Moreover, there is no evidence whether Thomas and James le Botiller were born before or after Ormonde's marriage to Anne; and ... the Earl lived honorably and happily with his wife for many years. The parallel between Arcite's behavior and that of d'Arcy, or Ormonde, is after all not very striking, and with the acceptance or rejection of this central identification stand or fall Mr. Tupper's interpretations of other details of the story."
the long poem. But in the middle of Book V, at the point where Diomede is preparing to press his cause for winning Criseyde, Chaucer presents formal portraits of Diomede, Criseyde, and Troilus. Devoting only one stanza to his description of Diomede, he emphasizes the Greek soldier's powerful masculinity without the use of poetic imagery. And for his enumeration of Troilus' virtues, he limits his use of figurative speech to the statement that the hero is

Yong, fresh, strong, and hardy as a lyoun;
Tewe as stiel in ech condicioun.
(V, 830 f.)

In his portrait of Criseyde, however, his use of imagery is of considerable importance in emphasizing key qualities of her appearance and disposition. Having stated that she was of medium stature and of unsurpassed loveliness and that she bound the tresses of her hair with golden thread, he gives special attention to the beauty of her eyes:

Lo, trewely, they writen that hire seyn,
That Paradis stood formed in hir yën.
(V, 816 f.)

And her beauty, he declares, is rivaled by her love, her amorous disposition:

For discussion of Chaucer's motive in the use of these portraits, see Louis A. Haselmayer, Jr., "The Portraits in Troilus and Criseyde," PQ, XVII (1938), 220-223.
... with hire riche beaute evere more
Strof love in hire ay, which of hem was more.

(V, 818 f.)

Chaucer concludes his description with this enumeration of her moral qualities:

She sobre was, ek symple, and wys withal,
The best ynorished ek that myghte be,
And goodly of hire speche in general,
Charitable, estatlich, lusty, and fre;
Ne nevere mo ne lakked hire pite;
Tendre-herted, slydinge of corage
But trewely, I kan nat telle her age.

(V, 820-826)

The figurative phrase *slydinge of corage*, which seems to echo Benoit (Troie, 5266): "Mais sis corages li chanjot"

20W. G. Dodd makes the following pertinent observation on this quality of Criseyde's disposition: "... she is amorous. We have her word for this:
What shal I doon? to what fyn live I thus?
Shal I not loven, in cas if that me leste?
What, par dieux, I am nought religious!
by which, of course, she means that she is not the kind of woman to be a nun. We also have Pandarus's testimony as to this characteristic of his niece:
And for to speke of hir in special,
Hir beautee to bethinken and hir youthe.
It sit hir nought to be celestial
As yet.

There is the element in her nature that makes her fond of the opposite sex. It is well to observe that there is nothing improper in this. We may accept Pandarus's observation as being true, broadly speaking:

Was never man ne woman yet bigete
That was unapt to suffren loves hete
Celestial, or elles love of kinde.

If some women are devoid of tendencies toward 'love of kinde' there is nothing unnatural or in any way improper in such tendencies in other women. We must not assume that an amorous disposition in Criseyde means sensual nature." Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1913), p. 166.
and Guido (Historia, sig, e 2, a col.2): "animi constantiam non servasset,"\(^{21}\) is generally taken to mean "unstable of disposition."\(^{22}\) On the basis of this conception commentators often consider the phrase as a belated attempt by the poet to explain Criseyde's unsteadiness in the remaining part of the poem.\(^{23}\) While slydinge of corage no doubt echoes in part Benoit's and Guido's words, the interpretation "unstable of disposition" is, however, open to certain objections. Says P. V. D. Shelly on this point, "... we are thinking of Chaucer's Criseyde, not Benoit's or Guido's, and it is Chaucer's words that we must consider. They must be taken, moreover, in their own context, and not divorced from it .... what slydinge of corage means is shown by the words that immediately precede it. Emphatically by using a triple negative, Chaucer tells us that she was never lacking in pity. She was tender-hearted, with a heart (corage) quick to move (slydinge) in sympathy. Slydinge of corage means nothing more than 'sympathetic,' 'compassionate,' and is thus an additional item of praise, instead of being, as is so often

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\(^{22}\) See, for example, Skeat, op. cit., VI, p. 236: "slydinge, pres. pt. as a adj. moving, i.e. unstable, T. V. 825."

interpreted, the one note of blame in a description that is otherwise wholly complimentary."

Shelly's contention that the phrase does not denote blame seems valid. It may also be noted in this connection that in Benoit, where the uncomplimentary statement is preceded by a statement of praise, the former is introduced by the connective word mais so that the contrasting element is immediately clear. But Chaucer makes no such use of a directive transitional expression, and this fact strengthens the view that he is not following Benoit's exact meaning. Moreover, Shelly's interpretation of the phrase to mean "with a heart quick to move in sympathy" seems preferable to "unstable of disposition" for the reason that it is applicable to Crisseyde's actions in all parts of the poem rather than only at the end. Given this meaning, the figure slydinge of corage, like the other images in Crisseyde's portrait, thus helps to summarize as well as emphasize an important quality. Although Chaucer has introduced no new principle in the use of imagery to describe his very human and complex heroine, it will be noted that two of the three images which he employs differ from those in earlier portraits in that they show strong

\[24\text{The Living Chaucer, pp. 125-126.}\]
motor appeal: beauty ever *strove* with love in Criseyde, and she was *sliding* of heart or disposition.25

Of an altogether different type are the highly symbolical images found in the exquisite portraits of the god and goddess of Love in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women (1386). In these everything in the descriptions is symbolical. First, it may be noted that the goddess' green dress, golden hair ornament, and white crown symbolize the daisy, which in turn signifies love.26

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... she was clad in real habit grene.
A fret of gold she hadde next her heer,
And upon that a whit coroune she beer
With flourouns smale, and I shal nat lye;
For al the world, ryght as a dayesye
Ycorouned ys with white leves lyte,
So were the flowrouns of hir coroune white.
For o perle fyn, oriental,
Hire white coroune was ymaked al;
For which the white coroune above the grene
Made hire lyk a daysie for to sene,
Considered eke hir fret of gold above.
(F, 214-225)
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But the daisy is Alceste, who is thought of here as the goddess of Love, and her "habit grene" is symbolical not

25There may also be some slight degree of motor appeal in the other image: Paradise stood formed in her eyes, but the main emphasis here seems to be on Paradise and the suggestions which it calls forth.

only of the flower but of new love and amorous passion as well. The daisy lady Alceste also seems to stand for Queen Anne, a fact which may be suggested by her crown of "o perle fyn." As Hugo Lange has pointed out, the name "Anna" signifies, in Hebrew, gratia, which means "grace" or "mercy." Hence the goddess may wear a crown of pearl because in the symbolism of precious stones the pearl signifies gratia, "mercy." But even if no specific connection with the name Anna is intended, pearl is particularly appropriate for the crown of an allegorical figure representing the Queen, since this gem was much favored by fourteenth-century kings and queens.

For the symbolism of green, in dress, see Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, trans. F. Hopman (London: Edward Arnold and Company, 1927), p. 249. Huizinga cites as a reference these lines from a fifteenth-century song: "Il te fauldra de vert vestir, C'est la livrée aux amoureux." It is interesting to note that the Young Squire, who was "a lovyere," is pictured in the Ellesmere Manuscript as wearing a gown of green, lined with red, and embroidered with tiny white figures. Green, however, is also often employed as a sign of inconstancy. See Squire's Tale, V 646-648, and Against Women Unconstant, 7.

For references to discussions of the topical allegory, see p. 51, above.

and therefore suggests royalty. Moreover, it might be mentioned that while the god and goddess of Love are an inheritance from classical times, in medieval writings these deities often took on characteristics connected with religion. Since the pearl is "par excellence the precious stone of the New Testament," its use in connection with Alceste may therefore owe something to Biblical associations, though, if such is the case the symbolical element refers of course primarily to the deity and religion of Love rather than to its Christian origin. The whiteness of the crown, which is a part of the daisy symbolism and which gains emphasis by being

30W. H. Schofield remarks that the fourteenth century might be called "the pearl age" because of the bewildering popularity of the gem at that time, and he calls attention to the fact that "pearls were then particularly favored by princes," that "many fourteenth-century rulers in Europe had superb specimens in their crowns, regalia, ornament," and that "they gave pearls away to their peers with lavish abundance, while at the same time they made compacts to prevent the use of the gem by the common people." "Symbolism, Allegory, and Autobiography in The Pearl," PMLA, XXIV (1909), 607.


33For discussion of the ecclesiastical character of the Prologue in general, see Dodd, op. cit., pp. 211-214.
referred to three times in the portrait, may at the same time be symbolical of purity and as such a compliment to the pure womanhood of the Queen.

The details employed in the description of Alceste are thus found to contain multiple meaning. To a somewhat lesser degree the same is true of the various items in the portrait of the god of Love:

Yclothed was this myghty god of Love
In silk, embrouded ful of grene greves,
In-with a fret of rede rose-leves,
The freshest syn the world was first bygonne.
His gilte heer was corowned with a sonne,
Instede of gold, for heavynesse and wyghte.
Therwith me thoghte his face shoon so bryghte
That wel unnethes myghte I him beholde;
And in his hand me thoghte I saugh him holde
Twoo firy darters, as the gledes rede,
And aunghelyke hys winges saugh I sprede.
And al be that men seyn that blynd ys he,
Algate me thoghte that he myghte se;
For sternely on me he gan byholde,
So that his loking dooth myn herte colde.

(F, 226—240)

The god's raiment embroidered with green "greves" or boughs, like the green habit of the goddess, symbolizes amorous passion, and the red rose petals of his chaplet also signify love, the rose being the traditional flower of love, though succeeded by the daisy in the French marguerite poems and in the treatment of Alceste.\textsuperscript{34} Representation of

\textsuperscript{34}In the \textit{Romaunt of the Rose}, 907 f., the god of Love is described as having a chaplet of red roses upon his head.
the god as having wings and holding fiery darts comes from the classical conception of Cupid, but the image "aungelyke," employed to describe the manner of spreading his wings, adds an ecclesiastical touch. The fact that he appears with a halo ("His gilte heer was corouned with a sonne") perhaps likewise shows connection with ecclesiastical sources. Besides this love symbolism which derived from classical and medieval conceptions, there are possibly certain allegorical details that identify Chaucer's god of Love with King Richard II. The god's "gilte heer" may refer to Richard's auburn or golden hair, the "grene leves" to branches of the broom plant, worn by him as a badge, and the sun crown to his royal device which pictures a sun emerging from a cloud. As Robinson and others have pointed out, these allegorical references connecting the description specifically with

35 See Dodd, op. cit., p. 212.
36 Ibid., p. 211.
37 See J. B. Bilderbeck, Chaucer's Legend of Good Women (London: Hazell, Watson and Viney, 1902), pp. 85-87. Bilderbeck, on the theory that the F-version is the later version, holds that the "lylye floures" of G, 164, were appropriate in 1385, when the war with France broke out, but that in 1390, in time of peace, the sun crown was substituted. But Hugo Lange, holding the G-version to be later, believes that the sun was appropriate in 1385-86 and that the lilies were substituted in 1396 as a reference to Richard's marriage to the French princess Isabella. See "Die Sonnen- und die Liliensstelle in Chaucer's Legendenprolog: Ein neuer Beweis für die Priorität der F-Redaktion," Anglia, XLIV, (1920), 373-385.
Richard are dubious. Yet even if they are excluded from consideration, the imagery employed in the portrait, though less complex than that applied to Alceste, is still noteworthy for its suggestiveness.

Throughout all of the portraits which have been considered thus far, it will be noted that Chaucer has made functional use of imagery. Beginning with the earliest portrait of certain authorship— that of the duchess Blanche—he employs figures of speech to give clear visualization and to emphasize character traits. In his description of the goddess Fame, in the *House of Fame*, he begins to add symbolic details which help to give clear pictures and at the same time suggest qualities of disposition. These functional uses of imagery Chaucer develops to a still greater degree of effectiveness in the striking gallery of portraits in the *General Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales* (1387).

2. The Imagery of the *General Prologue*

The description of the Knight, which begins the series of famous portraits, contains only two poetic images, but these are of considerable importance. In telling of the Knight's array Chaucer states that he wore a "gypon," or

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tunic, which was "al bismotered with his habergeon" (I, 75 f.). Since soldiers commonly wore this garment under the hauberk, it would quite naturally become soiled with marks made by constant contact with the coat-of-mail. Hence the sad state of the Knight's tunic helps to mark its wearer as a fighting man.39 But of his bearing, this brave knight, who had sought battles and adventures in many lands, was "as meeke as a mayde" (I, 76). Through the use of this simile Chaucer stresses a quality in the Knight which, as Kemp Malone has observed, helps to "make of him a heroic or ideal exemplar of knighthood" but which at the same time marks him as an individual and helps to "make him come alive as a character."40

The portrait of the Knight's son, the Squire, pictures a fourteenth-century Beau Brummel, with his fashionable clothes and his locks curled "as they were leyd in press" (I, 81). But almost all of the imagery that Chaucer applies to him reflects the charm of his youth--his spring-like character. In sharp contrast with his father's "bismotered" tunic, the Squire's gay, long-sleeve gown is embroidered

... as it were a meede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede.
(I, 89 f.)

40Ibid., p. 199.
Chaucer does not mention the colors of the gown, but the Ellesmere Manuscript pictures it as green, lined with red and embroidered with tiny white figures. Such a combination is indeed suggestive of a meadow full of flowers. If Chaucer actually meant the gown to be green, the color symbolism—that of amorous love—would of course emphasize the Squire as a "lovyere" (I, 80). The idea of love as well as springtime appears directly, however, in the lines:

So hooe he lovede that by the nyghtertale
He sleep namoore than dooth the nyghtyngale,
(I, 97 f.)

the comparison here being derived from the belief that during the mating season nightingales sing all night. It may be that Chaucer avoids mentioning green directly in the Squire's portrait, since he finds it necessary to emphasize this color in the following description of the Yeoman.

Summing up the description of the Squire's youthfulness and charm (though placed in the middle of the portrait) is the line:

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41 Robinson's suggestion, op. cit., p. 754, n. 88, that the above lines may refer to "the pink and white of the Squire's complexion" seems to be an unnecessary, if not far-fetched interpretation.

42 It may be that Chaucer avoids mentioning green directly in the Squire's portrait, since he finds it necessary to emphasize this color in the following description of the Yeoman.

43 See above, pp. 227-228.

44 See Ewald Flügel, "Some Notes on Chaucer's Prologue," JEGP, I (1897), 122.
He was as fresh as is the month of May, 
(I, 92)

which suggests all the joyous beauty of spring sunshine, 
green bushes, fresh flowers, and singing birds.

The description of the Robin Hood-like Yeoman or 
"forster" who accompanies the knight contains no figures 
of speech and perhaps nothing that strictly speaking can 
be termed symbol. Yet it may be noted that his "cote and 
hood of grene" (I, 103) and his "sheef of pecok arwes" (I, 
104) mark him as a hunter, for a forester in the Middle Ages, 
as O. F. Emerson points out, was "an official more largely 
connected with hunting than with the preservation of timber, 
as in more recent times."^45 The "Cristopher ... of silver 
sheene" (I, 115) which the Yeoman wore upon his breast 
likewise helps to mark his occupation, since St. Christopher 
was the patron saint of foresters.46

Next comes the portrait of the famous Prioress. Of 
the images which Chaucer employs in describing this attrac­
tive figure, one notes first of all her flower-like name, 
Madame Eglentyne (I, 121). Although there has been much 
discussion as to the shrub to which the name eglantine

45"Chaucer and Medieval Hunting," Romanic Review, 
XIII (1922), 121. Concerning the hunter's costume, Emerson 
cites the Master of Game, ch. XXXVIII: "Phoebus [i.e. Gaston 
de Foix, the source of the Master of Game] sayth that they 
ought to be clad in greene when they hunt the Hart or 
Bucke...."

46Robinson, op. cit., p. 754, n. 115.
properly belongs, the herbalists identify it with the sweetbriar (*Rosa rubiginosa* or *Rosa eglanteria*), a species of wild rose native to Europe and widespread in Great Britain, and it seems likely that it is the sweetbriar to which the Prioress' name refers. Madame Eglentyne, or "Lady Sweetbriar," is of course somewhat unexpected as the name for a prioress, but, as it turns out, is well chosen for this particular one. The delicate single pink flowers of the wild rose and its fragrant foliage well symbolize the dainty appearance and manners of this gentle lady, and perhaps a child-like quality of innocence as well. But the name Eglentyne also has romantic courtly associations, for, as J. L. Lowes points out, the fourteenth century knew "Se sist bele Eglentine" (Raynaud's *Recueil de motets*) and the romance of "Bele Aiglentine et le quens Henris." In each of these the lady bearing the name of the Prioress is a beautiful worldly figure, and therefore

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49 See Clapham et al., loc. cit.

Chaucer's use of it helps to suggest Madame Eglentyne's concern with excellent manners, fine clothes, and ornaments—worldly, though pardonable, vanities especially dear to the hearts of gentlewomen.\(^{51}\) In addition, the Prioress' name may have associations with an actual person. As Manly has suggested, Chaucer may have known of a Madame Argentyn, who was a nun at the Convent of St. Leonard's adjoining Stratford-Bow, the convent which, if Chaucer had a particular nunnery in mind for the Prioress, was very likely his choice.\(^2\) The will of Elizabeth of Hainault, sister of Queen Philippa, who passed many years at St. Leonard's before her death in 1375, mentions the name Domine Argentyn, monial, which Manly thinks Chaucer might have changed to Eglentyne or mistaken the one for the other. Moreover, the bequests in the will give the impression that the nuns of St. Leonard's were fashionably interested in jewels and finery.\(^3\) If Chaucer had Madame Argentyn in mind when he named the Prioress, there would be, as Muriel Bowden observes, a jest in changing Argentyn

\(^{51}\) In the fourteenth century English nuns were almost always from the upper classes, the convent proving to be a not unhappy solution to the problem of dowerless daughters. See Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries c. 1275 to 1536* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922), p. 4.


\(^3\) Ibid., p. 207.
to Eglentyne. But this identification, though worthy of consideration, seems improbable; for as Manly himself points out, Madame Argentyn was not a prioress, and at the time Chaucer wrote, the prioress of St. Leonard's was Mary Syward (or Suhard). Yet without this possible connection with an actual person, the association of the name Eglentyne with the wild rose and at the same time with the heroines of romance results in the suggestion of simplicity and innocence on the one hand and of worldly elegance on the other, the two seemingly opposite sets of associations fusing to produce the subtlest and most delicate sort of ambiguity or irony.

There may likewise be present a degree of irony in the next image in the Prioress' portrait, that is, in the poet's statement that she had "eyen greye as glas" (I, 152). As Miss Muriel Kinney observes, in her essay "Vair and Related Words," the Middle English word greye may be taken to denote the color intermediate between black and white.

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54A Commentary on the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, p. 94.

the meaning of old English *graẹge*, and it may also be understood as a translation of the French *vair* meaning "sparkling, bright." The latter interpretation, it will be noted, further connects the Prioress with the heroines of romance, since the word *vair* appears frequently in descriptions of their eyes. Furthermore,

56 Manly, *Canterbury Tales*, p. 506, n. 152, and Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 756, n. 152, both interpret the word *greye* when applied to eyes to mean the color now called blue. Edmund Malone, the Shakespearean scholar, seems to have been the first to advance this idea, and his statement, "By a grey eye was meant what we now call a blue eye," is quoted by the OED from the 1821 edition of Shakespeare's *Works*, IV, 118. J. O. Halliwell, commenting upon a line in the romance *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, believes that "Malone may be right when he says that the term [*eyen grey*] meant what we now call a blue eye." Halliwell's edition of *The Thorton Romances*, Camden Society (London, 1844), No. XXX, 157. But, as Miss Kenney points out, there seems to be no real authority for the assumption that gray eyes are to be thought of as blue. See *Romanic Review*, X (1919), 341. A. K. Moore, in a more recent study of the problem, remarks: "The conclusion appears to be inescapable that the connotation of grey eyes has not changed appreciably since the thirteenth century, though there is some reason for believing that the shade now called blue was considered a member of the non-brown series. If so, the "eyen greye" of Chaucer's Prioress may have been any shade between slate-gray and sky-blue. Nevertheless, the evidence favors a gray effect, for the poet never compares the eyes of his characters with any object that is clearly blue." "The Eyen Greye of Chaucer's Prioress," *PQ*, XXVI, (1947), 312.

57 Miss Kinney, *loc. cit.*, notes that in the *Romaunt of the Rose*, 822, *greve* translates *vair* and that in the same work, 1603, *fair and bright* paraphrases *ses vex vers*.

the word *glas*, as Miss Kinney points out, would have two meanings for Chaucer and his audience. Clear, bright Venetian glass was imported into England in the form of vases and ornaments, whereas the glass produced in England was an inferior window glass of a clouded grayish color. The latter Miss Kinney associates with *greve* in the sense of a blending of black and white, and the former with *greve* in the sense of *vair*—sparkling, colorful, and bright. While one may not be able to agree with Miss Kinney that Chaucer intends the double associations for the purpose of poking fun at the Prioress, still the two meanings may well be present and may contribute to the gentle irony which pervades the portraiture as a whole. Concerning this matter one can only say with Raymond Preston: 

"Possibly--I do not know--Chaucer was aware of English glass as well as Venetian, of the soul of the Prioress behind the

59 *Loc. cit.* Considering the reference to English glass as uncomplimentary to the Prioress, who is otherwise portrayed as possessing physical beauty, Muriel Bowden, *op. cit.*, p. 105, n. 11, prefers to interpret *glas* in terms of the sparkling glass of Venice. It must be remembered, however, that in the fourteenth century all glass—even window glass—was rare. See Coulton, *Chaucer and His England*, p. 83. Moreover, the grayish color of English glass would seem to make it especially appropriate for picturing the color of gray eyes. Such glass would not have the clarity and brightness of the Venetian product, but used in windows where it would be illuminated by the sun, it would have a certain degree of lustre. Hence English glass, though providing a contrast with the Venetian, must not necessarily be thought of as uncomplimentary.
The element of "sparkle" and worldliness is further symbolized by several other items in the description which, as imagery, contribute to the ambiguity in Chaucer's treatment of the Prioress. Among these may be noted her little dogs (I, 146) and her gold brooch (I, 160), both of which were clearly against the rules governing nuns, as well as her fair forehead, which should have been covered in the presence of company. The ambiguity and delicate irony which is built up through these figurative and symbolical details—an ambiguity which, as Lowes has observed, suggests "the engagingly imperfect submergence of the feminine in the ecclesiastical,"—culminates in the final ambiguity of Amor vincit omnia (I, 162), the inscription on the Prioress' brooch. This motto, which originally concerned profane love, had been early adopted by the Church and given religious interpretation, but by the fourteenth century was again often employed in the profane sense. For a prioress amor can, of course, mean only one thing, amor

60 Chaucer, p. 158, n. 2.


62 See Bowden, op. cit., p. 94.

63 Convention and Revolt, p. 60.
But, as Speirs so effectively puts it, this Prioress "is just sufficiently a lady of the world, and a sentimentalist, for a doubt to exist as to whether it is the divine love or the profane courtly love sentiment that is intended. The doubt, if it exists (and in the context it surely does exist), has to be taken account of as an aspect of character. The irony is in this ambiguity within the character itself; and also as the character is seen, with its slight affectation, in relation to the spring landscape and nature."  

The description of the Prioress thus marks a new use of imagery in the portraits, for here Chaucer has employed figures of speech and symbol for the purpose of creating satire, though the satire is of the gentlest and most delicately poised sort. This use of imagery he continues in the portrait of the Monk, whom he treats with amused tolerance, but there is a much less ambiguous contrast between this figure's worldliness and his monastic profession than in the case of the Prioress.

The sensual worldly man that the Monk was as opposed to the studious disciplined man that one might have expected him to be is symbolized in his delight in "venerye," or hunting (I, 166), the many valuable horses he had in stable (I, 168), and the little tinkling bells on his bridle, whose profane sound rivaled the chapel bell:

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64 Chaucer the Maker, p. 107.
... when he rood, men myghte his byrdel heere
Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel belle.
(I, 169-171)

The contrast is continued in a series of images which the
Monk employed for dismissing the rules of his order:

He yaf not of that text a pulled hen,
That seith that hunters ben nat hooly men
Ne that a monk, whan he is recchelees,
Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees,—
That is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre.
But thilke text heeld he nat worth and oystre.
(I, 177-182)

The coloquial reductio ad absurdum comparisons used in
this passage clearly connect the Monk with the sensual man
of horse sense instead of the scholarly man of saintly
character.

The Monk's worldliness is further satirized by a
number of other symbolical details. He kept greyhounds
that were "as swift as fowel in flight" (I, 190), he loved
a fat swan best of any roast (I, 206), and the horse he
chose to ride to Canterbury was a sleek and shining palfrey
"as broun as is a berry" (I, 207). In addition, his supple

65Cf. Speirs, p. 107. Skeat, op. cit., p. 20, n. 170,
cites a number of examples to show that "fashionable riders
were in the habit of hanging small bells on the bridles and
harness of their horses." Huizinga, op. cit., p. 248, notes
that the medieval fondness for all that glitters and which
appears in the general gaudiness of dress is transferred
to the domain of hearing "by the naive pleasure taken in
tinkling or clicking sounds."
boots (I, 203), the fine grey fur which trimmed his sleeves (I, 193 f.), and the curious gold pin with its love knot with which he fastened his hood (I, 195-197) were not the ordinary habit and accessories of a Benedictine monk and are in complete contrast with the poverty which Chaucer characteristically seems to have taken for an outward symbol of holiness in his good clerics.66

Again, this contrast between what the Monk was and what he was not appears in the images which Chaucer employs to give a clear visualization of his well-cared for and over-indulged body:

His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he had been enoyny.
He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt;
His eyen steps, and rolynne in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed.
(I, 198-202)

These details and images picture a hedonist and Sybarite, so unlike the gaunt ascetic, and the contrast is brought home by the lines:

Now certainty he was a fair preluyt;
He was not pale as a forpyned goost;
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
(I, 204-206)

But there is also an opposition within some of the above images which picture the Monk. The comparison "as he had

66 On this point see Kemp Malone, *Chapters on Chaucer*, pp. 184-185.
been enoynt" implies a contrast between the holy oil and the greasy fatness of his face; and the phrase "in good poynt," which might appropriately be applied to a horse or a dog, suggests his animality. The irony of the entire portrait, as Speirs has observed, seems to be summed up in the statement that he was a "fair prelaat," for this "lover of good feeding and good hunting is 'fair' in the worldly, the substantial, not spiritual sense." Though the Monk is worldly in the sense that he is not the ascetic monk of tradition, still there is a certain amount of affability in this fat cleric who loves hunting and the comforts of life.

In the Friar, who is next described, the worldliness is of a different kind, for he is portrayed as an utter scoundrel and hypocrite. Some of the imagery which Chaucer employs to describe him is harshly sarcastic. Near the beginning of the portrait the reader is told that "Unto his ordre he was a noble post" (I, 214), and in the last line he is referred to as "this worthy lymytour" (I, 269), the words noble and worthy in these passages being employed in an altogether ironical sense. As in the case of the Monk, his worldliness is symbolized by his wearing apparel:

... he was nat lyk a cloysterer  
With a thredbare cope, as is a poore scoler,

68 Ibid., p. 110.
But he was lyk a maister or a pope,
Of double worstede was his semycope,
That rounded as a felle out of the presse.
(I, 259-263)

This shapely garment, richly made and probably lined so that it kept its circular form well, is indeed no such mantle as St. Francis had commanded his followers to wear:

All the brothers shall be clothed in mean garments, which are to be mended with sacks and other scraps of cloth; because God said through his Evangelist [St. Matthew IX, 8] that those who wear costly, luxurious, and soft clothing belong to kingly houses.69

Moreover, the excellent simile of the bell not only helps to give a clear visualization of the Friar's full and unwrinkled "semycope," but suggests his round, prosperous, inflated person as a whole. Other images in the portrait add an element of burlesque as well as satire, as in the lines:

His nekke whit was as the flour-de-lys;
Therto he strong was as a champioun.
(I, 238 f.)

The figure "whit ... as the flour-de-lys" suggests the

69 Opuscula Sancti Patria Francisci, ed., P. P. Collegii S. Bonaventurae (Florence, 1904), Reg. I, Cap. II, as quoted by Bowden, op. cit., p. 137.
softness of the Friar's living,\textsuperscript{70} and at the same time con-
trasts humorously with his strength. Speirs remarks con-
cerning this image: "Besides suggesting, in implied contrast
with the tanned neck of the labouring peasant, the delicate
whiteness of the very able-bodied Friar ... the simile of
the fleur-de-lys introduces an almost burlesque effect by
which the spirit is lightened from the oppressive triumph
of the jolly holidaying scoundrel."\textsuperscript{71} There is perhaps
also an element both of satire and of humor or burlesque
in the statement that the Friar's manner could be as play-
ful as a puppy: "And rage he koude, as it were a whelp"
(I, 257). While it is clear that such behavior is not
fitting for his clerical office, still there is something
humorous, and even appealing, in the mention of a playful
puppy. Almost the only entirely good thing that Chaucer
has to say about the Friar is that

\begin{quote}
His eyen twinkled in his heed aryght,
As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght.
\textit{(I, 267 f.)}
\end{quote}

Although the poet has portrayed this figure as a worldly
rascal of the worst sort, this comparison somehow restores
a little bit of confidence in him. It gives him a place

\textsuperscript{70} E. Horton cites lines 2530-2533 of Lydgate and
Burgh's \textit{Secrees of old Philisoffres} to show that a man "of
foble Colour" is disposed to lechery, and Johannis Baptiste
Portae, \textit{De Humana Physiognomonica}, lib. II, p. 207, to
show that a soft neck indicates perversion. See "The Neck
of Chaucer's Friar," \textit{MLN}, XLVIII (1933), 31. But since
these references do not mention a white neck as a physiog-
nomical symbol, the evidence seems to be insufficient for
considering the Friar's neck as such.

\textsuperscript{71} Op. cit., p. 111.
in the great out-of-doors and helps the reader to understand the confidence people had in him in spite of his worldliness. In this portrait, then, Chaucer has employed imagery not only to stress the contrast between what the Friar is and what he ought to be, but also to give at least a degree of relief from the oppressive rascality which the realistic treatment of such a figure requires.

The three portraits which follow that of the Friar contain a comparatively small amount of imagery. In the description of the Merchant the only thing that may possibly be regarded as such is this figure's "mottelee" (I, 271), or parti-colored cloth of a figured design, which in the fourteenth century and later was customarily worn by members of every sort of company on state occasions. Although the pilgrimage to Canterbury cannot be considered such an occasion, Chaucer may, as Miss Edith Rickert has proposed, have employed the "mottelee" and sitting "hye on horse" (I, 271) to suggest to his readers a state procession of officials.72

In the portrait of the retiring, studious Clerk of Oxenford, who was not worldly nor aggressive enough to eke out his income through secular employment, all of the imagery is indicative of poverty—a characteristic which, as noted

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72 "Extracts from a Fourteenth-Century Account Book," MP, XXIV (1926), 256.
earlier, is associated with all of Chaucer's good clerics. The simile in the line: "As leane was his hors as is a rake" (I, 287), suggests the prominent ribs of the poor beast which the Clerk rode to Canterbury. Besides this touch, Chaucer mentions that he "looked holwe" (I, 289) and wore a "ful thredbare" short upper coat (I, 290). Through these details Chaucer symbolizes the Clerk as a true man of learning, but states that although the Clerk

... was a philosophre
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,
(I, 297 f.)

the word philosophre being used as a pun to mean a student not only of philosophy but of alchemy as well. Since alchemists claimed that they could transform the baser metals into gold, Chaucer's use of the word in a double sense becomes obvious. The poor Clerk indeed had "but litel gold in cofre."

The pun, employed for the first time in the portraits in connection with the Clerk, seems to appear again as the device for the only figurative touch in the description of the wary and prudent Sergeant of the Law. Chaucer reports that this Sergeant

... konde endite and make a thyng,
Ther koude no wight pynche at his writyng.
(I, 325 f.)
The expression *pynche* *at*, which here has the figurative meaning "find fault with," may, as Manly has pointed out, refer to Thomas Pynchbek, an actual sergeant of law whom Chaucer seems to have had in mind in the portrayal of this figure.\(^7\)

In the excellent description of the Franklin, imagery again becomes particularly significant as a means of characterization. The physical appearance of this country gentleman is made vivid and unforgettable by the statement that

\(^7\)Pynchbek's career, sketched fully by Manly, *Some New Light on Chaucer*, pp. 148-154, may be briefly summarized as follows: He became sergeant "at least as early as 1376," and between 1376 and 1388 "served often as justice of the assize." Since he was apparently a supporter of the Gloucester faction, Chaucer might have felt more free to expose him to satire. Numerous records show that Pynchbek dealt extensively in land and often acquired "property in fee simple." Evidence in later records indicates that the Pynchbek family became very wealthy, and Manly notes that it is "not without significance that the surname Pynchbek became a proverbial term for thrift." Besides the resemblance between the career of Chaucer's Sergeant and that of the actual Pynchbek, there is probably a connection between the latter and the poet himself. First, the Pynchbek family's estates in Lincolnshire were near the chief manor of Katherine Swynford, Chaucer's sister-in-law, whom Chaucer's wife is thought to have visited frequently, and Chaucer would likely have had first-hand reports of the Pynchbeks. Secondly there is a traditional story that Pynchbek offended Chaucer's friend, Sir William de Beauchamp. Further, it will be remembered that Chaucer may have studied at one of the Inns of Court, and since he and Pynchbek were about the same age, they would likely have known each other. Hence there is good reason to suppose that the portrait of the Sergeant may refer to the real Pynchbek and that the expression *pynche at* is a pun on his name.
his beard was as white "as is the dayeseye" (I, 332) and that "of his complexioun he was sangwyn" (I, 333). "When one remembers," observes Manly, "that the English daisy is tipped with red, and thinks of the Franklin's beard against the background of his ruddy complexion, the appropriateness of the comparison seems perfect."74 Imagery is also used to emphasize other striking features besides the Franklin's appearance. Because of his luxurious habits, and particularly his delight in dining well, he was "Epicurus owene sone" (I, 336). His larders were so abundantly stocked that

It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke,
Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke.
(I, 345 f.)

And he was so generous in his entertainment of guests that he is identified with the patron saint of hospitality: "Seint Julian he was in his contree" (I, 340).75 Further, it is noted that

An anlaas and a gipser al of silk
Heeng at his girdel, whit as morne milk.
(I, 357 f.)

As Muriel Bowden points out, the fact that the Franklin wears both "anlaas" and "gipser" helps to connect him with the gentry, "for only wealthy civilians and distinguished men of law are shown to wear both dagger and purse in the

74 Ibid., pp. 158-159.
monumental brasses of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries." And the simile "whit as morne milk," like most of the imagery in the portrait, suggests an environment of natural plenty and thus contributes to the picture of the Franklin as a self-indulgent and generous country gentleman.

The portraits of Chaucer’s five gildsmen—the Haberdasher, the Carpenter, the Weaver, the Dyer, and the Tapicer—contain nothing that can be considered poetic imagery. In the description of their colorful cook there is only one image, but it is of considerable importance as a key to this figure’s character. Chaucer gives details which indicate that the Cook is a good chef and then says:

But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shyne a mormal hadde he.
   (I, 385 f.)

Professor W. C. Curry has identified the unsightly mormal with malum mortuum of the medieval treatises, and he sums


77 Professor Curry translates this description of the malady given by Bernardus de Gordon (whom Chaucer mentions in connection with the Doctour of Phisik, I, 434); "Malum mortuum is a species of scabies which arises from corrupted natural melancholia.... The marks of it are large postules of a leaden or black color, scabbed, and exceedingly fetid, frequently accompanied by a certain insensibility in the places affected. In appearance it is most unsightly, coming out on the hip-bones and often on the shin-bones." Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences (New York: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 48.
up the causes which fourteenth-century physicians give for this malady as follows: "unclean personal habits," "the eating of melancholic foods and the drinking of strong wines," and "disgraceful association with diseased and filthy women." Through the normal Chaucer thus suggests details which add considerably to the Cook's characterization.

The Shipman, who, like the Cook, represents one of the traditional occupations of the English people, is stated to have been from the west country ("wonyngge fyr by weste." I, 388), perhaps from "Dertemouthe" (I, 389). This fact must have summed him up rather well for the fourteenth-century audience, since the sailing men of Dartmouth, as Muriel Bowden points out, "besides holding from the king a blanket privateering commission, took the lead as freebooters, and were known as such throughout England." That the Shipman "rood upon a rouncy" (I, 390), which is usually assumed to be a clumsy, heavy

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78 Ibid., p. 50-51.

79 On this point Bowden, op. cit., p. 197, note 4, cites W. S. Lindsay, History of Merchant Shipping and Ancient Commerce (London, 1874), I, 432.
footed horse, possibly suggests his lack of equestrian experience. As P. Q. Karkeek has noted, Harry Bailey's customers probably had to mount whatever animal was provided, and the Shipman, ignorant of the art of riding, was therefore probably assigned one of the worst horses.

But if the Shipman knew little of horses and riding, such is by no means the case in the matter of navigation. To emphasize his nautical experience, Chaucer says: "With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake" (I, 406)—a figure which must have had some humor for the poet's contemporaries, since to shake or pull a man's beard in the Middle Ages was an act of great indignity to the wearer.

Chaucer also employs a figure of speech to illustrate the fact that the Shipman took no heed of "nyce conscience." If he fought at sea and won, he sent his prisoners "By water ... hoom to every lond" (I, 400); that is, he summarily drowned them all.

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But P. Q. Karkeek states: "The word 'rouncy', from the Medieval Latin runcinus, implies a heavy powerful animal, either a packhorse, or such as is used for rough agricultural purposes; in neither case was it suited for the saddle or intended for such work." "Chaucer's Schipman and His Barge 'The Maudelayne' with Notes on Chaucer's Horses," Essays on Chaucer, Chaucer Society, Part V, No. XV (London, 1894), p. 457.

81 Ibid., p. 458.

The learned and proficient Physician is likewise a figure with little "conscience." While the descriptive details which Chaucer uses for him are almost entirely in the form of direct statement, one finds at the end of his portrait these finely ironical lines which stress avarice as the keynote of his character:

He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therefore he lovede gold in special.

(I, 442-444)

In the portrait of the Wife of Bath imagery contributes greatly to the vividness of the presentation.

Gat-toothed was she, soothly for to seye.
Upon an amblere esily she sat,
Ywympled wel, and hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felaweshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe.
Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce,
For she koude of that art the olde daunce.

(I, 468-476)

The statement that the Wife was "gat-toothed" (had teeth set wide apart) has been given various interpretations. The fact that Chaucer emphasizes her fondness for crossing "many a straunge strem" (I, 463-467) seems to substantiate Skeat's observation that the Middle Ages regarded this physical characteristic as a sign of good fortune and
much travel.\textsuperscript{83} Chaucer's allusion to the same characteristic of the Wife's in her Prologue (III, 603), however, seems to support Curry's contention that the medieval audience would likely take this feature to mark a person as "envious, irreverent, luxurious by nature, bold, deceitful, faithless, and suspicious."\textsuperscript{84} Again, A. J. Barnouw has made the observation that, according to medieval belief, women who were "gap-toothed by nature" were "predestined for the office of love."\textsuperscript{85} Perhaps it is not going too far to suppose that all three "signs" were in the minds of Chaucer and his audience, for, as Muriel Bowden remarks, "Alisoun's flamboyant personality bears them all out."\textsuperscript{86} Further, one notes that comparison of the "bokeler" and the "targe" helps to give a clear visualization of the breadth of the Wife's hat. But like her "paire of spores sharpe," it also symbolizes her masterfulness—that impulse to have the "maistrye," which, as she later confesses, governed her relations with her five husbands. Chaucer rounds off his description of Alisoun

\textsuperscript{84} Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences, p. 109.
\textsuperscript{85} Letter to Nation, C11 (1916), 540.
\textsuperscript{86} Op. cit., p. 221.
with a figure which subtly epitomizes and emphasizes her experiences in love: she doubtless knew about remedies of love, "For she koude of that art the olde daunce."
The "remedies of love," which the Wife knew, is an allusion to Ovid's Remedia Amoris. But, as Muriel Bowden observes, there is a jest in her knowledge of the Remedia, rather than Ovid's Ars Amatoria: she knew all the rules of the game.87

The poor Parson, who is next described, presents a sharp contrast not only with the Wife of Bath but also with the profane ecclesiastics. Nearly all of the imagery which Chaucer employs in connection with this good man has association with the Bible and its expositors:

This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,  
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte.  
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,  
And this figure he added eek therto,  
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do? 
For if a preest be foul, on whom we trust,  
No wonder is a lawed man to ruste;  
And shame it is, if a prest take keep,  
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep. 
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,  
By his clennesse, how that his sheep sholde lyve 
He sette nat his benefice to hyre  
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre.

87 Op. cit., p. 220. Chaucer employs "the olde daunce" in two other places: PhysT, VI, and Tr, III, 695. Robinson, op. cit., p. 765, n. 475, states that Chaucer "perhaps got the phrase from the Roman de la Rose but that "it was a current figure in French, meaning 'to be artful, knowing.'"
And ran to Londoun unto Seinte Poules
To seken hym a chaunterie for soules,
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
But dwelt at home, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it not myscarie;
He was a shepherde and noght a mercenarie.

(I, 496-514)

Here the simple, religious images of the "shepherd," the "sheep," the "folde," and the "wolf" are altogether appropriate in describing the qualities of the good Parson, and through association with the Scriptures help to present him as a true man of religion. The figure of "gold" and "iren" also serves these purposes, but since it is presented as a reflection of the Parson's own words ("And this figure he added eek therto"), it may also help to emphasize the fact that he was a "lerned man" (I, 480) who possessed a knowledge of the Bible and other religious writings. Kittredge points out that the origin of the proverb about "rusting" gold may be Lamentations (IV, 1), as interpreted in Gregory's Pastoral Care, but that the same figure of speech which Chaucer uses appears in the late twelfth-century poem Li

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88 See St. Matt., IX, 35; VII, 15.

89 Although few priests of Chaucer's time seem to have had such a knowledge, the fourteenth century stressed learning as important for those even of poor parishes. For discussion, see Bowden, op. cit., pp. 230-231.
Romana de Carite (st. LXII): "Se ore enrunge, queus ert fers?" He notes further that the French author speaks of the "foolish" shepherd and wise "sheep," the one "soiled" in the mud and the other "clean" in the meadow, in the same order as in the portrait of the Parson. Kittredge therefore concludes that both authors probably drew from a now unknown source. But whatever this source may have been, the figurative statements which the Parson "added" seem to mark him as a man of learning who is competent truly to teach the Gospel of Christ. Besides these images which have religious associations, Chaucer employs one figure of another sort in his characterization of the Parson. He says that this priest "ne maked him a spiced conscience" (I, 526), which, as Robinson states, seems to mean that he was not "highly refined" or "over-scrupulous," possibly "with the suggestion that he was not sophisticated, versed in anise and cummin, and negligent of weightier matters." Imagery is thus an important feature in Chaucer's portrayal of this truly religious, learned, and intelligent parish priest.

In the portrait of the Plowman, who represents the Christian ideal among the peasants just as the Parson does among the clergy, there is little that can be termed poetic

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90 "Chaucer and the Romans de Carite," MLN, XII (1897), 113-115.

91 Op. cit., p. 766, n. 526. As Robinson points out, the literal meaning of spiced seems to be "seasoned."
imagery. It will be observed, however, that his costume, a "tabard" (I, 541), is a durable garment, which marks him as a self-respecting workingman who knows exactly his "estaat" and his "degree." Likewise, the fact that "he rood upon a mare" (I, 541) indicates his humble station, for, as Karkeek points out, "No person pretending to belong to the 'quality' would have mounted a mare, except under circumstances of direst necessity." But even though there are few specific items in the description which can be regarded as imagery, yet the portrait as a whole of this poor plowman who follows faithfully the commands of Christ—and above all, the command of brotherly love—may be thought of as symbolic of the highest Christian virtues.


93 See J. Horrell, "Chaucer's Symbolic Plowman," Speculum, XIV (1939), 82-92. Gardiner Stillwell advances the theory that Chaucer's portrait of "the ideal peasant suggests an antagonism towards the actual peasant," since the real peasant of the time "was revolting against everything Chaucer stood for." See "Chaucer's Plowman and the Contemporary English Peasant", ELH, VI (1939), 285-290. But as Horrell, op. cit., shows, this view cannot be accepted as valid, for Chaucer nowhere writes contemptuously of the peasant, but rather in approval of him.
For the dishonest but prosperous Miller—a figure very different from the Plowman—Chaucer uses a rather large number of images. Most of these serve to give a good idea of what the Miller looked like, but in so doing help to reveal his character traits as well. According to Curry, who cites such authorities as Aristotle, Rhases, and the Secreta Secretorum, Chaucer’s description of the Miller as "a stout carl" (I, 545), "Ful byg ... of brawn, and eek of bones" (I, 546), and "short-sholdred" (I, 549) indicates that he was "shameless, immodest, and loquacious" as well as "bold and easily angered." As Curry further points out, the Miller’s beard, which was as red "as any sowe or fox" (I, 551) and as broad "as though it were a spade" (I, 553), signifies that he was treacherous; his "nosethirles blake ... and wyde" (I, 557), that he was disposed to lust and anger; the wart on the tip of his nose, surmounted by the tuft of hairs "Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys" (I, 556), that he indulged in "shameful fornication" and violence; and his mouth which was "greet ... as a greet forneys" (I, 559), that he was a prodigious babbler and liar given to swearing. 94 Connected with this last trait is Chaucer’s statement that the Miller was "a janglere" an idle talker, and "a goliardeys" (I, 560), which seems to mean that he was a master in the telling

94 Medieval Sciences, pp. 80-86.
of indecent stories.95 The fact that the Miller wore "a swerd and bokeler ... by his syde" (I, 559) is also probably to be taken as a feature of his characterization. Concerning this point Kemp Malone remarks: "The miller is very much of a civilian, and one would not expect him to bear weapons, particularly on a pilgrimage. This item I take to be an element in the characterization. The miller had an aggressive personality; the sword and buckler may symbolize this part of his character. But in Chaucer one does well to be on the lookout for humorous effects, and the picture of the miller dressed in his workaday white coat but armed with sword and buckler may be intended to make us laugh."96 To emphasize the fact that the Miller did well in his trade because he was a superlatively good thief, Chaucer says: "he hadde a thombe of gold" (I, 563), which means that he was as honest as millers commonly are, or, in other words, that he was not honest at all.97 Taken as a whole, the imagery of the portrait serves to bring out the grossness and the dynamic force of the Miller's personality. But the effect is that

95 OED defines "goliardeys" as "one of the class of educated jesters, buffoons, and authors of loose or satirical Latin verse, who flourished chiefly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Germany, France, and England."

96 Chapters on Chaucer, p. 205.

97 Skeat, op. cit., V, 49, n. 563, notes that Chaucer's statement refers to the proverb: "An honest miller has a golden thumb," which, taken satirically, "means that there are no honest millers."
of exaggeration and caricature. Hence he is seen not as a repulsive villain, but as a comic character.98

As will have been noticed, Chaucer often alternates portraits which contain little imagery with those which use it freely, and such is the case of the description of the rather colorless Manciple which follows that of the more vital Miller. For this over-shrewd character, who was a buyer of provisions for the lawyers and students of one of the Inns of Court, only one image is employed. After telling how extremely clever he was in managing his payments, whether he paid cash or "took by taille," Chaucer forcefully concludes the description with the colorful proverbial figure: "And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe" (I, 586); that is to say, he cheated or got the better of all his superiors.99


99 See Skeat, op. cit., V, 50, n. 586. Cf. the Miller's statement, MillT Prol, I, 3143, that he is going to tell how a clerk "hath set the wrightes cappe."
The Reeve, like the Manciple, is over-shrewd in business dealings, but imagery plays a much more important part in his characterization. At the beginning of his portrait Chaucer states that he was a "colerik man" (I, 587). Applying the "rules" of the Secreta Secretorum and of Lydgate and Burgh's Secrees of Old Philosoffres, Curry shows that a man of this complexion "should be lean of body," sharp of wit and wise, hasty in taking vengeance, and "desirous of company of women more than he needs." In keeping with these "rules" Chaucer states that the Reeve was "sclendre" (I, 587), and through his description of the Reeve's shrewd and crafty management of his lord's estate he clearly indicates that the Reeve was sharp-witted.

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100 As to the exact office of the Reeve, there is some uncertainty. Robinson, op. cit., p. 767, makes the following comment: "The chief manager of an estate under the lord of the manor, was the steward (or seneschal). Subordinate to him was the bailiff, and below the bailiff was the provost, who was elected by the peasants and had immediate care of the stock and grain. Normally the reeve was subordinate to the bailiff, but many manors did not have a full complement of officers, and titles were more or less interchanged. Chaucer's Reeve was apparently superior to the bailiff, and even exercised some of the functions of a steward. He is represented as dealing directly with his lord, ruling under-bailiffs and hinds, outwitting auditors, and accumulating property."

101 Medieval Sciences, p. 73.
and wise. The poet says too that those who came under his jurisdiction "were adrad of hym as of the deeth" (I, 605)\textsuperscript{102}--a fact which seems to accord well with the choleric man's hot temper and love of vengeance. Furthermore, the Reeve had "pipe-stem" legs:

\begin{quote}
Ful longe were his legges and ful lene,
Ylak a staf, there was no calf ysene,
(I, 591 f.)
\end{quote}

and, as Curry points out, the physiognomists all state that this physical characteristic denotes lust and intemperance in his "sensual desires."\textsuperscript{103}

The Reeve's closely shaven face (I, 588) and his somewhat clerical haircut--

\begin{quote}
His euer was by his erys ful round yshorn;
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn--
(I, 589 f.)
\end{quote}

"indicated in Middle English times a man of low caste or, more especially, an obedient and humble servant." As Curry observes, "this ostentatious display of humility affected by the Reeve was doubtless a part of his general programme of hoodwinking his young lord and of privately

\textsuperscript{102}As Muriel Bowden, op. cit., p. 260, n. 29, points out, "deeth might possible refer in l. 605 to 'death' in general, but because the word is preceded by the definite article it more likely means the pestilence."

\textsuperscript{103}Medieval Sciences, pp. 74-75.
increasing his own store of goods; he could so 'plesen subtilly' that, in addition to what he stole during the year, he had the confidence and thanks of his lord together with special gifts of coats and hoods besides.  

Other details in the portrait suggest that the Reeve was an old man. One of these is the statement that "by his syde he baar a rusty blade" (I, 618). As Brooks Forehand observes, the sword was rusty because the Reeve was "past the age for using it." He might "have used it frequently and cruelly in his youth (anger still one of his 'foure gledes'), and stories of his youthful physical iolence (now replaced by 'his sleighte and his cooyne')" were perhaps still in circulation; the peasants were "adrad of hym as of deeth." But if he was old and knew that he was not going to use the blade, he still had a purpose in wearing it. As Forehand points out, it served as a symbol; he liked "to think of things youthful." The Reeve's "long surcote of pers" (I, 617) may be another indication of age. Quoting from Herbert Norris, who says that a surcote (French ganache) was an outer garment lined with fur, "usually worn over a

104 Ibid., p. 72.

robe or tunic for extra warmth, Forehand notes that the surcote which the Reeve had on, together with its length, "suggests an old man, safeguarding against April chilliness his 'sclendre colerik' person, especially his legs 'ful longe' and 'ful lene,' 'ylak a staf' where no calf is visible." Although commentators have frequently found an inconsistency between the Reeve's portrait in the General Prologue and the Prologue to his tale, where he is presented as an old man in whom there still lived a concupiscent mind, a study of the imagery in the former thus shows that the two treatments of the Reeve employ the same ideas, that through the use of suggestive details in the General Prologue Chaucer has made ample preparation for the direct statements which he employs later.

The portraits of the Summoner and Pardoner present figures that are not only dishonest, but grotesquely repellent. The bestiality of the former is readily apparent by his very appearance:

A Somonour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnes face,
For saucefleem he was, with eyen narwe.


107 Op. cit., p. 987. Forehand, pp. 987-988, finds that the Reeve's dwelling "ful faire upon a heath;/With grene trees yshadowed," I, 606 f., and his riding "hindreste" in the company of pilgrims, I, 622, also indicate his old age, but such interpretation is not strongly convincing.
Speirs makes the apt observation that "on the image of a 'Cherubinnes face'—a face in itself roundly innocent and angelic—'fyr-reed,'¹⁰⁸ together with the explanation of why it was so, produces a grotesque, shocking effect converting the angelic image to that of some gargoyle or painted mask."¹⁰⁹ Curry, who cites many medieval medical authorities, identifies the Summoner's "saucefleem" with "a species of morphea known as gutta rosacea, which has been allowed to develop into the kind of leprosy called alopecia." The supposed cause of the Summoner's malady, as Curry points out, is licentious living¹¹⁰—a fact which Chaucer indicates through several details in the portrait and emphasizes through the use of figurative language. This Summoner, so the poet relates, loved garlic, onions, and leeks, and strong wine "reed as blood" (I, 635). He was "As hoot ... and lecherous as a sparwe" (I, 626)—a bird traditionally associated with lewdness.¹¹¹ And an

¹⁰⁸Skeat, op. cit., V, p. 52, n. 624, notes that "cherubs were generally painted red, a fact which became proverbial...."

¹⁰⁹Chaucer the Maker, p. 118.

¹¹⁰Medieval Sciences, pp. 37-47.

¹¹¹See Robinson, op. cit., p. 768, n. 626.
especially grave cause of his disease is noted in the statement: "Ful prively a fynch skk koude he pulle" (I, 652), which, as Kittredge has shown, is a medieval impolite expression meaning "he kept a concubine."112

But images are employed in the description of the Summoner to show qualities other than those connected with his gutta rosacea and its causes. Through comparison with a talking jay Chaucer explains the Summoner's use of a few Latin terms and in so doing indicates not only his ignorance and noisiness but also his unnaturalness:

... when that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,  
Thanne wolde he speke no word but Latyn.  
A few termes hadde he, two or thre,  
That he had lerned out of some decree—  
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;  
And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay  
Kan clepen "Watte" as wel as can the pope.  
But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,  
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie.  
(I, 637-645)

And along with this loud coarseness and unnaturalness he had a blasphemous awelessness of both man and God. He boasted openly and brazenly that no one with funds need have any fear of the archdeacon's excommunication,

But if a mannes soule were in his purs;  
For in his purs he sholde ypunysshed be.  
"Purs is the ercedekenes helle," seyde he.  
(I, 656-658)

This contemptuous blasphemy intensifies the fantastic quality of the final images, which picture the Summoner as a reveling buffoon, crowned with a garland of flowers and leaves "As greet as it were for an ale-stake" (I, 667) and bearing as "a bokeleer" a round, flattened "cake" of bread (I, 668).

The description of the Pardoner, "freend" and "compeer" of the lecherous Summoner, is the last of the portraits in the General Prologue to be considered here, since the final partial portrait of the Host contains no imagery. Of the rather large number of suggestive details and figures of speech which Chaucer applies to this "gentil Pardoner," one notes first of all that he is represented as singing a popular song:

Ful loude he soong "Com hider, love, to me!"
This Sumonour bar to hym a stif burdoun;
Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.
(I, 672-674)

In his choice of this particular verse of the song, Chaucer may be suggesting the well-known connivance between many pardoners and summoners in their efforts to cheat the people. But Chaucer perhaps also wishes to suggest the personal nature of the specific relationship between these figures. As Muriel Bowden observes, the Pardoner "addresses the words evidently to the evil Summoner,

who, far from being unresponsive to his depraved and unnatural advances, trumpets forth a bass accompaniment ('bourdon') to emphasize his perverted friendship with the Pardoner. Indeed, there is much in Chaucer's description of the physical appearance of the Pardoner to support this interpretation:

This Pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,  
But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;  
By ounces heng his lokkes that he hadde,  
And therwith he his shuldres overspradde;  
But thynne it lay, by colpons oon and oon.  
But hood, for jolitee, wered he noon,  
For it was trussed up in his walet.  
Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet;  
Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.  
Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare....  
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.  
No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have;  
As smothe it was as it were late shave.  
I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.  
(I, 675-684, 688-691)

The images in the above lines, besides vividly defining the Pardoner's physical attributes, are strong in suggestive power. From the similes of wax and flax one gets the impression that his hair was dirty, full of foreign particles as these objects are likely to be. And the comparisons of his glaring eyes with those of a hare and of his voice with that of a goat connect him with these odd beasts. To quote Speirs, these images give "a suggestion of craziness, certainly of abnormality, in the

creature which is not entirely the effect in him of drink." Moreover, as Curry has shown, the particular physical peculiarities to which these images are applied have physiognomical meaning. The thin clusters of hair which overspread the Pardoner's shoulders indicate a "lack of virility" and "effeminacy of mind"—a characteristic which may be further emphasized by his absurdly foppish wish to ride "al of the newe jet," that is, bareheaded except for his cap. His glaring eyes mark him as a person "given to folly, a glutton, a libertine, and a drunkard"; his small, high voice as a man of womanish character; and his lack of beard as one who is worse than "foolish, lustful, and presumptuous."

Giving literal application to Chaucer's figurative statement "I trowe he were a geldying or a mare," Curry argues that the Pardoner is intended as a eunuchus ex nativitate, and he quotes the following passage from Polemon, the chief authority on the subject, in support of his contention: "When the eye is wide open and, like marble, glitters or coruscates, it indicates a shameless lack of modesty. This quality of the eyes is observed in a man who is not like other men, ut eunuchus qui tamen non castratus est, sed sine testiculis natus. I have known, however, only one man

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115 Op. cit., p. 120.
116 Medieval Sciences, pp. 57-60.
of this kind." While interpretation of the Pardoner as a "eunuch from birth" is obviously possible, it is by no means the only explanation. Robert P. Miller has recently advanced the theory that Chaucer has in mind a particular figurative concept of eunuch used in several Biblical texts and dealt with by many patristic commentators. According to these authorities, there are, as Miller points out, besides the literal eunuch, two types of spiritual eunuchs: those who cut themselves off from evil works and lead a life of chastity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven and those who, instead of cutting themselves off from evil works, cut themselves off from good works. In Miller's opinion Chaucer's Pardoner is a spiritual eunuch of the latter sort. This interpretation—like Curry's—offers an interesting possibility. However, the most convincing explanation of the line "I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare" is probably that of Muriel Bowden, who also gives the statement figurative application, but believes that "the doubt Chaucer casts on the virility of the Pardoner is perhaps voiced as a scornful jest aimed against an un-


fortunately effeminate man" who happened "also to be a
libertine and a thorough rogue." 119

Other images in the portrait help to explain the
deception which the Pardoner employed to make himself
appear genuine. In this connection one notes Chaucer's
apparently ironical statement that the Pardoner "streight
was commen fro the court of Rome" (I, 671), to which is
added a few lines later:

A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe.
His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe,
Bretful of pardoun, comen from Rome al hoot.
(I, 685-687)

Thus the Pardoner—at least so far as appearances were
concerned—had come directly from Rome. As evidence he
had brought a wallet stuffed full of indulgences "al hoot"
from the quaestorum oven; 120 and upon his cap was sewed
a vernicle—that is, a copy of the handkerchief which was
supposed to have received the imprint of Christ's face

119 Op. cit., p. 276. As objections to Curry's
theory, Bowden points out that Polemon himself, the chief
physiognomist on the subject of eunuchry, has known only
one "eunuch from birth," and that in writing of wide open,
glittering eyes this authority "says only that the
eunuchus ex nativitate possesses them, not that their
possession marks the man as such."

120 A medieval official who sold indulgences was
called either a pardoner (because of what he gave) or a
quaestor (because of what he asked). For discussion, see
J. J. Jusserand, English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages,
trans. Lucy Toulmin Smith (4th ed., London: Ernest Bern,
when St. Veronica lent it to Him on the way to the Crucifixion and was preserved in the church of St. Peter at Rome. Since it was usual for persons returning from pilgrimages to bring with them some token of the place they had visited, the Pardoner's vernicle therefore served as a protestation that he and his pardons were genuine. But these devices were no doubt a part of his deception, as were his "relikes" (I, 693-700), which, according to Chaucer's direct statements, were unquestionably false. Through the use of such trickery the Pardoner knew just how to make a guileless parish priest and the simple people "his apes" (I, 706). This fraudulent cleric, however, was not only a seller of indulgences and relics, but a preacher as well; and in church, if not elsewhere, he had all the appearance of "a noble ecclesiaste" (I, 708). But his noble appearance here was simply another example of his trickery, for his conduct was motivated solely by avarice:

He moste preche and wel affile his tonge
To wynne silver, as he ful wel koude.
(I, 712 f.)

The metaphor "wel affile his tonge" clearly suggests the mechanical and hence insincere, though theatrically perfect, preaching which made the Pardoner so successful in his role as "a noble ecclesiaste."

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121 For further discussion of the term "vernycle," see Skeat, op. cit., V, 56, n. 685.
In these descriptions of the widely varied band of Canterbury pilgrims, to an even greater degree than in the portraits of the earlier poems, poetic imagery is thus found to be a highly significant element in the poet's descriptive technique. As in the earlier portraits, Chaucer employs figures of speech to emphasize details of appearance, conduct, and character. For these purposes he uses here an increased proportion of short similes, which accord well with the natural flow of conversational language. Moreover, it will be noted that symbolism, which in previous portraits is applied mainly to abstract characters like the goddess Fame, becomes in the General Prologue an important device for characterizing true-to-life, if fictional, men and women of fourteenth-century England. And functioning as a special type of symbolism, which does not seem to appear in Chaucer's portraits before those of the pilgrims, are the instances where descriptive details are found to have physiognomical signification. Through such elements which serve dual purposes—that is, which not only contribute directly to the concreteness of the picture but at the same time suggest or emphasize qualities of disposition—the poet is able to produce effects quickly and economically and therefore to crowd much into the portraits even though the
style of the Prologue demands haste and brevity. But as important as the use of imagery of various types is in the presentation of his "companye of sondry folk," Chaucer seems to have realized that a steady, unrelieved employment of this method would likely produce a monotonous effect. Hence, he includes here and there among the portraits which make free use of imagery others which have less amounts and a few that contain no figurative or symbolical language at all. Through this arrangement Chaucer gains an effect of artlessness and variety not only within the individual portraits but also for the series as a whole.

The characterizations of the pilgrims in the General Prologue are in some instances notably supplemented by details given in the links and prologues to the tales, but passages containing such material are not, strictly speaking, parts of the formal portraits, and examination of the imagery occurring in them would be to write another essay.

The occasion, of course, is one of excitement. On the evening and morning before the journey people are becoming acquainted and making preparations. That Chaucer is eager to move along speedily with his account is clearly reflected in these comments: "And shortly ['to speak briefly'], whan the sonne was to reste," I, 30; "Of his array telle I no lenger tale," I, 330; "Now have I told you shortly, in a clause," I, 715; "Oure conseil was not longe for to soche ... And graunted hym withouten moors avys," I, 784, 786; "This is the point, to spoken short and pleyn," I, 790. See also I, 808; I, 819-821; I, 842 f.; I, 849; I, 857 f.
There remain to be considered, however, several portraits which are employed for presenting characters in the tales.

3. The Imagery of the Canterbury Tales Excluding the General Prologue

In the Knight's Tale, which may well have been originally drafted before the Canterbury conception, one finds the brief, but altogether charming portrait of Emelye. Walking in the garden on the May morning, she was fairer to behold

Than is the lylie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures newe—
For with the rose colour stroof hire hewe,
I noot which was the fyner of hem two....
Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse
Bihynde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse.
And in the gardyn, at the sonne upriste,
She gadereth floures, party white and rede,
To make a subtil gerland for hire hede;
And as an aungel hevenysshly she soong.

(I, 1036-1039, 1049-1055)

The clear visualization of freshness and naturalness in the lovely young girl is promoted by the rose and lily

123 A reference in the Prologue of the Legend of Good Women, C, 408, to "the love of Palamon and Arcite" shows that Chaucer had made a version of Boccaccio's Teseide, in some form, before the Canterbury period. The date of the revised tale has been variously assigned as 1381, 1382, 1387, and 1393. For a summary of the different theories, see Robinson, op. cit., p. 771.
imagery and by association with May and springtime, while realization of the delicate beauty of her voice springs from the comparison with angel's song.

Besides this brief portrait of the heroine, the *Knight's Tale* contains the extended descriptions of King Lycurgus of Thrace and King Emetreus of India, who are, respectively, the champions of Palamon and Arcite in the great tournament. Through short figures of speech Chaucer gives clear pictures of Lycurgus' striking physical appearance and magnificent accoutrement. The circles of his eyes "gloweden bitwixen yelow and reed" (I, 2132), and "lyk a grifphon looked he aboute" (I, 2133). His long hair, combed behind his back, "as any ravenes fethere ... shoon for-blak" (I, 2144). Instead of a coat of arms over his armor, "with nayles yelewe and bright as any gold," he had a "beres skyn, col-blak, for old" (I, 2141 f.). Upon his head he wore a "wrethe of gold, arm-greet," (I, 2145) and set full of bright stones. And about his chariot there courséd white wolf-hounds, "Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer" (I, 2149). Equally vivid in effect are the figures which Chaucer employs for Emetreus. Riding "lyk the god of armes, Mars" (I, 2159), this great "kyng of Inde" had hanging upon his shoulder a short mantel "Gret-ful of rubyes rede as fyr sparklynge" (I, 2164). His curly yellow hair ran "lyk rynges" and "glytered as the sonne" (I, 2165 f.). In his face were
a few freckles "yspreynd" (I, 2169), colored somewhere between yellow and black. With eyes of "bright citryn" (I, 2167), he cast his looks "as a leon" (I, 2171), while his voice was "as a trompe thonderynge" (I, 2174).

While figurative language helps to create vivid pictures of the two kings, some of the details to which the figures are applied, along with others not thus emphasized, are also possibly to be regarded as imagery since they may have more than surface meaning. According to Curry, who quotes from such astrological authorities as Claudius Ptolemaeus, Alchabitius, and Albohazen Haly, the physical characteristics attributed to Lycurgus and Emetreus mark them as types, respectively, of the Saturnalian and Martian

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124 Manly, *Canterbury Tales*, p. 555, n. 2155 ff., finds the description of Emetreus, who is not mentioned in Boccaccio's *Teseide*, "decidedly individual and somewhat suggestive of King Richard II." But A. S. Cook argues that in the portrait of Emetreus Chaucer has recorded, with some poetical embellishment, his impressions of Henry, Earl of Derby, on the occasion of his return to London from the continent on July 5, 1393. Cook shows that a number of the descriptive details are applicable to Henry personally and to trappings which he is known to have possessed. See "The Historical Background of Chaucer's Knight," *Trans.Conn. Acad.*, X (1915-1916), 166-174. On the whole, however, Cook's identification does not seem to be justified. Remarks Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 781, n. 2155-86: "...many of the features of the description emphasized by Cook do not seem particularly significant, and in other cases (as where he would explain frakeness by 'pock-marks') his argument is forced." Moreover, the identification "would imply for the passage in question a date much later than is probably to be assigned to the *Knight's Tale*."
figure, appropriately introduced into the tale for the reason that Arcite was protected by Mars and Palamon by Saturn. The correspondences which Curry notes between Lycurgus and the man born under Saturn are as follows:

His [the Saturnalian's] hair, on the head and elsewhere, is always a deep black, sometimes coarse, crisp or curling, but in the case of the royal sanguine nature softer and hanging down straighter; or as Chaucer says, "H"s beard was black, and his long hair, black as a raven's feather, was combed behind his back" [I, 2130, 2143 f.]. His complexion is usually swartish or maybe honey-colored, a mixture of black and yellow as if from a touch of black and yellow jaundice, or in the case of the sanguine temperament the color of a ripe olive. His eyes are sometimes large, sometimes small, but always deep set in the head, in color red like those of a cat or, in sanguine natures, red with bloody spots in them. Observe that Chaucer does not say that the eyes are yellow and red, but that the "circles of his eyes in his head glowed between yellow and red" [I, 2131 f.]. This curious effect is doubtless produced when the "red eyes with bloody spots in them," of a sanguine Saturnalian man are set deep in a dark yellowish complexion; the red eyes have yellowish circles about them. His eyebrows are exceedingly thick, rugged, joined over the nose, and hang lowering over the eyes; or as Chaucer remarks, after having described the circles of his eyes glowing between yellow and red, "And lyk a griffon loked he aboute, With kempe heres on his browes stoute" [I, 2133 f.]. And his body, though of medium stature, is well formed with broad shoulders and slender waist; or as Chaucer expands it, "His limbs great, his muscles hard and strong, his shoulders broad, his arms long and round" [I, 2135 f.]

125 Medieval Sciences, pp. 136-137.
And Curry thus sets forth the correspondences between Emetreus and the man born under the influence of Mars:

The Martial man's hair ... varies in shades of color according to circumstances from dark brown to chestnut, reddish, red, yellow sandy, or whitish flaxen, and it is crisp or curling; or as Chaucer says, "His crisp hair, curling in rings was yellow and glittered as the sun" [I, 2165 f.]; Chaucer merely states, "his color was sangwyn" [I, 2168]. His face is full and round, which Chaucer suggests, possibly, when he speaks of the "lippes rounde" [I, 2168]--the usual full lips of the heavy man with a round face. His sanguine complexion is darkened, however, not only as if by a healthy tan but by the appearance of a few freckles--"forte in ea masculas"; or as Chaucer says, "He had a few freckles sprinkled in his face, in color somewhat between yellow and black" [I, 2169 f.]. His eyes vary in color from varius to croceus, hazel, yellow, or light green; Chaucer selects the bright citron [I, 2167]. His voice is firm and strong, or as Chaucer has it, "as a trompe thunderinge" [I, 2174]; his countenance is fierce, proud, bold, menacing, with sparkling piercing eyes, or as Chaucer says, "as a leoun he his loking caste" [I, 2171].

It will be noted that the descriptions of the Saturnalian and Martian man thus summarized by Curry from the astrological authorities are in some instances a little vague and inconsistent, and for this reason Paul F. Baum argues that it is better to regard the portraits of Lycurgus and Emetreus simply "as bright splashes of color." Yet a number of the correspondences are striking enough, and when

126 Ibid., pp. 133-134.
127 See "Characterization in the Knight's Tale," MLN, XLVI (1931), 303.
it is remembered that Chaucer uses astrology conspicuously throughout the Knight's Tale, Curry's theory seems worthy of serious consideration.

The brilliant portraits of the three gay young figures in the Miller's Tale (early 1390's)--Nicholas, Alisoun, and Absolon--all make notable use of imagery. "Hende" Nicholas, the Oxford undergraduate who dabbled in astrology, knew much of love, but because he was "sleigh and ful privee" and "lyk a mayden meke for to see" (I, 3203), his love affairs remained "deerne" or secret. Fastidious in his person and with his belongings, he kept his chamber scented with sweet herbs and was himself

... as sweete as in the roote
Of lycorys, or any cetewale.
(I, 3206 f.)

At nights he played upon his psaltery "So swetely that all the chambre rong" (I, 3215). And with such songs as Angelus ad virginem and "the kynges noote," "ful ofte blessed was his myrie throte" (I, 3218). The images in the description of this "sweete clerk" (who differed so markedly from the scholarly Clerk of the General Prologue) emphasizes qualities which make him a figure of mystifying charm--a figure, as Raymond Preston observes, "with a hidden life of the senses not quite for certain swallowed in sensuality." 128

128
Chaucer, p. 191.
In the splendid portrait of Alisoun, the carpenter's racy young wife, the presentation is largely by means of short similes—a method which, as noted earlier, Chaucer seems to have learned from the *Roman de la Rose* but which he did not put to fullest use until late in his career. But while Chaucer has taken over the method of using similes to promote clear visualization of the lady's charms, he has abandoned the set of stock similes which in scores of poems are inseparably linked with forehead, eyes, nose, mouth, skin, throat, and so on. For the figures which he applies to Alisoun, he has drawn upon the creative resources of daily English speech; and "these resources," as John Speirs points out, "are the source of Alisoun's wonderful vitality, a peasant vitality arising from the (so largely) country imagery in which she is created, though she is a wealthy young bourgeois wife of Oxford town."^129^ Alisoun's body, Chaucer states, was as slender and graceful as that of "any wezele" (I, 3234). She wore an apron "as whit as morne milk" (I, 3236), and her smock and collar were embroidered with "col-blak silk" (I, 3240). Her eyebrows were plucked and "blake as any sloo" (I, 3245). She was more blisful to look upon "than is the newe pere-jonette tree" (I, 3248) and "softer than the wolle is of a wether" (I, 3249). There is no man so wise that he could think of

"so gay a popelote or swich a wenche" (I, 3254). The shining of her "hewe" was brighter than "the noble forged newe" in the tower (I, 3256). Her song was as loud and lively "As any swalwe sittynge on a berne" (I, 3258). She skipped and played "As any kyde or calf folwynge his dame" (I, 3260). Her mouth was as sweet as "bragot" or mead, "or hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth" (I, 3261 f.). She was as skittish as a "joly colt" and as "Long as a mast, and as upright as a bolt" (I, 3263 f.). The brooch upon her collar was as broad as "the boos of a bokeler" (I, 3266). Certainly she was

... a prymerole, a piggesnye,
For any lord to leggen in his bedde,
Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.
(I, 3268-3270)

Speirs makes so perceptive an analysis of the imagery in Alisoun's portrait that one can do no better than quote what he has said:

The images of wild or young animals (the weasel, kid, calf, colt) convey the impression of her wild young life. Suggestions of fruitfulness and natural growth are conveyed in the comparisons of her with the "pere-jonette tree" and apples in hay; the "bragot" and mead convey impressions of her freshness and sweetness to taste and smell. The images of morning milk and the swallow sitting on a barn introduce farmyard associations and suggest a girl by nature rustic, though decked out in finery as a wealthy town carpenter's wife. She has a natural wealth of her own. The images of mast and bolt suggest her native strength and uprightness of carriage--combined with her suppleness of body--and the
brooch as broad as "the bos of a bocter" adds a suggestion of a slightly barbaric element in her aspect. But the comparison with the "wolle of a wether" suggests, in contrast, her agreeable softness. In these images she is vividly perceptible; but something further is conveyed, the essence, the essential nature of this particular young wife. From the images springs directly the recognition that her potentialities are simply those of nature, of a natural creature, wild, young, untamed. She might have made a good yeoman's wife; she is married to the rich old carpenter of Oxford town.130

In addition to the images which Speirs considers in this excellent commentary, one other figure seems worthy of special notice:

Full brighter was the shynyng of hir hewe
Than in the tour the noble yforged newe.
(I, 3255 f.)

For this simile, apparently of his own invention, Chaucer has turned from the English countryside to the scenes of his official life. Since the gold noble of the fourteenth century was a very beautiful coin,131 the comparison serves to emphasize Alisoun's beauty and at the same time perhaps to suggest qualities of her native wealth. Through the use of these short figures of speech in his portrayal of

131 See Skeat, op. cit., p. 100, n. 3256, who calls attention to the fact that nobles were coined in the Tower of London (as Chaucer states), "the principal place of the London mint."
the carpenter’s wife, Chaucer creates an amazingly vivid and suggestive picture.

The description of Absolon—the parish clerk, barber, and typical small-town dandy—contains fewer poetic images, but is scarcely less vivid. The simile of the fan used at the beginning of the portrait,

Crul was his heer, and as the gold it shoon,  
And strouted as a fanne large and brode,  
(I, 3314 f.)

shows a particularly fine sense of appropriateness since it accentuates in the initial appearance of this character the note of foppishness which makes him deserving of his final discomfiture. Other images associate Absolon with the country or with the small town. His eyes are "greye as goos" (I, 3317; and he wears over his light blue kirtle a gay surplice "as whit as is the blosme upon the rys" (I, 3324). This last simile suggests a spring-like quality as do the lines:

Embrouded was he, as it were a meede  
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede;  
(Gen Prol, I, 89 f.)

but the young Squire is spring-like and courtly, whereas Absolon is a middle class small-town dandy. The portrait ends with a humorous image which contributes to the comic element in this parish clerk’s character and to the comic tone of the tale as a whole. When Absolon swings the
censer on holy-days, he waves the incense with love-lorn
glances towards the ladies of the parish, and especially
towards the carpenter's pretty wife:

To looke on hire hym thoughte a myrie lyf,
She was so propre and sweete and likerous.
I dare wel seyn, if she hadde been a mous,
And he a cat, he wolde hire hente anon.
(I, 3344-3347)

The use of imagery in the portraits of Nicholas, Alisoun,
and Absolon--no less than in the General Prologue--thus
helps to make these characters vitally alive.

The portraits of Symkyn the miller and his wife and
daughter in the Reeve's Tale (early 1390's) are also
brilliantly executed. In these some of the most signifi-
cant images serve to emphasize this family's comic social
pride. At the beginning of the sketch of the miller
Chaucer says: "As any pecok he was proud and gay" (I, 3926);
and this comparison sets the tone of burlesque with which
he tells of Symkyn's ridiculous pride in his thriving
trade, in his many accomplishments, and particularly in
his wife, who, as the illegitimate daughter of the parson,
had been gently fostered in a nunnery and had brought him
a dowry of "ful many a panne of bras" (I, 3944). According
to Curry, the miller's pride is also symbolized in the
line: "As piled as an ape was his skulle" (I, 3935). Taking
piled to mean "thick and bristly," he argues that Chaucer intends to say that the miller's hair "comes far down over his wide, 'villainous low' forehead"; and hair of this sort, he points out, is mentioned by the physiognomists as "one of the signs of the proud-minded man." Since the head of the ape is covered with hair, Curry's definition of piled seems to provide a reasonable basis for Chaucer's comparison, and his physiognomical interpretation accords with what Chaucer says elsewhere concerning the miller's disposition. Nevertheless, there are strong reasons for a different explanation. Piled, as defined by Skeat, means "bare" or "bald," and this reading is supported by the fact that later in the tale (I, 4297-4306) the miller's wife mistook her husband's head for the white cap she supposed Aleyn to be wearing.

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132 Cf. OED, s. v. "Piled," ppl. a. 3: "Covered with pile, hair, or fur."

133 Medieval Sciences, p. 83.

134 Curry, loc. cit., cites a parallel by Giraldus Cambrensis, who states that Geoffrey, Archbishop of York, had "a large head with hair extending, like that of an ape, over the forehead even to his eyelids." Opera, Rolls Series, No. 21, ed. Brewer, IV, 240.


136 Cf. Manly, Canterbury Tales, loc. cit.
The interpretation of Symkyn's head as bald may at first glance seem to render Chaucer's comparison unrealistic since the head of the ape is not bald. And if Whiting is right in his assumption that the figure is proverbial, this may be the case, for proverbial comparisons are not always based on realistic details. It will be noted, however, that reference is not specifically made to the ape's head and that the Barbary ape, which inhabits North Africa and Gibraltar and which was the species most likely to have been known to Europe in the Middle Ages, has a naked flesh colored face and large naked callosities on the buttocks. Hence it seems reasonable to suppose that

137 Whiting lists the comparison as conventional but cites no parallels. See Chaucer's Use of Proverbs, p. 155.

138 Cf. the proverbial simile: "as naked as a jay-bird," which is common in some parts of the United States.

139 See "Barbary Ape," Encyclopaedia Britannica, III, 96; "Macaque," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XIV, 544; and "Barbary Ape," The New International Encyclopaedia (2nd ed., New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1928), XII-XIV, 535. The last reference states that "this ape is undoubtedly the 'Pithecus' of Aristotle and other ancient writers" and that "it was the animal which the Greeks and other ancient physicians dissected in order to obtain information in regard to human anatomy." Jusserand, Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages, p. 234, reproduces a fourteenth-century drawing which shows apes or tailless monkeys--apparently of the Barbary species--robbing a sleeping pedlar's box.
Chaucer and his contemporaries might naturally have thought of piled as referring to one or the other of these parts of the ape's body. Since the greater weight of argument is therefore for regarding Symkyn's head as bald rather than as thickly covered with hair, the physiognomical signification of pride which Curry finds in the ape image becomes extremely doubtful. Still the figure is not without suggestions which contribute to the characterization. As C. L. Shaver observes, the ape is referred to by medieval writers as a stock symbol of human unsightliness and of the uncanny and, by extension, the absurd; and it is of course these qualities in the miller's appearance and character that Chaucer wishes to emphasize. Moreover, the miller had an ape-like nose, that is, a nose "camus" (I, 3934) or "flat," which, as Curry points out, may be interpreted physiognomically as a sign of "lustfulness, desire for coition, and a love of things Venerian." 

In his description of the miller's wife Chaucer stresses pride by the statement: "she was proud, and peert as is a pyc" (I, 3950), the comparison with the magpie

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140 Cf. ParsT, X, 426: "... the buttokes of hem faren as it were the hyndre part of a she-ape in the fulle of the moone."

141 "Chaucer's 'Owles and Apes,'" MLN, LVIII (1943), 105.

142 Medieval Sciences, p. 85.
suggesting scorn and mockery since this bird is traditionally associated with chattering and scolding. Because of her kindred and her gentle breeding acquired at the nunnery, the wife thought any lady should be delighted to honor her. But "she was somdel smoterlich" (I, 3963); that is, she had a "smutch upon her reputation, on account of her illegitimacy," and was "always on her dignity and ready to take offense." Hence Chaucer remarks with exquisite satire: "She was as digne as water in a dich" (I, 3964), which means that she was like foul water "which keeps everyone at a proper distance."

The daughter, who is described as a well-grown girl of twenty years, with "buttokes brode," "brestes rounde and hye," and "right fair" hair, had a flat or "kamus" nose (I, 3974), which, like her father's, can be regarded as a physiognomical sign of lustfulness. Although Chaucer does not indicate that she had a ridiculous social pride, there may be a touch of humor or even of satire in his statement that she had "eyen greye as glas" (I, 3974). If he has in mind here the muddy gray English window glass, as he well may have since no one would suppose he intended to describe the miller's daughter as beautiful, the simile

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143 Skeat, op. cit., V, 119, n. 3963.
144 Ibid., V, 119, n. 3964.
may be humorous. But if he is referring to greye in the sense of vair and glas as the sparkling glass of Venice, then the figure is possibly satirical since such associations would be fitting for a beautiful aristocratic lady like the Prioress rather than for the flat-nosed daughter of a churlish miller.

Although the **Cook's Tale** (early 1390's) is but a fragment, it contains the memorable character sketch of the jolly dancing prentice called Perkyn Revelour. That the prentice was a disreputable character is certain. He loved the tavern better than the shop, played at dice in the streets with his fellows, and often took his master's earnings from the till box. The master, who could stand him no longer and bade him be off, compared him to a rotten apple which must be removed from the hoard:

"Wel bet is roten appul out of hoord
Than that it rotie al the remenaunt.
So fareth it by a riotous servaunt."

(I, 4406-4408)

But even though it is clear that Perkyn would come to no good, still there was much about him to admire. In appearance he was "a propre short felawe" and "Brown as a berye" (I, 4368). He was as full of love and love-making "As is the hyve ful of hony sweet" (I, 4373). And he was as "gaillard" as the "goldfynch in the Shawe" (I, 4367).

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145 See above, p. 240.
His liveliness and wildness were therefore like those of the merry wild bird, incapable of thought, given only to song and play. As Shelly remarks, "His pursuit of pleasure is so headlong and heedless! His energy is so intense, and his gayety so high-pitched! Life runs furiously in his veins. He is no product of modern slums, sodden and depressed, but a 'jolly prentys' full of health and high spirits. If he is riotous, it is because he suffers from the pressure of youth and of the zest for life not because he is really vicious."146 Certainly this interpretation of Perkyn is supported by the healthy, rural life depicted in the imagery which Chaucer applies to him.

In the Man of Law's Tale (c. 1390) there appears a two-stanza description of the heroine, Custance, the second stanza of which is composed almost entirely of images:

"In hire is heigh beautee, withoute pride,
Yowthe, withoute grenehede, or folye;
To alle hire werkes vertu is hir gyde;
Humblesse hath slayn in hire al tirannye.
She is mirour of alle curteisye;
Hire herte is verray chambre of hoolynesse,
Hir hand, ministre of fredam for almesse."

(II, 162-168)

146 The Living Chaucer, p. 251.
While the figures of speech in these lines are effective in emphasizing the noble qualities attributed to Custance, neither the catalogue of qualities nor the suggestions called forth by the figures succeed in making her seem fully alive, and the impression gained from this portrait, as indeed from the poem as a whole, is that she "is somewhere between a personification and a person." ^\(^{147}\)

The sketchy characterization might be explained on the grounds that the tale (in stanzas) is a rather early work which Chaucer has fitted into the Canterbury conception with slight alteration. ^\(^{148}\) But as Tatlock shows, all positive clues that have been detected point to a date around 1390. ^\(^{149}\) Moreover, it must be remembered that the Man of Law's Tale is a romantic Christian legend—a literary type in which persons are characteristically "none too clearly defined." ^\(^{150}\) This fact alone is perhaps

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\(^{147}\) Speirs, op. cit., p. 135.

\(^{148}\) Skeat, Pollard, Hales, and Ker have argued from the crudity of its plot that the story of Custance antedates Troilus. For a summary of the views of these commentators, see Tatlock, The Development and Chronology of Chaucer's Works, p. 175 and notes, and p. xi.

\(^{149}\) Ibid., p. 186-187. See also Robinson, op. cit., p. 795.

sufficient to account for the vagueness in Custance’s portrait as well as for Chaucer’s treatment of her in general.

The next portrait to be considered, that of the summoner in the tale told by the Friar (1393-1394), describes the corrupt character of a particular summoner, but, according to the remarks of the narrator in his prologue, is to be regarded as typical of his whole fraternity:

"... ye may wel knowe by the name
That of a somonour may no good be sayd....
A somonour is a rennere up and down
With mandementz for fornicacioun,
And is ybet at every townes ende."

(III, 1280-1285)

Most of the images employed in the description of the summoner serve to emphasize his craftiness in seizing victims for the archdeacon’s court. First, he is pictured as a hunter who used bawds as his falcons:

This false theef, this somonour, quod the Frere,
Hadde alwey bawdes redy to his hond,
As any hawk to lure in Englelond,
That tolde hym al the secree that they knewe.

(III, 1338-1341)

Again, he is said to be as skillful in detecting lechers as a hunting dog in distinguishing wounded deer:
For in this world nys dogge for the bowe
That kan an hurt deer from an hool yknowe
Bet than this somnour knew a sly lecchour,
Or an avowtier, or a paramour.

(III, 1369-1372)

In another instance he is pictured as a predatory animal:
"This somnour evere waitynge on his preye" (III, 1376).
Besides these images that convey so clearly the cunning and
diligence with which the summoner pursued offenders, there
is a comparison with Judas Iscariot—traditionally a
symbol of all that is dishonest and treacherous:

And right as Judas hadde purses smale,
And was a theef, right swich a theef was he.

(III, 1350 f.)

Such images produce a concrete impression which leaves no
doubt as to the corruptness of this summoner's character.

The Clerk's Tale (1386-1388) contains portraits of the young marquis Walter and of Grisilde, but only the

151 For reference to Judas as a thief, see the Gospel of St. John, XXII, 6. Skeat, op. cit., V, 324, n. 1350,
cites also the "Legend of Judas Iscariot," printed (from MS. Harl. 2277) in Early English Poems, ed. F. J. Furnivall

152 The Clerk's Tale, like the Man of Law's Tale, has usually been regarded as one of Chaucer's earlier works,
composed about 1373. See Skeat, op. cit., III, 454. But in recent years there has been a disposition to place it in
latter makes use of poetic imagery. The portrait of this heroine, who is usually regarded as "precariously poised between the human and non-human,"\(^{153}\) presents her before her marriage and typification of perfect wifely obedience and patience. Here, as Speirs has observed, she "is lent a measure of human substance as a peasant girl among a village folk and their beasts," though "even as such she is idealized (like the Plowman of the Prologue) by the Christian idea of the blessedness of poverty and of labour performed in 'reverence and charitee.'"\(^{154}\) The images in the portrait are used primarily to accentuate Grisilde's ideal qualities; yet they convey some suggestion of life and thus contribute in some degree also to her humanization:

... for to speke of vertuous beautee,
Thanne was she oon the fairest under the sonne;
For povreliche yfostered up was she,
No likerous lust was thurgh hire herte yronne.
Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne
She drank, and for she wolde vertu plese,
She knew wel labour, but noon ydel ese.

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,
Yet in the brest of hir virginitee
Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage.
(IV, 211-220)

\(^{153}\) See, for example, Speirs, op. cit., p. 153, from whom the above words are quoted. Shelly, op. cit., pp. 272-283, finds her a more plausible and true-to-life character.

The figurative language which Chaucer has employed in this passage is of course much less striking and less suggestive than that in many of his portraits, but its restraint and chasteness are well suited not only to the character of the heroine but to the style of the tale as a whole.

In the Squire's Tale (1393-1400) appear portraits of three figures: the king of Tartary, the falcon, and her false tercelet lover. The first of these has only one image. King Cambyuskan, Chaucer states, was a lord outstanding in many ways and "Of his corage as any centre stable" (V, 22), the word centre meaning the point or fulcrum about which something turns and hence serving as an emblem of stability.155 In the description of the falcon there is likewise a single image. To evoke pity for this bird that continually cried and screamed and tore herself with her beak because her lover had proved false, Chaucer says:

... ther nys tygre, ne so cruel beest,  
That dwelleth outher in wode or in forest,  
That nolde han wept, if that he wepe koude,  
For sorwe of hire, she shrighete alwye so loude.  
(V, 419-422)

The portrait given by the falcon of her tercelet lover, however, makes free use of imagery, all of which serves

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155 The term centre is used especially to indicate the center of the earth, which according to the old astronomy was supposed to be the fixed center of the universe. See Skeat, op. cit., V, 371, n. 20.
primarily to emphasize the latter's pretended courtly qualities and his falseness in abandoning her for a kite. When this tercelet came to woo her, the falcon relates, he had seemed the "welle of alle gentillnesse" (V, 505). Though he was full of treachery and falseness, these qualities were so "wrapped" under "humble cheere," "hewe of trouthe," "plesaunce," and "bisy peyne" that one could not have guessed that his manner was all pretense, so deeply "in greyn he dyed his colours" (V, 507-511). Just "as a serpent hit hym under floures" until "he may seen his tyme for to byte," so "this god of love, this ypocryte" performed his duties and courtesies and attentions with all the delicacy pertaining to the "gentillesse of love" (V, 512-517). As with "a toumbe" where all "is faire above" but "under is the corps," such "was this ypocrite, bothe coold and hoot" (V, 518-520). He wept and wailed for such a long time and pretended to pay court for so many years that, "Al innocent of his crowned malice" (V, 526), she gave him her heart. This "tigre, ful of doublenesse" (V, 543), the falcon says, was so like a gentle lover

"That nevere Jason ne Parys of Troye--
Jason? certes, ne noon oother man
Syn Tameth was, that alderfirst bigan
To loven two, as written folk biforn--
Ne nevere, syn the firste man was born,
Ne koude man, by twenty thousand part,
Countrefete the sophymes of his art,
Ne were worthy unbokelen his galoche,
Ther doublenesse or feyning sholde approche.
(V, 548-556)
Indeed, his manner was a "hevene" for any woman (V, 558), no matter how wise she might be,

"So peynted he and kembbe art point-devys
As wel his words as his contenaunce.
(V, 560 f.)

These images, which so strongly accentuate the qualities of the perfect lover, create through their courtly character a background and tone which help to transform the birds into authentic figures of courtly romance.

At the beginning of the Physician's Tale (1386-1388) there is a rather extended description of Virginia, in which imagery is employed to stress the young heroine's exceptional beauty and purity. In a manner well suited to the pompous Physician, Chaucer has him use the somewhat stilted and learned device of quoting what Nature would have said of this girl whom she had endowed with such supreme excellence:

... "Lo! I, Nature,
Thus kan I forme and peynte a creature,
Whan that me list; who kan me countrefete?
Pigmalion noght, though he ay forge and bete,
Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel seyn,
Apelles, Tanzis, sholde werche in veyn
Outher to grave, or peynte, or forge, or bete,
If they presumed one to countrefete.
For He that is the formere principal
Hath maked me his vicaire general.
To forme and peynten erthely creaturis
Right as me list, and ech thyng in my cure is
Under the moone, that may wane and waxe;
And for my werk right no thyng wol I axe;
My lord and I been ful of oon accord.
I made hire to the worship of my lord;
So so I alle myne other creatures,
What colour that they han, or what figures."
(VI, 11-28)
Continuing the description of Virginia's beauty, the Physician states that just as Nature

... can peynte a lilie whit,
And reed a rose, right with swich peynture
She peynted hath this noble creature,

(VI, 32-34)

before her birth, wherever such colors were appropriate, while Phoebus had dyed the long tresses of her hair so that it was "lyk to the stremes of his burned hete" (VI, 38).

But if her beauty was extraordinary, a thousand times more so was her virtue. She was chaste in spirit as well as in body, "For which she floured in virginitee" (VI, 44). Though she was "wis as Pallas" (VI, 49), and her eloquence was always womanly and plain, she used no counterfeit termes to seem wise. "Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrie"; for wine given to the young, says the narrator, "dooth Venus encrease," just as when "man in fyr wol casten oille or grease" (VI, 58-60). The learned or semilearned images used here differ greatly from the short conversational figures of speech used in the sketches in the General Prologue or in such descriptions as those of Nicholas, Alisoun, and Absolon in the Miller's Tale; yet they are appropriate to the Physician and help to create a portrait of ideal beauty and virtue—a portrait which Raymond Preston finds "reminiscent of the Blessed Virgin in St. Ambrose of Milan."

The employment of imagery for purposes of satire has been noted in several of the portraits previously considered. The supreme example of imagery turned to such use occurs, however, in the description of the knight in Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas, which burlesques the typical hero of the poorer and more absurd metrical romances of the poet's day and possibly the Flemish bourgeois knights who aped the manners of English and French aristocracy as well. In this portrait one notes, first of all, the satirical name Thopas (Topaz), which, as Skeat remarks, is "an excellent title for such a gem of a knight." The associations evoked by this knight's birthplace—

Yb0rn he was in fer contree
In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,
At Poperyng, in the place—
(VII, 718-720)

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157 Although some students of Chaucer have assigned this tale to 1383-1384, it is usually held to have been written in the Canterbury period. See Robinson, op. cit., p. 842, and above p. 89, n. 152.

158 Op. cit., V, 183. A largely conjectural and unconvincing explanation for Chaucer's choice of this name is given by Hugo Lange, "Chaucer's Boethinsubersetzung: Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis Chaucers und Froissarts," Deutsche Litteraturzeitung, XXXVII (1916), 1299-1303, 1669-1672, 1827-1832. According to Lange, Chaucer was playing upon Froissart's "Meliador, ou le chevalier au soleil d'or" and took Meliador to mean "honey-gold." As an equivalent for this term he adopted Thopas, since in heraldry the topaz corresponds to the blazon "or" and to the planet Sol. Lange notes further that it was appropriate for the "honey-gold" knight to have a golden shield and saffron hair.
probably also contribute to the burlesque, for in the fourteenth century Poperinghe had a reputation for its unwarlike character and for the stupidity of its men. The fact that Sir Thopas was born in Poperinghe may indicate as J. M. Manly believes, that the jibe is intended for the knights of Flanders, who were not respected by English aristocracy, though this is not a necessary conclusion. On this point W. W. Lawrence remarks: "... it has always seemed to me that the joke here is that the reader is led to expect that the knight came from a far-off land of romantic character—'yborn he was in a fer contree'—which turns out to be no further 'beyond the sea' than Poperinghe, just one of the commercial towns in Flanders. And how prosaic a spot! It is as if a French romancer in France were to make the birthplace of his hero Liverpool.

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159 On the first of these points, Manly, *Canterbury Tales*, p. 630, n. 1910, quotes Froissart, *Johnes*, ch. CXXXIII, who represents the bishop of Norwich, leader of the so-called Crusade of 1383, as saying: "We cannot better ride to our profit than to enter into the frontier of Flanders by the sea coast, as to the towns of bourbourg, of Dunkirk, ... of Ypres, and of Poperinghe; in these said countries, as I am informed by the burgesses of Ghent, they had never war that grieved them." The stupidity of the men, as Manly points out, is enshrined in this Latin couplet composed after the king of France had devastated Ypres and Poperinghe in 1328 and recorded in the *Cronyche van Nederlent*: "Fland-derences stultos francus rex Cassel multos Stravit mille ter C bis duo sexque quarter."

160 See Manly's edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, p. 628.
or Leeds." The "comic sound of the name Poperinghe to English ears," Lawrence further adds, may also be "partly responsible for this 'birthplace.'" 161

The imagery which Chaucer employs for describing Sir Thopas' physical appearance, clothes, and actions satirize the hero by calling forth suggestions quite inappropriate for a knight of aristocratic lineage. His face as white "as payndemayn" (VII, 725), or "fine white bread"; his complexion "lyk scarlet in grayn" (VII, 727), a dye for cloth; and his hair and beard "lyk saffroun" (VII, 730), a coloring for pies, meats, and confectionary—all suggest a burgher or tradesman, as do his "shoon of cordewaine," his "hosen broun" from Bruges, and his robe "of sylklatoun," which "coste many a jane" (VII, 732-735). Inappropriate too were the "grey goshauk" which he carried "on honde" when he rode hawking by the river (VII, 737 f.) 162 and his expertness in such plebeian sports as archery and "wrastlynge" for the prize of a ram (VII, 739-741). 163 In view of Sir Thopas' birth in Flanders, these figures of speech and details may serve to burlesque the Flemish bourgeois knights, as Manly


162Manly, Canterbury Tales, p. 631, n. 1928, cites Dame Berners' Boke of Hawkyng (fo. d 3), which gives the names of hawks appropriate for emperor, king, prince, duke, earl, baron, knight, squire, lady, and young man, and then adds: "And yit ther be moo kyndis of hawkes. Ther is a Goshawke and that hawke is for a yeman."

163Archery belonged to yeomen. Cf. Gen Prol, I, 104-108. In earlier days wrestling was practiced by the nobility as well as by the lower classes, but in Chaucer's time was not a knightly accomplishment. See Manly, Canterbury Tales, p. 631, n. 1930 f., and cf. Gen Prol, I, 548.
has argued, though the main object of burlesque seems to
be the hero of the degenerate romances.  

Although Sir Thopas has long been regarded as liter-
ary satire, Manly sets forth the view that "the object of
satire was the ridiculous pretentiousness" of the Flemmings,
that "Chaucer's primary object ... was not so much to bur-
lesque the minstrel romances as to produce a satire of the
countrymen of Sir Thopas, and that his contemporaries en-
joyed its subject matter even more than its form." Such
satire, Manly contends, would have been highly appropriate,
during the visit of the Flemish embassy [in 1383] ... or
immediately after it." See "Sir Thopas, a Satire," Essays
and Studies by Members of the English Association, XIII
(1928), 52-53, and Canterbury Tales, pp. 628-631. A few
years before Manly advanced this view, Miss Lillian
Winstanley, though admitting the tale to be a burlesque
of the metrical romances, maintained that it is also in-
tended as a satire on a particular Fleming, Philip van
Artevelde. See her edition of the Procoress's Tale and the
Tale of Sir Thopas (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922),
pp. lxv ff. In his article in PMLA, 81-91, Lawrence takes
issue with these interpretations and argues convincingly
that the chief object of the satire is literary. In refuta-
tion of Miss Winstanley's theory, he points out that the
tale contains no reference, "open or concealed," to Philip
and that this view implies that Chaucer inserted into the
Canterbury Tales "satire of a man long since dead." As for
Manly's contention that Chaucer's "primary object" was to
poke fun at Sir Thopas' countrymen, he notes that the only
direct evidence is the statement that the knight was born in
Flanders. He finds no reason for believing the tale to have
been written in 1383 or immediately afterward, pointing out
that if it had been written then satire directed at the
Flemish embassy would have been stale by the time it was in-
corporated into the Canterbury Tales. It is much more
likely, he thinks, that Sir Thopas was planned for the parti-
cular dramatic situation "in which it is so effectively intro-
duced." For discussion of the dramatic effectiveness of the
tale as literary satire, see especially R. M. Lumiansky, Of
Sondry Folk: A Study of the Dramatic Principle in the
Canterbury Tales (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1955),
p. 90 ff. In connection with the literary satire in Sir
Thopas, see also A. Mcl. Trounce, "The English Tail-Rhyme
Romances," Medium Aevum, I (1932), 87-108, 168-182; II (1933),
34-57, 188-198; III (1934), 30-50. Trounce, who shows that
the romances written in the tail-rhyme stanza represent a
school of East Midland poetry, argues convincingly that it
is the absurd side of romantic thought and of artificial
style, not these romances as a genre, which is the subject
of Chaucer's ridicule.
The reasons for the bourgeois elements in the description are not far to seek. Cervantes has shown how effectively knighthood can be rendered ridiculous by the intrusion of the homely detail of low life. Moreover, the English romances such as Chaucer is supposed to be caricaturing were intended for the simpler middle class folk who could read no French, or not read at all. In these pieces courtly elegances are often neglected. Probably Chaucer felt this, and deliberately made his carpet knight plebeian.165

But besides associating Sir Thopas with things plebian, the imagery in the portrait possibly serves to satirize the typical hero of the romance in another way. According to Carrol Camden, Jr., Chaucer has made use of physiognomical signs which would have been recognized in the fourteenth century as indicating a timid and cowardly man. Quoting from Metham's Physiognomy, Camden points out that the knight's hair and beard "lyk saffroun" (VII, 730) and his "semely nose" (VII, 729) signify "ferffulnes" and "cowardyse," while his white face indicates weakness and effeminacy, a white complexion being more suited to a woman than a man. Thopas' "lippes red as rose" (VII, 726) likewise serve to show that he had feminine attributes, "for the Middle English ideal of personal beauty required that a woman have red lips." There is an additional suggestion that he is effeminate and cowardly, Camden believes,

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in the name Thopas, since the topaz "was worn by young girls to protect their purity." With such a name it was quite fitting that this knight should be

... chaast and no lechour,  
And sweete as is the brembul flour  
That bereth the rede hepe.  

(VII, 745-747)\(^{167}\)

The details which Chaucer used in his description of Sir Thopas are in some instances quite contradictory, as in his statement that the knight's face was white as fine bread, but that his complexion was like scarlet dye. Indeed the mixture of associations produced by images which refer in turn to items, activities, and qualities bourgeois, plebian, cowardly and effeminate creates an altogether inconsistent effect. But such inconsistency is clearly Chaucer's intention, for it contributes significantly to the effect of humor and burlesque.

In the portrait of Chauntecleer in the Nun's Priest's Tale (1393-1400) Chaucer again makes use of imagery for burlesque, but whereas the images in the description of


Sir Thopas serve to lower a knight to the level of commoner, here they have the opposite purpose of raising a cock to the level of aristocratic gentleman. Against the sober realistic background of the poor widow's poultry yard, Chauntecleer is presented with dazzling mock-heroic brilliance:

His voys was murier than the murie orgon
On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon.
Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge
Than is a clokke or an abbey orlogge....
His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailled as it were a castel wal;
Lyk asure were his legges and his toon;
His nayles whitter than the lylye flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.

(VII, 2852-2864)

The splendid similes of such items as fine coral, jet, lilies, burnished gold, and battlemented castle walls associate Chantecleer with courtly life, while the images used to glorify his crowing call attention to that gift of which he was especially vain and which later was the agency of his fall. The lavish display of colors—red, black, azure, white, and burnished gold—not only represents the markings of an actual cock¹⁶⁸ but also calls to mind the

168 See Lalia Phipps Boone, "Chauntecleer and Partlet Identified," MLN, LXIV (1949), 78-81. Miss Boone shows that Chauntecleer's description seems to fit a rooster of the breed called Golden Spangled Hamburg, which exists today and "existed in England for an unknown time before the eighteenth century." As described in The American Standard of Perfection, published by the American Poultry Association, Inc. (Buffalo, N. Y., 1940), p. 310, the cock of this breed has a "bright red" comb, a "bright red" face, "leaden blue" legs and toes, a "dark brown" bill, a "golden bay" neck "with lustrous greenish-black stripes down the middle of each feather," and a "clear golden bay" body and breast.
splendor of heraldic blazonry. Through these images, Chaucer creates a masterpiece of comic effect in which Chauntecleer is made the strutting parody of a proud and lordly gentleman.

The last of the portraits to be dealt with in this discussion are those of the Canon, in the *Canon's Yeoman's Prologue* (1393-1400) and of the alchemists, in the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* (1939-1400). For the Canon, who, with his Yeoman, overtakes the pilgrims at Boughton under Blee, Chaucer employs only a relatively few figures of speech and symbolic details, but these help to produce a picture of notable distinctness. The clothes of this man, who so suddenly intruded upon the company, were "blake" with "a

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169 J. L. Hotson, who sees in the *Nun's Priest's Tale* a representation of the quarrel between Henry Bolingbroke and Mowbray in 1398, shows that Chauntecleer's colors correspond exactly with the colors found on Bolingbroke's coat of arms when he entered the lists at Coventry, and that Chaucer mentions several of them by heraldic names. Moreover, he notes that in contemporary literature Bolingbroke is constantly referred to as a bird: "an eron," "aquila," "egle," "falcon," "blessed bredd," "beu brid." The fox, according to Hotson, represents Mowbray, because he is called "colfox," and one of Mowbray's esquires was named Colfox. Because of the far-fetched coincidences which Hotson offers as evidence, such as the name of Colfox, his interpretation seems most unlikely. Yet his comparison of Bolingbroke's coat of arms with Chauntecleer's colors may have some significance for the imagery in the cock's portrait, since it provides evidence that the specific combination of colors employed by Chaucer occurs in heraldry and could have suggested a coat of arms to the poet's audience, though not necessarily the arms of Henry Bolingbroke. For Hotson's theory, see his article "Colfox vs. Chauntecleer," *PMLA*, XXXIX (1924), 762-781.
whyte surplys" underneath—a detail which would seem to mark him as a canon, though Chaucer states that he was not certain of what the man was until he considered for a time "how that his cloke was sowed to his hood" (VIII, 571). Because the Canon had ridden in pursuit of the company as though "he were wood" (VIII, 576), his aged dappled gray horse was covered with sweat and foam, and spots of white foam which had got on the Canon's black clothing made him appear "al flekked as a pye" (VIII, 565). And the Canon himself, who had placed a large burdock leaf under his hood because of the sweat and the hot sun, was sweating so magnificently that...

... it was joye for to seen hym swete!
His forheed dropped as a stillatorie,
Were ful of plantayne and of paritorie.
(VIII, 579-581)

As Lowes has remarked, Chaucer never surpassed in its kind his initial description of the Canon, for "never elsewhere has a hot and sweating human being been metamor-

170 Skeat, op. cit., V, 416, n. 557, quotes from Rock, Church of Our Fathers (London: 1903-1904), II, 84, the statement that some families of canons regularly required their members, whenever they went out of the house, "to wear over their cassock a linen surplice, and above that a large, black cope."
phosed with such delectation into a masterpiece.\textsuperscript{171} Moreover, it will be noted that the fine simile of the "stillatorie" is highly appropriate for an alchemist. But at this point the reader does not know that the Canon practices alchemy, and despite his distinct visualization he is still a mystery.

The mystery is exposed, however, by the Canon's Yeoman, who in the first part of his tale relates freely the particulars of his master's unsuccessful attempts to turn the baser metals into gold and then characterizes the race of alchemists as a whole. These men, according to the Yeoman, are so obsessed with the belief of ultimate success in their pursuit of alchemy that they cannot get enough of it. But alchemy is a dangerous, though alluring pursuit—"a bitter-sweet" (VII, 878)—for though they have but one sheet in which to wrap themselves at night and a poor coat to walk in during the day, they will sell both to forward their relentless but fruitless quest. And ever afterward, wherever they go,

\textsuperscript{171} Geoffrey Chaucer and the Development of His Genius, p. 238. Lowes makes this statement in regard to the Canon's Yeoman, to whom he apparently thinks the portrait applies. But as Skeat op. cit., V, 417, n. 565, and Robinson op. cit., p. 867, n. 565, point out, the word he in line 565 refers to the Canon. Hence it is reasonable to suppose that the lines which follow refer to him rather than to his Yeoman.
Man may hem knowe by smel of brymstoone.
For al the world they styken as a goot;
Hir savour is so rammyssh and so hoot
That though a man from hem a mile be,
The savour wole infecte hym, trusteth me.
And thus by smel, and by thredebare array,
If that men liste, this folk they knowe may.

(VIII, 885-891)

Through the olfactory images in these lines, the Yeoman thus derisively distorts the alchemists into caricatures; like devils they are identifiable by the "hoot" and "rammyssh" stench of brimstone which surrounds them.172

From the foregoing examination of the imagery in Chaucer's portraits emerge some fairly definite conclusions. It is apparent, first of all, that there is an astounding abundance of imagery in descriptions of this kind throughout all periods of his poetry, though one finds instances, and particularly in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, where, apparently for the sake of variety, Chaucer has presented characters entirely or almost entirely by means of direct statement. Further, it is evident that the imagery thus employed is functional rather than decorative in character and that in the successive poems it shows a development both in the functions which it serves and in its degree of suggestive power.

172 In connection with this passage Raymond Preston, op. cit., pp. 281-282, makes the interesting observation that "hell, now appearing a hygienic eternity of distrust and terror of war, an air-conditioned nightmare, was to the imagination of an age of bad drains, sufficiently, a stench."
In the portrait of Blanche in the Book of the Duchess, Chaucer uses images to promote clear visualization and to accentuate traits of character, and these uses remain important in the descriptions throughout the poems. With the portrait of the goddess Fame in the House of Fame, he begins to employ symbolic details to suggest character traits. The descriptions of Anelida in Anelida and Arcite, of Criseyde in the Troilus, and of Alceste and the god of Love in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women add no new uses of imagery, but the images in all except the first of these show an increasing power of suggestiveness. Particularly one notes the multiple meanings conveyed by the figures and symbolic details applied to Alceste. Then in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, Chaucer turns all his previous uses of imagery to the realistic portrayal of the varied company of pilgrims and introduces some new uses as well. Here, in such portraits as those of the Prioress, the Monk, and the Friar, images help to create satire, while physiognomical signs and indications of disease serve indirectly to characterize pilgrims such as the Miller, the Reeve, the Pardoner, the Summoner, and the Cook. Scarcely less varied in function and in a number of instances equally as effective are the images in the portraits of the tales. The rural freshness in the description of Alisoun, the satire in the descriptions of Symkyn the miller and his wife and in Sir
Thopas, and the mock-heroic treatment of Chauntecleer
all help to mark the highest peak of an artistry in the
use of poetic imagery which, as this study has attempted
to demonstrate, was reached by the poet through successive
stages of development.
CHAPTER VI

CHAUCER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD IMAGERY

A poet of Chaucer's inquiring mind and unquestionable knowledge of the theories of composition current in his day naturally would have some rather definite views on the figurative rhetorical colors which constitute poetic imagery. It is therefore the object of this essay to examine the poet's scattered and fragmentary utterances on literary art in an attempt to determine these views and further to compare them with the conclusions reached in the preceding essays regarding his actual practices.

Such study of Chaucer's comments is, of course, beset with numerous difficulties. In the first place, Chaucer is not a subjective poet, and it is not easy to determine all the precise implications of his remarks. As one critic so aptly puts it, the poet "does not always remove his mask when he draws the curtain aside and speaks directly to his audience, and hence the audience must beware of making 'earnest of game.'"¹

The student of Chaucer's critical opinions must be cautious also in imputing to him the ideas expressed by

his characters. Indeed, more than once the poet seems to give warning against such misunderstandings. He has the Nun's Priest disclaim "the cokkes wordes" (NPT, VII, 3265), and before presenting the tales of the Miller and the Reeve he tells the reader:

The Millere is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;  
So was the Reeve, and other manye mo,  
And harlotrie they tolden bothe two.  
Avyseth yow, and put me out of blame.  

(MillT Prol, 1, 3183-3186)

Chaucer's comments which apply to imagery are further complicated by the fact that they are for the most part linked almost inextricably with his utterances on rhetoric as a whole and on language and poetic materials in general. Yet despite these difficulties, the study of Chaucer's critical remarks is fairly rewarding. Considered in connection with his actual practices, these utterances help to make clear his attitude toward imagery and thus add to one's understanding of him as a poet. Moreover, an examination of this kind will serve to summarize and emphasize the more significant conclusions reached in the foregoing studies.
Although no critical comment on individual figurative devices appears in Chaucer's writings, there are several passages in which opinion is expressed concerning the rhetorical colors as a whole. In most of these the speaker seems to protest against the use of the colors or professes to care little and know nothing of them. Such an instance appears in the *House of Fame* in this question which the Eagle puts to Chaucer:

"Have ye not preyed thus simply,  
Without any subtilite  
Of speche, or gret prolixite  
Of termes of philosophie,  
Of figures of poetrie,  
Or colours of rethorike?"

(II, 854-859)

Again, one notes these words of the Franklin:

I lerned never rethorike, certeyn;  
Thyng that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyn.  
I sleep nevere on the Mount of Pernaso,  
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Scithero.  
Colours ne knowe I none, withouten drede,  
But swiche colours as growen in the mede,

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Reference is made, however, to three colors which may be figurative in character: the proverb, the example (*exemplum*), and the similitude (*similitudo*). The proverb, which Chaucer does not distinguish from the *sententia*, is mentioned twenty-eight times. As examples, see: *HF*, I, 289; *Tr*, II, 397; *III*, 293; *WB Prol*, III, 284, 325; *MerchT*, IV, 1567; *Buk*, 25. For mention of the example, see: *Tr*, I, 759 f.; *KnT*, I, 1953 f., 2039; *Mel*, VII, 1095; *NPT*, VII, 3106-3108. The word similitude appears in four places: *MillT*, I, 3228; *SqT*, V 480; *SecNT*, VIII, 431; and *Bo*, III, pr. 5, 25-30; but only the last two instances refer to the rhetorical figure.
Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte.
Colours of rethoryk been to me queynte;
My spirit feeleth noght of swich mateere.
(Frankl Prol, V, 719-727) 

In similar manner, when the Host asks the Clerk of Oxenford for a tale, he speaks contemptuously of the rhetoric which the scholar learned at college:

Youre termes, youre colours, and youre figures,
Keepe him in stoor til so be that ye endite
Heigh style, as whan that men to kynges write.
(Cl Prol, IV, 16-18)

These passages have been interpreted by some commentators as evidence of Chaucer's scorn of the colors of rhetoric. C. S. Baldwin, for example, discovers an attack in each of the allusions and, in summarizing the attitudes of both Chaucer and Dante, says: "... within that century Chaucer, who knew them [the conventions of rhetoric] too, laughed them away." Yet it will be observed that none of the specific remarks on the colors is made by the poet himself and that each is appropriate to the particular

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3 The Squire likewise exclaims that he cannot describe the beauty of Canace because he lacks the necessary command of English and rhetoric. See SqT, V, 34-41.

Moreover, the conception that Chaucer is denouncing the colors in these speeches is not in conformity with his actual practices. As Traugott Naunin has demonstrated, rhetorical devices are to be found in all periods of the poet's work; and, as the present studies have attempted to show (ch. II), his use of the colors includes every figurative pattern authorized by the medieval rhetoricians. Hence there seems to be no real basis for supposing that the passages quoted above indicate Chaucer's own views.

A further direct allusion to rhetoric by one of Chaucer's characters, however, seems worthy of careful consideration in connection with the poet's attitudes. The Clerk responds to the admonition of the Host by telling a

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5 For discussion of the appropriateness of the passages, see Florence Teager, "Chaucer's Eagle and the Rhetorical Colors," FMLA, XLVII (1932), 410-418, and Marie Padgett Hamilton, op. cit., pp. 148-158. Miss Teager points out that the Eagle's lecture on sound and, indeed, the speech quoted above are rich in rhetorical colors. And Mrs. Hamilton observes that the Eagle's comment serves mainly as his "device for emphasizing his skill in rhetoric and dialectics. He wishes it understood that his training ... has not sanctioned the terms of philosophy or colors of rhetoric at the expense of simplicity and directness, and further demonstrates—and here the joke is on Chaucer—that he knows the wisdom of suiting discourse to audience." Mrs. Hamilton shows further that the passages in which the Squire and Franklin disclaim a knowledge of rhetoric represent a rhetorical expedient used effectively by many writers to win attention.

6 See Der Einfluss der mittelalterlichen Rhetorik auf Chaucers Dichtung, and also Dorothy Everett, Some Reflections on Chaucer's "Art Poetical."
tale composed by another clerk—one who turned rhetoric into luminous poetry:

"Fraunceys Petrak, the lauriat poete,
Highte this clerk, whos rethorike sweete
Enlumyned al ytaille of poetrie."

(CI Prol, IV, 31-33)

This scholar then demonstrates that he is altogether competent to pass judgment on rhetoric, even in a great poet like Petrarch:

"I seye that first with heigh stile he enditeth,
Er he the body of his tale writeth,
A prohemye, in the which discryveth he
Pemond, and of Saluces the contree,
And speketh of Apennyn, the hilles hye,
That been the boundes of West Lumbardye,
And of Mount Vesulus in special, ...
The which a long thyng were to devyse.
And trewely, as to my juggement,
Me Thynketh it a thyng impertinent,
Save that he wole conveyen his mateere."

(CI Prol, IV, 41-47, 52-55)

Here, as in the passages previously noted, Baldwin contends that rhetoric and high style are the objects of attack. But it seems clear that what the Clerk censures is Petrarch's prologue, in which the rhetoric serves no functional purpose and which in its entirety is irrelevant, excepting that the poet wishes "to conveyen his mateere."  

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8 In this phrase the Clerk makes use of a figurative color, but a functional use. The word conveyen, which must be interpreted here to mean "introduce" or "impart," has the literal meaning of "escort." See Robinson, op. cit., p. 814, n. 55.
Although this comment does not come from Chaucer, it nevertheless seems to reflect his own attitude; for the attack on irrelevancy and artificiality—with its implied preference for functional use of rhetoric and imagery—accords not only with the poet's frequent protests against extraneous matter and prolixity, but also with his pronouncements concerning the importance of function in literary art in general. "For o fyn is al that evere I telle," he says in one place in Troilus (Tr, II, 1596); and in another he remarks: "Th'entente is al, and not the lettres space" (V, 1630). Similarly, in the Man of Lawe's Tale he states:

Me list nat of the chaf, ne of the stree,
Maken so long a tale as of the corn.
What sholde I tellen of the roialtee
At mariaghe, or which cours goth biforn;

9For Chaucer's comments of this sort, see especially BD, 215-220; HF, 1299, 1341, 1505 f.; PE, 326; Tr, I, 141-147; II, 955, 1299, 1564-1568, 1595 f.; III, 513, 604, 1676 f.; IV, 15-17; V, 1032, 1765-1769; LGW, I, 616-621; II, 953-955; III, 995-997, 1002 f., 1184 f., 1552 f.; VI, 2025; VIII, 2403; Mars, 209 f. For similar comments by Chaucer's characters, see: LGW Prol F, 570-577; KnT, 993-1000, 1187-1189, 2206, 2479-2482, 2919-2924; MLT, II, 374; WB Prol, 829-831; SqT, V, 73 f.

10This opinion is also assigned to Pandarus, who is himself an accomplished rhetorician: "Nece, alwey, lo! to the laste,/How so it be that some men hem delite/With subtyl art hire tales for to endite,/Yet for al that, in hire entencioun,/Hire tale is al for som conclusiou," II, 255-259; "... Th'ende is every tales strengthe," II, 260.
Who bloweth in a trumpe or in an horn?
The fruyt of every tale is for to seye.

(II, 701-706)

Important also in this connection are these lines from the House of Fame, where Chaucer deliberately disavows writing poetry merely to display his artistry:

O God of science and of lyght,  
Apollo, thurgh thy grete myght,  
This lytel laste bok thou gyel  
Nat that I wilne for maistrye,  
Here art poetical be shewed;  
But for the rym is lyght and lewed,  
Yit make hyt sumwhat agreable,  
Though som vers fayle in a sille;  
And that I do no diligence  
To shewe crafte, but o sentence.

(III, 1091-1100)

In view of these utterances on the importance of function in poetry, it therefore seems reasonable to suppose that the implications concerning rhetoric and imagery in the Clerk's speech represent Chaucer's own views.

That Chaucer recognized the importance of function in the use of figurative colors may be observed more directly, however, in a few passages in which he humorously ridicules bookish images employed merely for the sake of artificial elegance. In Troilus and Criseyde (II, 904 f.), after referring to the sun by such "literary" figures as "the dayes honour," "the hevenes ye," and "the nyghtes foo," he says, "al this clepe I the sonne." A similar instance appears in the Franklin's Tale (V, 1015-1018):
But sodeynly bigonne revel news
Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe,
For th'orisonste hath reft the sonne his lyght,—
This is as much to scye as it was nyght!

In both of these passages Chaucer is, of course, primarily concerned with creating humor, but the fact that he does so by ridiculing extravagant, ornamental figures clearly indicates his attitude toward imagery of this kind. The same view is also expressed in the Nun's Priest's allusion to Geoffrey de Vinsauf and the famous lament for King Richard in his Poetria nova:

O Gaufred, deere maister soverayn,
That whan thy worthy kyng Richard was slayn
With shot, compleynedest his deeth so soore,
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy loore
The Friday for to chide, as diden ye?
For on a Friday, soothly, slayn was he.
Thanne wolde I shewe yow how that I koude pleyne
For Chauntecleres drede and his peyne.
(NPT, VII, 3347-3354)

There can be no doubt that the purpose in these lines is satirical, and the object of ridicule is the excess in Geoffrey's intentionally serious but actually comic exclamatio. This passage spoken by the Nun's Priest,

Indeed the entire tale of the Nun's Priest burlesques too extravagant rhetoric. Yet one should not infer from the above passage that Chaucer is making a full scale attack upon Geoffrey de Vinsauf and his Poetria. It will be remembered that the examples in Geoffrey's treatise are by no means always turgid and that they enjoyed the compliment of Chaucer's study and imitation. On the latter point, see Manly, Chaucer and the Rhetoricians; Kittredge, "Chauceriana," MP, VII (1910), 481; and Marie Padgett Hamilton, "Notes on Chaucer and the Rhetoricians," PMLA, XLVII (1932), 403-409.
like those in which Chaucer and the Franklin ridicule their
own bookish and decorative figures of speech, presents a
view consistent with the remarks of the Clerk and with the
poet's pronouncements on the importance of function in
poetry generally. All of these utterances are thus found
to imply a preference for functional use of the colors and
hence of poetic imagery\(^{12}\)—an attitude which is in full

\(^{12}\)This view is, of course, opposed to the rhetoricians' conception of the figurative colors as ornaments of style—a conception which suggests that such figures are something "extra" and not essential to what is being said. Yet a functional view of imagery corresponds closely with the general philosophy of Chaucer's period. As Mrs. Hamilton, "Chaucer's Utterances on Literary Art," pp. 15-16, emphasizes, "the Middle Ages, following Aristotle and the New Testament, judged a thing by its effective performance of its characteristic function," a doctrine epitomized in this statement by Pandarus: "Wo worth the faire gemme vertulees! No worth that herbe also that dooth no boote," Tr, II, 34.4 f. This creed, which is implicit throughout Chaucer's poetry, is expressed directly in such passages as the Manciple's long speech on the text: "The word moot node accorde with the dede," MancT, IX, 208-222; and in the definition of "gentilesse": "... he is gentil that dooth gentil dedis," WBT, III, 1169. See also WBT, III, 1109-1176; and all of Gentilesse. Dante, from whom Chaucer learned much, makes this explicit statement of the doctrine and applies it to the art of discourse: "Everything is good of its kind which effects that for which it is ordained, and the better it does this, the more of goodness it has. Hence we say that a man is a good man who lives the life of contemplation or action, for which he by nature is ordained; we apply the term 'good' to a horse which runs vigorously and far, for which thing he is ordained; we call a sword good which cuts hard things well for which it is ordained. Thus speech, which is ordained to make manifest the thoughts of men, is good when it does this, and that kind of speech which does this most successfully is best." Convivio, I, v, 60-101, as translated by W. W. Jackson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909).
accord with the poet's characteristic practices. For as Dorothy Everett\textsuperscript{13} and others have shown, Chaucer makes functional use of the colors of rhetoric in all periods of his poetry; and as the present studies have sought to demonstrate (ch. V), he not only employs functional imagery throughout his portraits but also shows in the course of his career a clearly marked development in the variety of purposes which it serves and in the degree of effectiveness with which he uses it.\textsuperscript{14}

Concerning appropriateness of subject matter in rhetorical colors or figures of speech in relation to the character of the poem in which they are used or to a particular narrator, Chaucer makes no specific comment. But the subject matter of the imagery is, of course, a part

\textsuperscript{13}Op. cit., passim.

\textsuperscript{14}This is not to suggest that Chaucer never uses images which are nonfunctional. Most of the personified abstractions which he takes over from his sources serve primarily for decorative purposes. But as Kemp Malone has observed, Chapters on Chaucer, p. 96, "evidently Chaucer's interest in such figures, never great, became less and less as time went on." If such scholars as ten Brink and Malone are right in giving priority to the F-version of the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women, there is rather specific evidence of the poet's attitude, for this version (160-163) contains a number of personified abstractions which are omitted in the G-version. The modern reader is likely to regard also as nonfunctional many of Chaucer's sententiae, proverbs, and exempla. It must be remembered, however, that the temper of the Middle Ages was distinctly practical and that its literary valuations were determined much more by the criteria of edification than by those of art. Moreover, as Manly has pointed out, Chaucer "came more and more to make dramatic use of these rhetorical elements, that is, to fit them into the mouths of his dramatis personae and to use only such as might fittingly be used by them." Chaucer and the Rhetoricians, p. 18.
of the language and the subject matter of the poem as a whole, and on these latter items he has something to say. According to his statement in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, language should be appropriate to both speaker and subject:

Whoso shal telle a tale after a man  
He moot rehearse as ny as evere he kan  
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,  
Al speke he never so ruderliche and large,  
Or ellis he moot telle his tale intrewe,  
Or fynye thynge, or fynde wordes newe.  
He may not spare, althogh he were his brother;  
He moot as wel seye o word as another....  
Eek Plato seith, whoso that kan hym rede,  
The wordes moote be cosyn to the dede.  
(I, 731-738, 741-742)

This view regarding diction is repeated by the Manciple:

And so bifel, whan Phesus was absent,  
His wyf anon hath for hir lemmman sent.  
Hir lemmman? Certes, this is a knavyssh speche!  
Forveveth it me, and that I yow biseche.  
The wise Plato seith, as ye may rede,  
The word moot nede accorde with the dede.  
If men shal telle properly a thyng,  
The word moot cosyn be to the werkyng.  
(MancT, IX, 203-210)

Remarks Manly, Some New Light On Chaucer, p. 284: "Imagery, as Chaucer uses it, is a form of diction. His images are not used for decorative purposes, but because they are needed to convey to the reader the idea that lay in Chaucer's mind in the exact form in which he conceived it and felt it." On this point see also Emile Legouis, Geoffrey Chaucer, trans. L. Lailavoix (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1934), p. 191. For the view that the subject matter in imagery is part of the subject matter of the poem, see Louis McNeice, Modern Poetry: A Personal Essay (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 111.
And in the apology for the tales of the Miller and the
 Reeve the poet's remarks relate to subject matter as well
 as language:

> What sholde I moore seyn, but this Millere
> He nolde his wordes for no man forbere,
> But tolde his cherles tale in his manere,
> M'athynketh that I shal rehearse it heere.
> And therfore every gentil wight I preye,
> For Goddes love, demeth not that I seye
> Of yvel entente, but for I moot rehearse
> Hir tales alle, be they bettre or worse,
> Or elles falsen som of my mateere....
> The Millere is a cherl, ye knewe wel this;
> So was the Reve, and othere manye mo,
> And harlotrie they tolden bothe two.
> Avyseth yow, and put me out of blame.
> (Mill Prol, I, 3167-3175,3182-3185)

While these refusals to falsify his art seemingly express
the poet's belief in literal realism, or faithful corres­
pondence between inner and outer form, it is evident that
they serve as effective rhetorical devices to invest his
tales with the appearance of reality\(^\text{16}\) and to create humor\(^\text{17}\).
Therefore the ideas stated in the above passages must be
considered in connection with Chaucer's related utterances
and with his practices.

\(^{16}\) Mrs. Hamilton, "The Utterances of Chaucer on Lit­
iterary Art," p. 66, stresses the point that Chaucer, "like
Dante and other medieval poets, often represents himself
as an eye-witness of the events he records—a device for
securing credence which was especially recommended in the
Middle Ages."

\(^{17}\) See Malone, *Chapters on Chaucer*, p. 157.
Praise of correspondence between inner and outer form is expressed or implied in several other places in the poems. One notes as an instance these lines in which Chaucer commends Lucrece for the harmony between her innocent soul and her outward appearance:

Hyre contenaunce is to hire herte dygne,
For they accorde bothe in dede and sygne.

(LGW, V, 1738 f.)

Significant also are the implications in the Manciple's speech on society's failure to make the word "accorde with the dede":

I am a boystous man, right thus seye I,
Ther nys no difference, trewely,
Bitwixe a wyf that is of heigh degree,
If of hir body dishonest she bee,
And a povre wenche, oother than this--
If it so be they werke both amys--
But that the gentile, in estaat above,
She shall be cleped his lady, as in love;
And for that oother is a povre womman,
She shall be cleped his wenche or his lemman....
Right so bitwixe a titeless tiraunt
And an outlawe, or a theef erraunt,
The same I seye, ther is no difference.

(MancT, IX, 211-220, 223-225)

The need for agreement between practice and pretense or between inner and outer form thus suggested in the Manciple's strictures¹⁸ is expressed in two other passages which are

¹⁸ Mrs. Hamilton op. cit., p. 74, in commenting upon these lines, observes that this discrepancy between form and function is the object not only of the Manciple's censure "but of all Chaucer's satire."
directly related to the problem of literary composition.
Pandarus, in his advice to Troilus on letter writing, remarks:

"Ne jompre ek no discordant thyng yfeced,
As thus, to usen termes of phisik
In loves termes; hold of thi matere
The forme alwey, and do that it be lik!
For if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk
With asses feet, and hede it as an ape,
It cordeth naught, so nere it but a jape."

(Tr, II, 1037-1043)

And the poet himself makes this observation in the introductory lines of the Troilus (I, 12-14):

For wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne,
A woful wight to han a drery feere,
And to a sorwful tale, a sory chere.

Although some of these comments do not come from the mouth of the poet, all voice an attitude consistent with the ideas expressed in the General Prologue and in the apology for the tales of the Miller and the Reeve. These pronouncements thus seem to indicate that Chaucer sanctioned poetic truth in the use of language and subject matter, and the implication is that he held a similar view of appropriateness in regard to the use of poetic imagery.

Still such an inference is based on little more than a few hints and suggestions and must be interpreted in connection with conclusions based on Chaucer's own practices. As one of the essays in these studies has shown (ch. III), Chaucer's imagery characteristically contains a mixture of
subject matter which is generally suited to his informal, conversational style and is in a broad sense entirely appropriate. In a considerable number of cases, however, he has chosen the spheres of materials appearing in the images to correspond more closely with the individual character of the poem. One finds that much of the imagery in the House of Fame echoes the buoyant, noisy tone of the poem and the unstable nature of the goddess Fame, that a large number of delicate, tranquil images in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women reflect qualities of the lovely daisy queen, and that the colorful mixture of richly varied realistic subject matter in the General Prologue helps to create an effect of reality in the diverse pilgrims representing contemporary English life. Again, the imagery in the Reeve's and the Wife of Bath's prologues is very closely related to the specific background and occupation of the speakers and thus contributes to their self-characterization. Furthermore, in several of the tales—the Knight's, the Miller's, the Reeve's, and the Nun's Priest's—the subject matter in the images is found to be especially well adapted not only to the character of the poems but also to the individual narrators. While Chaucer does not always choose his images with such attention to their particular aptness, yet it is typical that his figures of speech do not "falsen" his "mateere," that they accord "in dede and sygne." All in all, then,
Chaucer's practices suggest that his utterances on poetic truth in language and diction are to be taken seriously and that these comments reflect, at least in broad terms, his attitude toward appropriateness in the use of poetic imagery.

As for Chaucer's opinions concerning the origin or proper source of rhetorical colors or figurative language, again one finds nothing in his remarks that is specifically applicable. It is clear, however, that he sets little store by invention of poetic materials, for he repeatedly implies that the stuff of poetry is to be sought in "olde bokes."

In one passage he represents these materials as grain in vast fields, from which all who wish may reap:

For wel I wot that folk han here-beforn
Of makyng ropen, and lad awey the corn;
And I come after, glenynge here and there,
And am ful glad if I may fynde an ere
Of any goodly word that they han left.

(LGW Prol G, 73-77)

And in another place he uses a variation of this same figure to stress the importance of old writers as a source for modern poetic creation:

For al be that I knowe nat Love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quiteth folk here hyre,
Yit happeth me ful ofte in bokes reede
Of his myrakles and his crewel yre....
For out of olde feldes, as men seyth,
Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere,
And out of olde bokes, in good føyth,
Cometh al this newe science that men lere.

(PF, 8-11, 22-25)
When one considers statements like these, along with Chaucer's numerous references to his author or source, it comes as no surprise to learn that he has drawn a very large number of his images and suggestions for images from such writers as Boethius, Ovid, Boccaccio, Dante, Machaut, and the authors of the Roman de la Rose.

But Chaucer recognizes other sources for literary matter. The Man of Law ends his Introduction with an apostrophe to merchants, in which he pays tribute to the oral transmission of a story:

Ye seken lond and see for yowre wynnynge;  
As wise folk ye knowen al th'estaat  
Of regnes; ye been fadres of tidynges  
And tales, bothe of pees and debaat.  
I were right now of tales desolaat,  
Nere that a marchant, goon is many a yeere,  
Me taughte a tale, which that ye shal heere.  
(II, 127-133)

The possibility of such origins for Chaucer's tales has received little attention, because the oral models are not available and books have supplied originals and analogues for most of his poems. Yet as a source for

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19 For further instances of this kind, see: Anel, 8-ll; Tr, II, 12-14; III, 1324-1330; LGW Prol G, 85-88; LGW Prol F, 578 f.; LGW, III, 924-929; SechNT, VIII, 78-84.


21 See Klaeber, Das Bild bei Chaucer, p. 412.
imagery oral materials must have been of considerable importance, since much of the proverbial and conventional matter which Chaucer makes use of undoubtedly belonged to ordinary fourteenth-century English speech. 22

While Chaucer's comments may thus imply his attitude toward derived imagery, they give no hint of his ideas concerning the treatment of such materials. But when one examines his practices, it seems clear that he believes that whatever is borrowed should be improved. As has been shown in one of the preceding essays (ch. IV), Chaucer employed a variety of methods in taking over figures from other writers and from proverbial matter, his practices ranging all the way from rather close translations to instances which contain only an echo of the original. Yet in all of his alterations, whether major or slight, his characteristic tendency is toward the addition of realistic details which lend a greater degree of concreteness, vividness, and immediacy. The particulars which the poet uses for these purposes often seem to come from his own first-hand experience and observation—a source which he recognizes in at least one place in his poems. In the House of Fame the Eagle chides Chaucer for devoting too much of his attention to books:

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22 See Malone, op. cit., p. 5.
"Joves halt byt gret humblesse,
And vertu eke, that thou wolt make
A-nyght ful ofte thyn hed to ake
In thy studye, so thou writest,
And ever mo of love enditest,
In honour of hym and in preysynges,
And in his folkes futherenges,
And in hir matere al devisest,
And noght hym nor his folk dispisest,
Although thou maist goo in the daunce
Of hem that hym lyst not avaunce.

"Wherfore, as I seyde, ywys,
Jupiter considereth this,
And also, beau sir, other thynges;
That is, that thou hast no tydynges
Of Loves folk yf they be glade,
Ne of noght elles that God made;
And noght oonly fro fer contree
That ther no tydyngecometh to thee.
But of thy verray neyghebores,
That duellen almost at thy dores,
Thou herist neyther that ne this;
For when thy labour doon al ys,
And hast made alle thy rekenynges,
In stede of reste and newe thynges,
Thou goost hom to thy hous anoon,
And, also dumb as any stoon,
Thou sittest at another book
Tyl fully daswed ys thy look,
And lyvest thus as an heremyte,
Although thyn abstynence ys lyte."

(II, 630-660)

Even though these lines are spoken by one of the poet's characters rather than himself, they nevertheless suggest that Chaucer was aware of the importance of actual observation and experience as a source for literary matter. And as far as imagery is concerned, his practices show that he must have placed more than a little value on these materials, not only as a source for the comparatively few figures of speech which he invented for himself, but more particularly as a means of verifying images found in books.
and of adding realistic details to increase their effectiveness.

The strongly individual and fresh effects which Chaucer achieves through new combinations and interpretations of these materials drawn from other authors, from English speech, and from first-hand observation of life must be attributed in no small degree to the powers of his visualizing imagination. That he was aware of the importance of these powers for poetic creation is suggested by his comments in the invocations in the House of Fame:

O Thought, that wrot al that I mette,
And in the tresorye hyt shette
Of my brayn, now shal men se
Yf any vertu in the be,
To tellen al my drem aryght.
Now kythe thyn engyn and myght!

(II, 523-528)

And yif, devyne vertu, thow
Wilt helpe me to shewe now
That in myn hed ymarked ys--
Loo, that is for to menen this,
The Hous of Fame for to descryve--
Thou shalt se me go as blyve
Unto the neste laure thay see,
And kysse yt, for hyt is thy tree.

(III, 1101-1108)\(^{23}\)

\(^{23}\)Manly, Chaucer and the Rhetoricians, p. 17, observes that "these passages, although the first is translated from Dante, seem to ... express Chaucer’s growing conviction that narrative and description, instead of being mere exercises in clever phrasing, depend upon the use of visualizing imagination."
Since imagery, as Chaucer uses it, is a functional and integral part of poetry, it seems reasonable to assume that the view which he implies here concerning the dependence of poetic composition as a whole upon visualizing imagination might well extend to the creation of figurative language.

As this study indicates, the student who comes "glenyne here and there" among Chaucer's utterances on poetic art will not find sufficient evidence to construct a complete and hard-and-fast theory of imagery. Nevertheless, certain of the poet's statements contain implications which point to significant conclusions concerning his attitude. First of all, it is clear that he does not look with disfavor upon figurative language, or upon the colors of rhetoric generally, as some scholars have mistakenly supposed. Yet it is equally evident that he sanctions a functional use of imagery—a use which serves as essential expression to convey the author's exact meanings. As for the subject matter used in figures, Chaucer seems to favor materials which are at least in a general way appropriate to the character of the poem and to the narrator. The chief source for imagery, according to the implications in his comments, is old books, though he seems also to recognize the importance of oral materials and first-hand observation. Finally, his statements suggest that he realizes the value of visualizing imagination in the creation of images.
The conclusions reached in the foregoing essays show that these ideas drawn from Chaucer's comments on poetic art are supported by his own practices. Therefore it seems safe to assume that, as far as they go, his comments give an accurate representation of his attitude toward poetic imagery. The critical opinions which constitute this attitude are not, of course, sufficient to account for everything that is distinctively Chaucerian in the poet's figurative expression. Yet consideration of these views—as incomplete as they are—contributes in some measure to a fuller understanding of Chaucer and his poetic principles.
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VITA

William Allen Tornwall was born in Houston, Mississippi, May 20, 1912. He received his primary and secondary education in the public schools at Houston, Mississippi. In 1935 he received a diploma from Bennett Academy, and in 1937 a B. S. degree from Delta State Teachers College. He obtained an M. A. degree in English from the University of Alabama in the summer of 1943 and is a candidate for the Ph. D. degree in English from Louisiana State University at the spring commencement of 1956.

His teaching career began in 1937 in the secondary school at Eupora, Mississippi, where he remained until he entered the United States Army in February, 1942. He taught again at Eupora for the year 1943-44. During the years 1944-46 he taught in the secondary school at Woodville, Mississippi. From 1946 through 1951 he was employed as an instructor in English at Mississippi State College. Since that time he has been a teaching fellow at Louisiana State University.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: William A. Tornwall

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Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

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