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PRECEPTIVE PORTRAITURE: CHAUCERIAN AND
SPENSERIAN EFFICTIO

by

DEBORAH BICE

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis Advisor: Dr. William Siebenschuh

Department of English
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
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GRADUATE STUDIES

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Deborah Bice

candidate for the Ph.D.
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PRECEPTIVE PORTRAITUDE: CHAUCERIAN AND SPENSERIAN EFFICTIO

Abstract

by

DEBORAH BICE

The art of describing the feminine ideal can be traced to Maximian's portrait of Helen of Troy in the sixth century. He used the now familiar head to toe catalogue with the language of colour significations: white, red, black, and gold, or, the focus of this study, the effictio. "Ideal woman" had blond hair, black eyebrows, white skin, and red cheeks and lips. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Matthew of Vendome (who crafts two additional portraits of Helen of Troy) and Geoffroi of Vinsauf amplify this baseline formula, elaborate immensely, and thereby provide instructional rhetorical directives for describing "the feminine ideal," again in a descending catalogue, again with designated colour significations. Moreover, Geoffroi of Vinsauf incorporates within the physical profile the moral profile, and the effictio as a physiognomic rhetorical representation, is firmly rooted as a functional rather than an ornamental device. For fourteen hundred years, many writers, but specifically the Gawain poet, Geoffrey Chaucer, and Edmund Spenser
imitate the baseline concept of this tradition or provide inventive modifications thereof. In this study, I will distinguish the *effictio* from the *notatio* and *descriptio*, figures also cited in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, in order to clear the confusion among these terms, and, to appreciate the unique force and function of this convention. The *effictio* as separate unit is indeed a window to the soul; yet, evaluating the trope contextually will reinforce how it is a window to the subject's actions and motivations as well. I will explore the more traditional examples of the *effictio* in early medieval love lyrics, the portrait of the Green Knight in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Chaucer's Emelye in *The Knight's Tale*, and Spenser's Belphoebe in the *Faerie Queene*. More important, I will explore significant modifications of the *effictio* in Chaucer's portraits of Chauntecleer in the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, Alysoun of Bath, and Absolon and Alisoun in *The Miller's Tale*, and in Spenser's portrait of Rosalind in *Shepheard's Calendar*. 
During a Renaissance poetry class, I was drawn to Spenser's portrait of Belphoebe in the *Faerie Queene*, not because of its blatant breadth, but because it reminded me of Alisoun's description in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*. When I mentioned the rhetorical similarity to Dr. Thomas Bishop, he responded, "Good. It's an effictio. Do your paper on it." That turned out to be the best and the worst day of my graduate experience. The worst, because since that advice, I have been obsessed with this tradition: its history, its variations, its longevity, and its legacy. The best, because I love being obsessed with its history, its variations, its longevity, and its legacy. I now expect to see "it" in many places and am rarely disappointed. Consequently, my search has led me from examples of early effictio in medieval hymns, love lyrics, and Geoffrey Chaucer, to variations in Edmund Spenser and John Donne, to newer evidence of the trope in Fannie Hurst and Walt Disney heroines. Recently, for example, I noted a marked difference in Disney's Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* through a "camera" guided effictio. With her dark hair and eyes and insatiable (and refreshing) appetite for
intellectualism, she differs from the more traditional blond, insipid Disney heroines (Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Tinkerbell, The Blue Fairy, and Wendy). Ultimately, a progressive Belle defies provinciality, searches for the beauty within her Beast, and lives happily ever after within her impressive library. Idiosyncratic Belle not only has the requisites, insight, and intelligence to thrive within her culture, but she does so without having to burst into "Someday, my prince will come."

Make no mistake, when I explore a formulaic baseline of this familiar head to toe catalogue connected with the idea of feminine beauty, from which many modifications are possible, my interest remains an artistic and not a feminist one. It is the mix of tradition and individual talent and the combination of history and ingenuity that fascinates me. In fact, after researching the effictio for several years, I am still moved by its diversity without debasement, and I am still exhilarated by its power and force. Not once, have I been bored.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One Preceptive Portraiture</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two Early Portraiture</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three Chaucerian Effictio: Imitation</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four Chaucerian Invention</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five Spenserian Abundance and Abbreviation</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Consulted</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Early effictio is a representation of the feminine ideal in a descending catalogue, with select physical features, and with select colour significations. One of the earliest examples we know of is Maximian's sixth century portrait of Helen of Troy. With golden hair, white skin, black eyebrows, and red lips, the rhetorical standards for beauty are not only recognizable, in Maximian's portrait, but they are clearly defined. The convention, which is introduced as a "figure" cited in Pseudo Cicero's Rhetorica ad Herennium, evolves into a detailed and amplified formula when, around the twelfth and during the thirteenth century, Matthew Vendome and Geoffroi of Vinsauf establish more comprehensive catalogues and provide clear, instructional models. Moreover, Geoffroi of Vinsauf categorically links the physical profile with the moral profile in his directives. Woman's external beauty therefore becomes formulaically fused with her "countenance." And at this point, the traditional effictio becomes a valuable tool for presenting a complete physiognomic representation. More important, the writer's individual and inventive rhetorical modifications within the catalogues
serve to provide even more complex portrait representations. Therefore, whether the writer provides the baseline concept of the feminine ideal or a deliberate, insightful, artistic variation thereof, the *effictio* remains a powerful method of description.

Before I explore examples of early *effictio*, Chaucer's use of the *effictio* in his preceptive portraiture, and Spenserian imitation and modification of the convention, I will, in the first chapter, explore the root of this tradition. I will also attempt to clear the confusion among and the misapplication of three rhetorical terms: *descriptio*, *notatio*, and of course, *effictio*. Because the art of rhetoric seems to be one of definition, further definition, and redefinition, it is important to distinguish the *effictio* from the other "figures" if only to appreciate the unique force and function of the *effictio*. Significantly, it is only the *effictio* that provides a complete physiognomic representation in a head to toe sequence and with specific colour significations. And although the three terms are often confused and arbitrarily assigned to any portrait, the *effictio* is clearly the most effectual device. In capable hands, it will illuminate that rare best of the best, or more important, it will expose the complexity, or the appropriate duality if you will, within the others. From an "up and down, bifoire and eek bihynde, withinne and withoute" (Keirnan 14) rhetorical perspective, it has measured beauty, grace, purity, humour, honour, strength, courage, and wisdom for more than fourteen hundred years. Given then its function, impact,
and duration, no one, from the face that launched a thousand ships to a contemporary Disney lass is beyond description or too marvelous for words.
CHAPTER ONE
PRECEPTIVE PORTRAITURE

Either follow tradition or invent what is self consistent. Horace, *Ars Poetica*

Because the tradition of stylized portraiture dates back to classical times, by the time Edmund Spenser crafted the portrait of Belphoebe in Book II, Canto 3 of *The Faerie Queene*, he had a clear tradition to follow. He had the example not only of the ancient Roman rhetorical treatises but also of the medieval explications and amplifications that rediscovered and codified the tradition in the middle ages. Moreover, when British literature begins to revive and flourish in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Gawain poet and Geoffrey Chaucer use and further modify the *effictio*. Consequently, Spenser was able to reinforce early portraiture mimetically and to reinvent accordingly. Essentially, the portrait of Belphoebe is a blend of the elements of the older tradition that goes far beyond simple imitation.
Formal description of a woman was a common rhetorical exercise. Examples date from Maximian's sixth century portrait of Helen of Troy—the representative prototype of the feminine ideal through the sixteenth century—to Thomas Hardy's haunting vision of Eustacia Vye. For more than eleven plus centuries, writers crafted variants of traditional feminine portraits highly stylized in content and form (Pearsall, "Descriptio" 130). One needs only to recall Virgil's description of Venus in The Aeneid 1.(314-29) and Chaucer's Emelye in the Knight's Tale to comprehend the creativity and to savour the richness of Spenser's eighty-one line "shining description" (Hughes 67) of Belpheobe— one, as Hazlitt acknowledges, "of the finest things in Spenser" (Lectures 38), and one that clearly imitates then alters the ancient topos cited by Pseudo Cicero and used by Chaucer, and the focus of this study, the effictio.

Certainly by Spenser's time, portrait rhetoric had evolved into series of broad conceptual terms. Portrait labels were often randomly plucked from among a massive list of semantic "figures" by those writers familiar with the existing treatises, the writers who soon imitated them, or by the scholars who eventually researched early manuscripts. It seems a feature of this tradition (throughout its history) is its continuous redefinition. In fact, according to R. Mc Keon, rhetoricians from Cicero on have in common a persistent care in defining their own art (no doubt a reason why by the fourth century there were listed more than two
hundred figures of speech). Each seems in earnest pursuit, for whatever reason, of definitive categorization, and I am no different; and it seems likely that what might follow is a sense of altering definitions, the differentiation of various conceptions of rhetoric itself, and the spread of the devices of rhetoric to subject matters different from those ordinarily ascribed to it (3). Accordingly, this rhetorical fluctuation manifests itself in a semantic potpourri of interchangeable and arbitrary rhetorical terminologies—one that has plagued rhetorical portrait study and especially portrait nomenclature all along. For example, upon an extensive investigation of Chaucer’s portrait of Alisoun in the Miller’s Tale the "consistent inconsistencies" of portrait nomenclature clearly indicated how labels seem to reflect the personal preference of the scholar. When discussing descriptive portrait, for example, Kevin Kiernan and D.S. Brewer insightfully explore catalogue portraiture without rhetorically signifying effictio; Jill Mann in her "estates" study and Derek Pearsall's Gawain essay use the term descriptio although Pearsall does acknowledge the term effictio; Robert Jordan uses the term for a general description of landscape and architecture. Chauncey Woods prefers the term notatio (in some rhetorics, an etymological explanation), and Camille Paglia oversimplifies and uses the generic term "portrait." With the exception of Ernest Gallo who presents the precise term, scholars have either misapplied, avoided, or essentially ignored the differences between these three portrait "figures." This is problematic because there should exist a clear differentiation among these "plucked" portrait figures as well as a clear and sufficient
validation of one topos in particular— the descending catalogue, the *effictio*. Additionally, awareness of the convention and its history provides a basis for new understanding of the writers who used and redefined it, specifically Chaucer and Spenser.

What exactly is *effictio*, and how did it evolve from a definition in the *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* into an important medieval and Renaissance rhetorical trope? Why is it important that we need to establish a clear norm, or at best a *sense* of a clear norm? The reason is best explained by looking at the problems created by the competing terms and first determining what it is not.

It is not *descriptio*— a term often misapplied to any physical portrait. *Descriptio*, R.H. Book 4 #4, is "the name for a figure which contains a clear, lucid, and impressive exposition of the consequences of an act." It is clear, from the early semantics how one might inadvertently synonomize the Pseudo-Ciceronian adjectivals (clear and lucid) and the nominative (exposition) with a description of any kind and certainly with one that does in fact provide a detailed physical description; yet in its early context, the term *descriptio* specifically applies not to external portraiture but rather to internal behavior and its consequences. Perhaps when Chaucer provides his description of the Prioress, and specifically her eating habits and her love for the lower animal forms, all which
serve to illuminate her less than charitable and humble inclinations, the term *descriptio* would be appropriate. Geoffroi of Vinsauf later classifies *descriptio* as description of persons, objects, or landscape, again, a generic and at best a general categorization.

It is not *notatio*, # 19—defined, by Pseudo-Cicero as well as Geoffroi, as "describing a person's character by the definite signs which, like distinctive marks, are attributes of that character, ex. bragging beggar." Consider the lecherous Miller or the offensive sallow skinned Reeve. While these are stark, stereotypified presentations, they are not examples of *effictio*. The *notatio* is more of an explanation and is not a complete descriptive physical portrait—rather an appraisal of adverbial-like internal qualities, even if vividly detailed. Since *descriptio* and *notatio*, although quite useful in describing acts and internal attributes simply do not provide a complete portrait, what does distinguish the *effictio*?

The *effictio*, # 13, is a clear blend of the physical and moral attributes offered with a traditional colour code in a formulaic route; in fact, one of the most striking facts about the medieval *effictio* is its adherence to the top-to-toe description (Gallo, *Poetria* 182). It provides a physiognomically complete, or as Evans notes, "the art of interpreting character from the physique" (5), or, a "clear portrayal," a total
examination of the subject's moral profile (Geoffroi of Vinsauf labels this a countenance) as well as the external features. The effectio as a separate unit of portraiture is certainly a vivid, accurate representation, but when it is examined and evaluated within a contextual framework, the effectio provides invaluable insight into the motivations and the actions of the subject represented. The portrait then becomes much more than a window into the soul, it becomes a window into the ways and means of the subject.

Traditionally, the trope describes the feminine ideal. Specifically, the description catalogues requisite features: golden hair, white skin, black eyebrows, and red cheeks and lips—in a descent from the top of the head down to the toes. The colour code is gold (yellow), white, red, and black. The convention also equates beauty with purity. And although the early models were stylistically rigid in structure, colour, and moral association, by the mid fourteenth century poets modified this form because they "were acutely aware of the effects that could be produced by careful modification of the descending catalogue" (Kiernan 2). I will explore these carefully crafted modifications and their respective effects in subsequent chapters.

Again, it is generally accepted that in the sixth century, Maximian was the first to use the convention, sometimes labeled descriptio
feminae pulchritudinis (which again because of its structure, colour, and inherent character representation is clearly effictio and not descriptio). This head to toe description appears in his Elegy I (Webster 13). Still, the effictio did not achieve its most complete rhetorical demarcation until Matthew of Vendome and Geoffroi of Vinsauf emphasized amplification around the twelfth century. Furthermore, it did not make its greatest impact until medieval authors, particularly the Gawain poet and Geoffrey Chaucer in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, recognized its artistic potential and included clear imitations or deliberate variations of the form, examples that would in turn serve as models for writers of the Renaissance, and beyond. This form then was suitable for the writer who wished mimetic duplication of the traditional feminine ideal as well as one who chose an unconventional representation; "such an approach of course is open to the charge that it treats the [effictio] as a separate piece of description for its own sake and not related organically to what precedes and what follows" (Gallo, Rhetoric 84). But this is precisely why the effictio, in my opinion, is an important, powerful trope. It is a methodically and deliberately crafted stylized ornament with inner substance, a utilitarian adornment, and in essence, a decorative window to the soul. Consequently, there seems a need to explore this rhetorical convention in its ancient context and in its early forms to appreciate fully its creative evolution.

Essentially chameleon-like in adaptability, rhetoric has innately
satisfied the ever changing demands of its culture. It has provided the persuasive legal words for arbitrators, the insightful intellectual words for instructors, the flamboyant captivating words for public speakers, the clever practical words for judicial debate, and finally, the clear artistic words for literature. Rhetoric then becomes the consummate chameleon... with a life force that seems to have instinctively altered its acclimated form whenever necessary... the ultimate survivor.

P. Abelson suggests that "rhetoric consisted of practical training during the Roman period, then it consisted of the technical rules of a science and finally, when the theoretical and logical form of rhetoric fell into obsolescence, of the practical rules for writing letters and documents" (52). Concerning the movement in the middle ages, R. McKeon credits: a period extended through the eleventh and the first half of the twelfth century dominated by Cicero, and another the fourteenth century and the Renaissance in which Aristotle and the Greek rhetoricians, Quintillian, and Boethius all had increasing influence (13). And ultimately, J. Murphy notes: "a mature educated man, of say, the fourteenth century, would have heard literally thousands of sermons, read (or even heard) hundreds of letters written to the format of the dictaminis, heard (or possibly read) an untold number of verse compositions affected by the advice of teachers of the poetriae...His elementary education, whether he realized it or not, was an amalgam of grammatical and rhetorical processes" (Eloq. xi).
It would seem then that in the ancient stage, rhetoric (grammar as well as oration) addressed composition, language analysis, figures, meter, and style and invention. In its "modern" medieval stage, when rhetoric experienced its resurgence throughout medieval Europe, grammar addressed the entire realm of language and literature. Medieval grammarians/teachers would construct their own doctrines. These doctrines would then divide into two specific categories: treatises distinguished by breadth of approach or depth of analysis, which are still occasionally read with profit today; and the manuals or handbooks for day to day training: terminological jungles, each born and bred for its age, and seemingly bound for extinction once that age had passed away (Ward 26). And it is this latter category with which we are most concerned, for the Ciceronian influenced Rhetorica ad Herennium remains a doctrine that clearly survives its fate, defies its extinction, and instead transcends its perfunctory, oratorical, and instructional role to "ignite the fires" (Ward 28) of future writers.

Clearly, there is no greater classical influence than the Ciceronian from the middle ages through the Renaissance. It is Cicero's rhetoric and only Cicero's which is translated into vernacular tongues during the middle ages with most of the translations dating from the thirteenth century (Murphy Rhet. 113). In fact, there is hardly a major medieval
writer from Thomas Aquinas to Petrarch and Boccaccio who does not praise Cicero's eloquence. The point is clear that he was regarded as primus auctor that on this ground alone we could conclude that his works must have had enormous circulation (107).

The *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, the staple Latin textbook from the end of the fourth century and beyond somewhat influenced by Aristotelian theory, reinforces the essential difference between Ciceronian where imagery is decorative, and Aristotelian where imagery is wholly integrated into the matter. The Ciceronian approach to rhetoric exchanges the Greek practical and political agendas for one that not only addresses the concepts of proficient oration techniques but concentrates heavily on the "figures." Book IV, in an almost detached structure, treats style by first distinguishing the three levels, and then by fragmenting all of the stylistic devices into 45 figures of speech (further fragmented into ten tropi, identified later in this chapter) and 19 figures of thought (including the portrait nomenclature previously noted), totaling a list of 64 figures --one which becomes a standard list for writers.

Although the treatise is often dated as a contemporary of *De inventione*, it was most likely composed before. And because the composition dates correspond and the book fits exactly into Roman
theory represented by Cicero (Rhét 21), it was actually credited to
Cicero. This misconception of authorship however has been long been
rectified. The treatise has been recognized as anonymously authored,
and accurately credited to a contemporary of Cicero's, appropriately
called Pseudo-Cicero.

When we move into transition from the ancient Ciceronian to the
Ciceronian influenced medievalist, we discover new approaches to
language, and we face three "interim" changes significant to portraiture:
1. selected Hellenistic terms and figures of speech and thought are again
reclassified; 2. the classical preoccupation with exemplary oratory skills
gives way to the post-antique techniques for exemplary writing skills
and the onset of rhetorical diversity with the birth of separate and
specialized treatises; and, 3. medieval grammarian/ teacher/ writers,
particularly Matthew of Vendome, John of Garland and Geoffroi of
Vinsauf, become responsible for all teaching, that is the teaching of
writing as well as speaking, for the resurgence and thereby the survival
of the classical manuscripts, and for the new doctrines where the
"imitation of classical authors soon was replaced by precept, definition,
and example" (Schoek, Euphistic 241).

Today we undoubtedly have a clearer sense of the boundaries
between grammar and literature, and it is difficult to imagine a single
course that could treat the two subjects adequately. But this was not the case in medieval times. For these medievalists, there was no such delineation between the study of proper usage and the study of literature. Grammar at that time was not exclusively linguistic but instead explored the entire realm of language and literature. Prose, meter, and rhythms, in addition to the traditional usage rules and ancient syntax, were included in medieval classes. Moreover, teachers not only doubled as rhetorician/literature specialists, but, in addition, they composed and taught their own critical "literature" thereby serving as rhetorician/literature/writing authorities. Consequently, "medieval grammar becomes a subject of some complexity, moving far beyond the mere concern for syntactical correctness and extending into the realm of the preceptive arts" (Murphy, Rhet 138)-- that is to say, the subject gradually incorporates a more artistic agenda whereby formulaic literary guidelines for the writing process are first appreciated, and then corroborated, conceived, achieved, and conveyed. Grammarioan writers revise and adapt the broad rhetorica to complement their respective pedagogies, and three artes, or comprehensive studies of the rules, surface: the grammatica, the rithmica, and most important to the effictio, the poetriae which, in more than half a dozen artes, essentially serves as a "how to write effective poetry" guide and clearly remains the most influential of all the respective artes. The newer poetriae further fragments into two divisions: 1. the more brief and basic explanations of traditional ornamental tropes [which seems to have supplemented elementary grammar handbooks], and 2. the more elaborate artes,
termed *versificatoriae*, of the leading medieval rhetoricians. This "writing" development which spans approximately seventy-five years, begins with Matthew of Vendome's *Ars Versificatoria* before 1175, reaches its peak around 1210 with Geoffroi of Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova*, and ends with John of Garland's *Exempla Vitae Honestae*, and *Poetria* in 1250. This more than half a century, then, produces practical instruction in composition as well as some of the finest medieval *artes* literature of the Middle Ages — literature created by astute authors who were clearly aware that they were writing during a renaissance. Geoffroi of Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova* for example was so named to contrast with Horace's *Ars Poetica*, dubbed the *Poetria Vetus* or the *Old Art Of Poetry*. Matthew of Vendome even dares to boast how the moderns have surpassed the ancients: 'The old, outstripped by the new, has come to a halt' (IV. A. 1). (qtd. Gallo, *Introductory* 52). These writers produce the most influential documents of the century and contribute to the final ancient/medieval "rhetorical" transition.

As Murphy notes, at this point in time, grammar is in the state of self examination (Rhet 188). The major writers, Vendome, Vinsauf, Gervase, Garland, Eberhard (161) were teachers as well, so their influence was significant. They would revive the classics and reinforce, as Pseudo-Cicero, Cicero, and Quintillian had, the importance of the figures, of ornamentation, of application, and of the entire matter of style. The existing manuscripts clearly reinforce this. As Gallo notes:
style—a traditional part of rhetoric—was a common concern ("Vendome" 52). One point is worth repeating however: the larger rhetorical terms: figures of speech and thought, scheme, color, and trope, as well as the more specialized portrait terminology, previously noted, at this point still remain unclassified, misclassified, or reclassified. For example, in its original form, the Greek schemata, later named exornations or figurae, were used to describe the entire realm of "literary" and "grammatical" devices in the rhetorical doctrines. The nineteen Figures of Thought included simile, understatement, dialogue and the portrait figures: description (descriptio), character delineation (notatio), and of course, portrayal (effictio). The "Figures of Speech" included punctuation terms (period, colon, apostrophe) and the structural terms (reasoning, climax, transition, conclusion). Obviously, literary as well as grammatical devices were generically grouped under this broad heading. Further subcategorized under "Figures of Speech" were ten special "Figures of Speech": onomatopoeia, antonomasia, metonymy, periphrasis, hyberbaton, hyperbole, synecdoche, catechresis, metaphor, and allegory. These were re-named—tropes." The term "trope," renamed "figure" in the eleventh century, is to this day synonymous with literary adornment or embellishment and remains close to Pseudo-Cicero's early definition where the "trope departs from ordinary meaning of the words and is with a certain grace applied in another sense" (R.H. IV 41). Shortly after the eleventh century, however, trope was again renamed—color. Generally attributed to some literary device that embellishes—literally, "gives color"—to ordinary language, in its earliest context, the term color was
of course applied to oration technique as "the particular aspect given to a case by the skillful manipulation of the facts." Gradually, the term "color" becomes widely used in the titles of the manuals as well as for a broad (and again arbitrary) series of ornamentation devices; in fact, the medieval use of the terms "color," "colore," and "color of rhetoric" provide good examples which may illustrate the amorphous nature of terminology. Around 1050, Onulf of Speyer's treatise on figures is called Colores rhetorici, and Alberic, Onulf's contemporary and the creator of the ars dictaminis, writes an intellectual treatise on colores, omitting all the "schemes" and "tropes." Matthew of Vendome refers to 29 colores rhetorici, and Geoffroi of Vinsauf applies the term only to figures of words. For Vinsauf, there is a clear difference between the term "trope" and the term "figure," the former meaning an emotional metaphor and the latter meaning an artistic pattern of thoughts. Evrad of Bethune argues that only 25 of the figures of words can be called colores, while John of Garland uses the term for every one of the figures. Much later, the references by Chaucer in the second half of the fourteenth century indicate that by that period, the term color rhetorici had become an almost obsolete phrase. For Chaucer, color meant figurative language in the most general sense; presumably it denoted for him any kind of decorated language (Rhet. 189).

Clearly, the prescriptions of these writers illustrate conclusively that poetria designated the study of verse style through the colors of rhetoric
(Parr, Vinsauf 34). Prior emphasis on "words, with their origin, formation, combination, inflection, pronunciation, and all things else pertaining to utterance alone" (qtd. Le Clerc 263), effectively gives rise to the basic formulaic components for coherent literary composition, which in "terms of style, organization, and figures" transcends any existing rhetorical debate. Moreover, any personal, or professional dialectic concerns prove beneficial. Methodological differences do not hinder but rather serve to solidify the movement with a strong commitment to diversity as its unifying edict. And it is this commitment to diversity along with a preceptive insight that will transcend the mere teaching of literature in all of its forms (but especially in verse) to include the newer methodology of creating literature.

By the twelfth century, verse dominates handbooks, letters, and sermons, and poetry, idealized in concept and fixed in formulaic organization, is now "in vogue." Consequently, there seems a need for "how to write the perfect poem" manuals. Students must imitate a model or compose a poem on a clearly delineated subject drawn from literary tradition, and these practicing poets require the versification manuals or exercise books "to provide sufficient poetic doctrine to supplement their creative urge to produce the perfect poem, and properly approached, these artes can afford us valuable clues about the tools most readily available to the medieval poet and his purpose in using them" (Gallo, "Introductory" 52). These artes ultimately provide us with the
first guide to amplified description, and specifically to the concept of portrait writing. And for exploring one descriptive poetic "tool" in particular—the effiectio— the "amplification" concept so inherent within the popular "teachings" of Matthew Vendome and Geoffroi of Vinsauf will provide enormous insight into this trope—its source, its function, and its impact.

The grammar teacher Matthew, born in Vendome, was a student of Bernard Silvester of Tours until he traveled to Orleans, where he kept company with Hugh Primas, the poet. Before 1175, he wrote his Ars versificatoria. After several disagreements with Arnulfus de Sancto, a colleague in Orleans, he fled to Paris where he remained for ten years; eventually, he returned to Tours and retired there.

In the Ars versificatoria, a rather generalized instructional doctrine treating the composition of verse through rules and practical exercise, Matthew satisfies the immediate needs of his grammar students. Providing seven idealized "types" in their proper poetic forms, the doctrine at once fixes both the ideal and its form. The lengthy "portrait prototypes" command specific physical characteristics within a formalized pattern. And, just as there exists a stylized set of characteristics for the feminine ideal "type" (hair, eyes, complexion, cheeks, and lips) there also exist fixed formulae for the additional
prototypes: the cleric, the sage, the ugly woman, the old woman, the rogue, or the worthy warrior. Generally speaking then, traditional portrait commands deliberate descriptives within a conventionalized format in order to produce, in "realistic" fashion, a *manifestatio*, a demonstration, a declaration of some person— that person being a type, not an individual" (57)—a type established by convention where new types could also be invented.

For Matthew, description is clearly "the heart of poetry" (52), and to describe is the explicit illumination of characteristics, traits, or personal attributes whether through imitation of the traditional verse forms or through assorted variations of the same formulas. His primary focus therefore is style— which for Matthew translates into ornamentation. He in fact devotes almost half of his entire treatise to description according to a strict set of rules. In the process, he validates, through Pseudo-Ciceronian and Ciceronian precedent, the utilitarian function of the descriptive process and the importance of amplification, the "dilation by means of tropical or figural devices' (Kelly 244) and "the chief concern of rhetoric and poetic" (Gallo, "Intro" 5). It is after all the concept of amplification that provides the prescriptive words and images for accurate portrait representation.

Before Matthew and his successors emphasized amplification in
descriptive writing, by means of focusing on the arbitrary list of figures by which the description might be embellished, amplification was a widely recognized and established oratorical device positioned in the conclusion of the more common epideictic speech. It was specifically designed to magnify, after absolute proof, a man's virtues or vices and thereby to incite either pity or anger for the subject through systematic, calculated, and ample description. And although it was often placed near the end of the argument for maximum effect, the device was not limited exclusively to this position. In the medieval transition, amplification simply transfers from the verbal to the written form of effective communication—one that again magnifies, continues, or enlarges virtues or vices. Amplification, a perfect tool for effective portraiture, however, is also used to add "new life and give new meaning" to old stories... in fact, the medieval writer was also free to make the older narratives new, to elicit possibilities left undeveloped by earlier writers, even to inject brand new material; and on the other hand, he was free to summarize hurriedly material not relevant to his purpose (54). On any level, however, amplification transfers appropriate emphasis and response from live audience to reader.

Consider the first of two portraits of Helen of Troy. Somewhat imitative of the Maximian portrait (and using the same subject), Matthew lists specifically her hair as golden, forehead white as paper, eyebrows black and thin, face a shining star, eyes like stars, nose neither
large nor small, ivory teeth, honeyed lips, red rosy face, mouth smelling of rose, smooth neck, radiant shoulders, well spaced small breasts, and incomparable figure. The second portrait which goes into greater detail includes milk-like forehead, eyes like stars, ivory teeth, snow-like neck, narrow [torso] down to the waist, swelled belly, smooth hands, fleshy white legs, short foot and straight toes. Also important to this sequence was the clear white space between the eyes. Matthew has established the top of the head--down to the toe sequence in formulaic colouring, and within these two representative portraits, the requirements for the descending catalogue for the feminine ideal have clearly become fixed. The feminine ideal must be fair-- with blond hair, light eyes, white skin, rosy cheeks and lips, and a pleasing, incomparable figure. The traditional colours of gold or yellow, white and red, and black are at this point monochromatic.

We are indebted to Matthew's emphasis of amplification, the establishment of formulaic types, and most important, the two full organizational portraits of the ideal of feminine beauty-- the two formal descriptions of Helen of Troy (Brewer, Ideal 258). And although the Ars versificatoria is often neglected or overshadowed by Geoffroi of Vinsauf's fuller treatments within the Poetria Nova in the early thirteenth century, the Ars versificatoria remains the pioneer treatise-- the earliest surviving ars poetica.
It was approximately thirty years after Matthew's treatise on descriptive technique that Geoffroi of Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova* elaborated further upon the concept of amplification. The document, dedicated to Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) has survived in more than 200 manuscripts; clearly, his influence is significant. According to Faral, he was specifically mentioned by Gervase of Melcheley circa 1216, Nicolas Trivet circa 1328, and Eberhard the German circa 1280 (13). Chaucer in the *Nun's Priest's Tale* acknowledges Vinsauf as 'dere mayster soveraigne,' and Erasmus offers tribute when he includes Geoffroi within "rather distinguished company: 'You know Tully, you know Quintillian, you know Horace, you know Geoffr[i]; certainly you are not unaware how copiously, how brilliantly they have expounded the principles of [rhetoric]; whoever follows these principles has completely fulfilled the poetic office' " (qtd. Gallo, *Vinsauf* 165)

We know very little about Geoffroi of Vinsauf's life. He claimed to be an Englishman (*P.N.* 13), perhaps studied in Paris, did live in London, taught at Hampton, and did visit Rome; all else is speculation.

Again, Geoffroi was very deliberate when selecting the name for his document, a tribute no doubt to Horace's *Poetria*. But at the same time, his intention to move beyond Horace's original text is clear: he hoped to
provide comprehensive coverage in the form of precepts, model exercises, and proper authority for systematic analysis (Nims 9). And in keeping with its title, the treatise deals not only with the basics, structure, and dynamics of successful poetics (introductions, theme, amplification and abbreviation) but explores in detail (1125 verses to be exact) the importance of variations in style and ornamentation.

He considers amplification to be a blend between the development of content, or "an extending of the material," and the assorted variants of style. Description, he writes, "pregnant with words, follows as a seventh means of amplifying the work." Concerning amplification, he specifically advises: "But although the path of description is wide, let it also be wise, let it be both lengthy and lovely. See that the words with due ceremony are wedded to the subject. If description is to be food and ample refreshment of the mind, avoid too curt a brevity as well as trite conventionality." His prescriptive advice as well as his model for the feminine ideal, one with no name, is much richer than Matthew of Vendome's:

Let the compass of Nature first fashion a sphere for her head; let the colours of gold give a glow to her hair, and lilies bloom high on her brow. Let her eyebrows resemble in dark beauty the blackberry, and a lovely and milk-white path separate their twin arches. Let her nose be
straight, of moderate length, not too long nor too short for perfection. Let her eyes, those watch-fires of her brow, be radiant with emerald light, or with the brightness of stars. Let her countenance emulate dawn; not red, nor yet white—but at once neither of those colours and both. Let her mouth be bright, small in shape—as it were, a half circle. Let her lips be rounded and full, but moderately so; let them glow, aflame, but gentle with fire. Let her teeth be snowy, regular, all of one size, and her breath like the fragrance of incense. Smoother than polished marble let Nature fashion her chin—Nature, so potent a sculptor. Let her neck be a precious column of milk-white beauty, holding high the perfection of her countenance. From her crystal throat let radiance gleam, to enchant the eye of the viewer and enslave his heart. Let her shoulders, conforming to beauty's law, not slope in unlovely descent, not jut out with an awkward rise; rather, let them be gracefully straight. Let her arms be a joy to behold, charming in their grace and their length. Let soft and slim loveliness, a form shapely and white, a line long and straight, flow into her slender fingers. Let her beautiful hands take pride in those fingers. Let her breast, the image of snow, show side by side its twin virginal gems. Let her waist be close girt, and so slim that a hand may encircle it. For the other parts I am silent—here the mind's speech is more apt than the tongue's. Let her leg be of graceful length and her wonderfully tiny foot dance with joy at its smallness.

Moreover, Geoffroi suggests appropriate accessories:

Let her hair, braided and bound at her back, bind in its gold; let a circlet of gold gleam on her ivory brow. Let
her face be free of adornment, lovely in its natural hue. Have a starry chain encircle her milk white neck. Let the border of her robe gleam with fine linen; with gold let her mantle blaze. Let a zone, richly set with bright gems, bind her waist, and bracelets encircle her arms. Have gold encircle her slender fingers, and a jewel more splendid than gold shed its brilliant rays. Let artistry vie with materials in her fair attire. (P.N. 37)

And shortly thereafter when describing a beautiful woman in his Documentum De Modo Et Arte Dictandi Et Verificandi, often categorized as nothing more than a prose version of the Poetria, Geoffroi reinforces:

Circular is the pattern of her head, and bright as the Stars shines her golden hair; her lily-white forehead glows Like the milky-way; the dark hyacinth paints its color on Her eyelids; twin gems glitter at the margin of her forehead;
Beauty’s moderation defines her nose in length;
Like a blend of silver and gold her complexion of amber glows;
Her pleasing lips sparkle like fire; her teeth are the color of Ivory; a woman of such beauty above lacks not a matching beauty below.

Certainly, Geoffroi’s contributions to Matthew’s original treatise are noteworthy. Geoffroi’s portrait begins at the top of the head, and Kevin Keirnan suggests: the reason for the descent is clear enough. The
catalogue begins at the head for that is the seat of the intellect (3). The portrait provides the precise physical attributes, in terms of colour and proportion, within a sensory framework. He includes passionate visions of fire and ice: rubies and ivory, lilies and roses. He incorporates sweet smells and tactile-soft forms. He offers richness. He emphasizes the complementary blend between gold and silver, between the sun and the stars. Matthew's precise amplification is herein re-amplified, and the original formula for the feminine ideal essentially remains the same; she has the blond hair, light eyes, white skin, red lips and cheeks, and incomparable figure—fixed prerequisites that would remain constant well into the Renaissance and beyond. But Geoffroi offers more. It is significant that within the catalogue, he dictates the woman's moral profile. In fact, in a reference that echoes Song of Solomon (2:1-2; 4:4), he refers to her "countenance" twice:

Let her countenance emulate dawn: not red, nor yet white—but at once neither of those colours and both. Let her neck be a precious column of milk-white beauty, holding high the perfection of her countenance.

It is at this point that the effictio as topos becomes a physiognomically complete portrayal. With these directives, this catalogue is no longer a series of external attribute. Ideal woman must also possess internal perfection. Geoffroi has included the term countenance, a term that
relates specifically to her spirituality or morality. In the words of Thomas Aquinas: "three things are required for beauty: first, integrity or perfection [countenance], next, true proportion [faîre], and lastly, brightness [milk white perfection] because we call beautiful whatever has a brilliant colour" (qtd. Huizinga 245). Geoffroi is stating in clear terms that woman must be composed of "all things." She is innocent virgin, and she is desirable love object. She is the white of the Madonna's lily and the red of the lover's rose. She is the "coral" of goodness" and the pearl of purity. She is snow and milk and swan and ivory; yet, she is ruby and apples and fire. She is the Rose of Sharon. This red and white dichotomy then is certainly not original in the language of colour. It is Biblical, significant, relative, and complex, as we will explore in the next chapter. Geoffroi's elaborate description then has given us the first complete representation of the feminine ideal. Moreover, his countenance directive proves a significant contribution to the effictio because for the first time, the subject is appraised for her internal moral character as well as her external attributes. The physiognomic representation then is complete.

Clearly, the Ars versificatoria, and the Poetria Nova serve as a link between the artist and his art form. Requisites of route, attributes, and colour are established, and fourteenth century writers have a clear model to follow.
I have examined the distinction between the *descriptio*, *notatio*, and *effictio*, and I have determined the *effictio* as the most powerful. Pseudo-Cicero provides the designated "figure of colour," Matthew of Vendome and Geoffroi of Vinsauf rediscover and codify the trope, through the concept of amplification, and medieval doctrines in general, still essentially rooted in one form of ancient rhetoric or another, are now in their most exciting resurgence. With this solid precept for *effictio* in place, Chapter Two will provide some early examples.
CHAPTER TWO
EARLY PORTRAITURE

My aim shall be poetry so molded from the familiar that anybody may hope for the same success.

Horace, *Ars Poetica*

By 1325, poetry prevailed in England as a stylized art in its own right. It was a mode of communication, and reduced to its simplest form in the vernacular languages of Europe, it was a necessity for teaching those who had to learn by ear, the verbal equivalent of learning by eye, from images in stained-glass, wall painting, and sculpture. Clearly, this was an age when description was utilized quite naturally (Salter 1) especially in its exquisite, formulaic portrait. With the clear formulas of Vendome and Vinsauf to imitate and with infinite variations to explore, early poets were able to generate splendid examples of *effictio*. 
Because most of the sacred and secular medieval lyrics have been lost, we are forced to examine and to reexamine the few pieces that remain. And of those few, the bulk of the surviving Middle English lyrics are not secular, but sacred and didactic, influenced primarily by the Bible and Latin liturgy, and "written in a late thirteenth century hand" (Brook, Harley 1). They exist today simply because the clergy copied and preserved them. Usually very brief, these religious lyrics are sometimes no longer than five lines; often, they are short simply because they are incomplete. Also interesting is how some religious pieces echo the somewhat "lustful" secular Latin parodic lyrics so popular in twelfth century Europe. Predictably, these love lyrics are addressed to the Virgin Mary, and G.L. Brook notes how early sacred poetry echoes "the phraseology of love lyrics." The resemblance, within the MS. Harley 2253 for example, between The Way of Christ's Love #31 and The Way of Woman's Love #32 is "so close that it is clear that one is an imitation of the other, and the secular lyric is probably the earlier" (Harley 16) suggesting strongly that the clerics were quite aware of the existing secular models. And although the sacred lyrics are not directly relevant to this particular study, from a descriptive perspective, this early religious poetry remains fresh to date and should be valued for its sureness and sophistication (Ransom xxvi).

Fortunately, a few secular lyrics "written in the same fourteenth
century hand" (Harley 1) did survive within one manuscript—the MS. Harley 2253, most likely compiled in the late 1340's. A copy of the manuscript is presently in the British Museum. Although the precise reference, The Harley Lyrics has come to refer to those lyrics found within this specific manuscript, Harleian lyrics can be found in other manuscripts (The Auchinleck Manuscript, for example, which shares five of the lyrics contained in 2253). The Harley 2253 folio contains one hundred and forty one leaves, with the first forty eight leaves devoted to sacred poetry—again, generally prayers to Jesus Christ and The Virgin Mary. Additionally, it is generally accepted that: 1. the poems, rather diverse in content, were written by different scribes at different times; 2. the dialects vary from poem to poem and reflect the Southern, Western, Northern, and Eastern Midland regions; and 3. because the manuscript mingles quite naturally both English and French verse, "the compilers of the manuscript" were at ease with both languages (Brown, English 28). Moreover, the folio contains "English, Anglo-Norman, and Latin works that includes saints' lives, fabliaux, religious lyrics, love lyrics and parodies" (Ransom xxi). Derek Pearsall argues that the mixing of genres and dialects exposes the manuscript's "lack of real sophistication" (Old English 127), yet, I must agree with Daniel Ransom and Carter Revard, who view this "arrangement of opposite types and themes in the manuscript as signs of literary sophistication, in the authors and in the compilers" (121). The manuscript is indeed rich with its different types of lyric, yet irrespective of its miscellaneous nature, it is important in several contexts. Most
literary historians credit this poetry as the "first sustained" or at least the first surviving treatment in English literature (Brook, Harley 20) of the theme of love, in rich qualitative terms and detailed expressions. Certainly, its alliterative quality, its varying stanza formations, including the "dancing rimed stanza," and occasional unrhymed lines, often rare during this time, warrant attention. Yet, for our purpose, the most significant contribution of this poetry remains the exceptionally clear examples of effictio found within the lyrics. These associative descriptions of "ideal woman" in the classic formulaic descending catalogues survived and served as models for the poets who followed.

In this chapter, I will examine representative examples of traditional effictio in "The Fair Maid of Ribblesdale," "Blow Northerne Wynd," and "Alysoun" from the Harley manuscript, and in "A Catalogue of Delights," from Russel Hope Robbins' edition, Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries. Additionally, as an example of early modification of the form, the portrait of the Green Knight in Sir Gawain and The Green Knight, will be examined. But first, it seems important to restate one point. The traditional effictio within a lyric serves to illuminate the feminine ideal—the woman who boasts perfection "withinne and withoute." Consequently, and not surprisingly, the most important quality required of the woman is all encompassing beauty, that is to say, spiritual as well as physical beauty. John Gower, a personal friend of Chaucer, enumerates the specifics of the convention in an
When the trembling lover admires a woman endowed with radiant beauty, the blush of the rose is in her face. He admires her golden hair, her well shaped ears, the smoothness of her brow which is gleaming white, her youthful cheeks, her eyes which shine like the sun and which a well composed countenance graces, her straight nose and delicately opened nostrils, her honeyed lips—and the breath of her mouth is sweet—her even teeth, whiter than milk, and the beauty of her mind which is keeping with her. The radiance of her face brightens her ivory neck, together with her throat of crystal; and the luster of her breasts glistens whiter than snow, as if two dazzling apples were affixed to it. He beholds her long arms, just the least bit roundly plump, and he thinks their embrace is a heavenly kingdom. And he sees her hands and bejewelled fingers glitter—no soft wool softer than they. He perceives her youthful shoulders, unaccustomed to burdens; no boniness shows in them, so he marvels at them the more. From aside he sees her extend her graceful figure, and no line is straighter than she. He observes her steps treading in the dance and notes the measure of her paces...[del. omis]
And he sees her head encircled and glittering with jewels, and the splendor of her clothes, which are highly becoming to her...Delightful are the part in her hair, her serene brow, her milk white neck, her mouth, her little lips, her blush, and the bright of her eyes.
Beautiful are the crown of her head, her brow, eyes, nose, teeth, mouth, cheeks, chin, neck, hands, breast, and perfect foot.

Moreover, "the girl's beauty transcends humankind; she possesses a kind of divinity which surpasses the race of man. Fortunate above all others whom grace of form adorns, she becomes a phoenix without peer...When a man sees her womanly beauty—so sweet, elegant, and fine, but more like an angel's—he thinks her a goddess" (qtd. Miller 196).

Woman's heavenly beauty may easily transcend human perception, but it cannot nor does not transcend the elementary semantics required in order to capture it fully in lyric. Predictably then, there existed numerous and somewhat interchangeable terms, ones that also reflect spelling or dialect variations, to illustrate this concept of external beauty including: bealte, chosen, feyr, feyre, feir, fayr, fasir, fyn, freo, fre, frely, freoli, frely, gentil, glad, gladly, hende, lossum, semly, shene, suetnesse, pryuen, priuene, and wayle. The word fair, referring specifically to complexion colour: (feyr, feyre, feir, fayr) along with its synonyms: hendi, suete, bleo, gentil, lylie-whyt, lylie-leor, lussum, and seml, are also synonymous with the word "beauty" or "beautiful." This reinforces a significant correlation within the effectio equation, because simply stated, within traditional models, the woman who is beautiful is always fair, and the fair woman is therefore always considered beautiful, with
the next level of the syllogism equating beauty/fairness to perfection. Normally, the fair reference is mentioned early on in the description, and this manifests itself within each of the following models (as well as in the Chaucerian models to follow). It will, however, prove most effective in Spenser's abbreviated *effictio* of Rosalind, one to be discussed in a later chapter.

Because the ideal woman must possess moral "perfection" as well, there existed multiple terms to elucidate the woman's stellar moral profile or beauty of countenance including: godly, worly, hendi, hendy, gentil, godnesse, graciouse (gracious); stypye, breme, chosen (excellent); menskful, freo, gent (noble); mildenesse, meke (gentleness); rhytfulness, pryuen, suetnesse, pewes (integrity virtue); bliithe (cheerful), lealte (loyal) and, lasteles (faultless). Ideal woman indeed must possess and reflect these exemplary qualities, and again must possess physical perfection at the same time. Granted, this is no small feat but this noted, let us examine examples of the feminine ideal within the early medieval lyrics.

"The Fair Maid of Ribblesdale"

Ace sonnebeem hire bleo Ys briht,
in vche londe heo leometh liht,
thourh tale as mon me tolde.
the lylie lossum is ant long,
with riche rose ant rode among,
a fyldor fax to folde.

Hire hed when ich bihole apon,
the sonnebeem aboute noon
   me tohte that y seze;
hyre eyzen aren grete ant gray ynoh;
that lussom, when heo on me loh,
   ybend wax eyther breze.
the mon and hire muchele maht
ne leneth non such lyht anahl
   (that is in heouene heze)
ase hire forhed doth in day,
for wham thus muchel y mourne may,
   for duel to deth y dreyze.

Heo hath browes bend an heh,
whyt bytuene ant nout to neh;
   lussum lyf heo ledes;
hire neose ys set as hit wel semeth;
y dez, for deth that me demeth;
   hire speche as spices spredes;
hire lockes lefly aren ant lorge
for sone he mihte hire murthes monge;
   with blisses when hit bredes
hire chyn ys chosen ant eyther cheke
whit ynouh ant rode on eke,
   ase roser when hit redes.

Heo hath a mury mouht to mele,
with lefly rede lippes lele,
   romaunz forte rede;
hire teht aren white ase bon of whal,  
euene set ant atled al,  
    ase hende mowe taken hede;  
swannes swyre swythe wel ysette,  
a sponde lengore then y mette,  
    that freoly ys to fede.  
Me were leuere kepe hire come  
then beon pope ant rude in Rome,  
      stypest vpon stede.

    When y byholde vpon hire hond,  
the lylie- white, lef in lond,  
    best heth mihte beo;  
eyther arm an elne long,  
baloygne mengeth al bymong;  
    ase baum ys hire bleo;  
fyngrs heth hath feir to folde;  
myhte ich hire haue ant holde,  
    in world wel were me.  
Hyre tyttes aren anvnder bis  
as apples tuo of Parays,  
ouself ze mowen seo.

Hire gurdal of bete gold is al,  
vmben hire middel smal  
    that triketh to the to,  
al with rubies on a rowe,  
withinne coruen, craft to knowe,  
    ant emeraudes mo;  
the bocle is al of whalles bon;  
ther withinne stont a ston  
    that warneth men from wo  
the water that hit wetes yn  
ywis hit wortheth al to wyn;
that sezen, seyden so.

Heo hath a mete myddel smal,  
body ant brest wel mad al,  
    ase feynes withoute fere;  
eyther side soft ase sylk,  
whittore then the moren-mylk.  
    with leofly lit on lere...[del. omis.]
(H.L.)

"Blow, Northerne Wynd"

Blow, northerne wynd,  
sent thou me my suetyng!  
Blow, northerne wynd,  
blou! blou! blou!

Ichot a burde in boure bryht  
pat sully semly is on syht,  
menksful maiden of myht,  
    feir ant fere to fonde.  
In al this wurchliche won  
a burde of blod ant of bon  
neuerzetete y nuste non  
    lussomore in londe.  
    Blow, &c.

With lokkes lefliche ant longe,  
with frount ant face feir to fonde,  
with murthes monie mote heo monge,  
    that brid so breme in boure,
with lossum eye grete ant gode,
with browen blysfol vunder hode.
He that reste him on the rode
    that lefflich lyf honoure!
        Blow, &c.

Hire lure lumes liht,
ase a launterne any,
hire bleo blykyeth so bryht,
    so feyr heo is ant fyn.
A suetly suyre heo hath to holde,
with armes, shuldre ase mon wolde
ant fyngres feyre forte folde.
    God wolde hue were myn!

Middel heo hath menskful smal;
hire loueliche chere as cristal,
thezes, legges, fet, ant al
    ywraht wes of the beste.
A lussum ledy lasteles
that sweting is ant euer wes;
a betere burde neuer nes
    yhered with the heste.

Heo is dereworth in day,
graciouse, stout, ant gay,
gentil, iolyf so the iay,
    worhliche when heo waketh.
Maiden murgest of mouth;
bi est, bi west, by north ant south,
ther nis fiele ne crouth
    that such murtheres maketh,
Heo is coral of godnesse,  
heo is rubie of ryhtfulnesse,  
heo is cristal of clannesse,  
    ant baner of bealte;  
heo is lilie of largesse,  
heo is paruenhe of prouesse,  
heo is solsecle of suetnessse,  
    ant ledy of lealte...[del. omis.]  
(H.L.)

"A Catalogue of Delights"

Her heer is yelou as the gold,  
Her forhed shapyn as it shuld  
    with all the feturs therabout,  
Her Eris ben comly & round,  
Her browes with bewte bene bound:  
    wel wer hym that wynne her mouth.

Her lovely eyen of colour gray,  
Her rudy is like the rose yn may  
    with leris white as any milk,  
Her nose is et right womanly,  
With mouth & tethe bothe so goodly,  
    her lippes soft as silk...

Her pappis ys bene godely & round.  
her brest is bothe swete & sound,  
    I know none so fair a wyght:  
Her sidis ben long, her myddyl small,
Her body is as gentill with-all,
    Her bak is set ful right:
her armes bene small, her hondes swete,
with fyngurs ling with nayles mete ;
    All os plesur she is wrout...[del. omis.]
    (Sec. Lyr.)

"Alysoun"

...ichot from heuene it is me sent;

...On heu hire her is fayr ynoh,
    hire browe broune, hire eze blake,
with lossum chere he on me loh,
    with middel smal ant wel ymake.
Bote he me wolle to hire take
    forte buen hire owen make
longe to lyuen ichulle forsake
    ant feye fallen adoun.
    An hendy, hath, &c. (H.L.)

In the first place, note how each description conforms to traditional 
\textit{effictio} formula by establishing early on that the woman is indeed 
physically beautiful and/ or fair. In "Fair Maid," a "splendid example of 
medieval description" (Ransom 49), the woman is, in the first place,
"fair." Moreover, her beauty is as bright as a sunbeam, and in each land, her light gleams (7,8), suggesting the internal as well as the external glow, and the poet would rather meet with her than be the Pope in Rome--she is truly admired; in "Blow Northerne Wynd," the maiden also gleams: her light gleams like a lantern (23), she is very fair on sight (6), most pleasing (43), and beautiful (8), she is a banner of beauty (50); in fact, there is none more beautiful in the whole world (10); in "Alysoun," her face is lovely (15); and, in "Catalogue," there is none so fair (15). In each lyric, the first requirement of an effictio has been realized.

Next, note how, for the most part, each portrait conforms to the established effictio route: the description begins at the top of the head and then surveys the face before a methodical descent down the torso. Of the four examples, the most conventional is "Catalogue" which lists, in sequence, hair, forehead, brows, eyes, cheeks, nose, mouth, teeth, lips, breasts, torso, waist, back, arms, hands, and fingers. In this lyric, the author chooses not to return to her face or to re-scan her torso during the course of the descent. This example therefore provides the most linear of all possible routes. The "Alysoun" lyric is equally conventional in that it presents her hair, forehead, brows, mouth, eyes, complexion, nose, mouth, teeth, lips, breasts, waist, back, arms, fingers. Again, the descent is clear. And although "Alysoun's" description seems rather scant compared to the other models, the descent from hair, brow, and
eyes to waist is traditional.

In "Fair Maid," the *effictio* lists hair, head, eyes, forehead, brows, nose, mouth (specche), hair, chin, cheek, mouth, lips, hand, arms, fingers, breasts, waist and torso, toe, waist and breasts. While this pattern travels primarily in a linear descent, the traditional route is altered twice. After viewing her entire face, instead of moving to the neck and shoulder area, our eyes are forced back to the top of her head and then down to her chin for one more look at her entire face. The poet no doubt feels that one facial viewing won't suffice. Her incomparable beauty commands two inspections. Moreover, after continuing the descent to her toes, we are again guided north to her waist and then further north to her breasts. In the course of the *effictio*, her body is surveyed more than one and a half times. The route then travels from north to south to north to south to north and to north, and the anonymous author has thereby established a slight variation of the formulaic head to toe catalogue sequence, one that Chaucer seems to adopt in his portraits of Alisoun in the *Miller's Tale* and Emelye in *The Knight's Tale*. For example, Chaucer provides a route that offers his reader more than a quick scan of Alisoun's body, with clear emphasis on her most important asset, her "girdle." Similarly, but from a more reverent perspective, Chaucer allows the reader to gaze upon Emelye before strategically lingering on her "braid." His deliberate motives for doing so in each portrait will be explored in subsequent chapters. To return to the early
lyrics, the route in "Blow, Northerne Wynd" is similar to that in "Fair Maid" and lists its catalogue in an almost identical order: hair, face, forehead, eye, brow, complexion, face, neck, arms, shoulder, fingers, waist, thighs, legs, feet, "ant al" up to the mouth. Although this altered route travels from north to south to north, the ultimate effect remains the same as that within "Fair Maid": this variation, of not executing one simple descent, clearly affords the reader more than survey, and at the same time, urges the reader to linger upon selected emphasized features. In fact, as Kevin Keirnan notes, many poets were aware "of the effects that could be produced by careful modification of the descending catalogue...Perhaps the most startling modification of all is when the poet reverses the direction of the catalogue" (2) in that the reader's eyes leisurely savour the complete length of the woman's torso not once but twice!

Thus far, ideal woman is "fair" and beautiful from head to toe. It would also seem quite natural that she is desirable. She represents that intangible source of perfection so coveted within a prospective love/soul mate: "one loves either the tangible or the intelligible world. It may be possible to move from the tangible to the intelligible, but the two are not opposites; they exist in a relationship of inferior and superior (Robertson, Preface 25). The poet gazes upon her beauty in the first place and appreciates her exemplary physical features; he then catalogues the traits that illuminate her essence. In "Catalogue," one line
details how the woman "is wrout of plesur." This reference, and specifically the term "wrout" [wurche: act, cause, make] and pleasure [carnal or platonic] is no doubt subjective. It can, as many of the "love" lyrics do, lend itself to sacred or secular interpretations, with the possibility of valid arguments for either perspective in that "a woman may be loved concupiscently with reference to certain physical satisfactions, or charitably with reference to God...to desire something simply and to desire something else as preferable are not contraries" (26). Granted, within a secular sense, her beauty might act to incite or to make carnal, sexual pleasure, but this beauty, "whether used or abused obviously depends on the inclination or 'will' of the observer" (67). Even though there is this mingling of secular desire and sacred idolatry for the woman within these lyrics, it seems more likely that her beauty evokes incorporeal desire —strictly from an innocent, awed, and again, incorporeal perspective. I believe this to be the case in all of the above examples. In "Alysoun," the poet is no doubt in awe, for he has taken his love from "al wymmen (11) and given to Alysoun; still he desires her; in "Fair Maid," an early reference reveals how the poet would rather meet with her than be Pope in Rome (46), and the final reference is clearly sacred— Christ himself sanctions noble nights with his heavenly woman. In fact, the poet means to elevate his subject rather than revel in it (Ransom 53). In "Blow," God wishes (or a stronger "wills") her his (30). These "highly rhetorical and hyperbolic descriptions of the woman's beauty and gentility" (Ransom 53) then serve to elicit from the observer a measure of worship rather than one of
salaciousness and to reinforce in the words of Boethius how: "the
coveteise of the verry good is naturely iplauntyd in the hertes of men"
(qtd. Robertson, Preface 30).

In that, as stated earlier, a true efficio illuminates the inner attributes
as well as the outer features, "ideal" countenance references are included
within the standard descriptions. Listed earlier, there were certainly
many representative words to categorize the attributes a good lady must
possess, words that apply to courtesy and fine breeding. In "Fair Maid,"
the woman's light is more powerful and noble than the heavens at night,
her beauty rivals that of the moon (20), she has great strength (19), there
is a Paradise (heavenly) reference (19), a meeting with her is compared
to heaven on earth (84), her body is like moren-mylk (77) specifically--
so fresher and sweeter than the milk gathered during any other time of
the day, and most important, she is honest, for her lips are true, lele (38).
This last term, lele, which reveals much about her character, does not
refer to the deepened red colour of her lips; granted, the lips are the
traditional rede, but the term lele, true, is used here as an adjective that
modifies the word lips, and not as an adverb that modifies the adjective
red, as in the cliché to clarify colour: true red. The woman is true--
honest in speech -- perhaps the most admirable trait of all. The Biblical
references that validate the value of truth and at the same time infer how
"the wicked speak lies" (Psalm 58) abound: Proverbs 6:16-19, 12:22,
16:28, 17:7; Matthew 12:36-7; Psalm 101-7, 58:3. And, if the woman
speaks no lies from her red lips, she does not condemn, deceive, or betray, and again, she exhibits angelic rather than human characteristics. In "Alysoun," in one clear reference, the poet reveals that she is sent from heaven above (9), an angelic categorization, and although there are additional specifics within this scant effictio, the poet obviously recognizes those qualities that would constitute a "Heavenly" demeanor, ones the woman no doubt possesses. And although these lyrics provide the necessary and concrete "internal" referents of effictio, there can be no clearer rhetorical treatment of ideal woman's countenance than in "Blow Northerne Wynd." Earlier in the lyric, many of the standard praises are observed: woman is a noble (6, 7) faultless lady (35); she is excellent, magnificent, gracious, and gentle (39-41). But in this lyric, she is more:

she is coral of goodness  
she is ruby of virtue,  
she is crystal of purity,  
...she is lily of generousity,  
she is periwinkle of excellence,  
she is marigold of sweetness,  
and lady of loyalty. (47+)

In this amplified, metaphorical, stanzaic tribute, the poet not only includes the symbolic vibrant colours of gold, white, and red, and has associated them with natural "elements," but he further associates the elements with ideal virtues of goodness, integrity, et al. Colour
symbolism then gives clearer, richer and more depth to the portrait because the physical traits and moral profile are identified, exemplified, and enhanced through the recognizable emblematic significations within the coded language of colour.

The history of colour symbolism can be traced from ancient times: the application within the religious rites of India, Persia, Egypt, and China; the Biblical (Old Testament) applications (vestments, sacred objects); the Greek and Roman mythological applications (shrines, gods and goddesses; the natural or environmental applications of the primitive man (fire, sky, night, sun). In fact according to M. Channing Linthicum, "certain meanings had naturally become associated with colours even in pre-Christian times: red with blood, and hence with power; yellow with the sun, therefore with warmth and fruitfulness; green with spring, youth, hopefulness; brown with autumn and despair; grey with winter and barrenness, white with purity; black—with the absence of color—with darkness, gloom woe, and death" (15). The rules of the language of colour symbolism are simplistic: only simple (pure) colours are to be used. The primary colours (in the Middle Ages) are white, red, black, blue, and green and gold (yellow); secondary colors are gray, purple, and brown. If a colour combination is used, "that which dominates gives general meaning, that which is dominated, the modified meaning": red (love) + black (evil) = egotism, evil love (hatred). Opposite meanings, ones that give signification contrary to their ordinary interpretations
(Eagen 15), can be attributed to a use of colour: for example, blue, which customarily signifies faithfulness (for example, the colour of the Virgin Mary) was often used to clothe an adulterer or dupe. The blue cloake designated the adulterous woman...at last blue was the colour of fools in general (Huizinga 250). Following is an outline of the primary efficietio colours and their standard colour meanings:

**White**

chaste, virgin

1. Unstained
   - pure
   - innocence, joy, happiness
   - moral perfection
   - holiness

2. Light
   - triumph over darkness, eternal truth, faith, honesty
   - knowledge (ignorance),
   - goodness (evil)

3. As Opposite of: (Black)
   - joy (sorrow), truth (falseness)

**Red**

sacred: God, Divine, martyrdom, pure love

- carnal: lust, adultery, sin

1. Blood
   - emotion
   - defiance, cruelty
hate

war (Mars), suffering

Hell

2. Fire

passion

Black

1. Positive

structural strength, colourless, passionless

mysterious, fearful
secrets

evil

devil

witchcraft, wickedness

falseness

sleep (endless)

2. Negative

dark

darkness

d death

woe, grief, mourning

silence

silent, sleep

3. As Opposition of: (White)

colourless,

negation, ignorance, evil

Gold or Yellow

autumn-maturity

fruitfulness

spring is the time of
marriage of Sun and Earth

love

Light

God} wisdom, bounty, goodness

1. Sun}

strength, power
bright, glory
rays} wisdom, knowledge, inspiration

warmth (human)} cheer, joy, mellowness

integrity

purity} goodness} honor, reputation

wisdom

2. Gold}

glory
value} power
dignity

(Eagen 32+)

Similarly, in the language of "gemology," precious stones also had symbolic meanings: diamond: light, innocence, purity, joy, faithfulness; pearl: rarity, purity, wisdom; ruby: love and passion; tourquoise/topaz/aquamarine: elevated thought; emerald: felicity, love, joy; gold: worth, perfection, purity, honor,—integrity; amethyst: royalty, nobility, truth
and constancy.

Given then that natural beauty, admirable attributes, and brightness of colour constitute the ideal woman, the woman, in the "Blow Northern Wynd" does indeed possess natural beauty. In rhetorical terms, she represents, the beauty within nature's precious treasures. She is pure white flower, she is bright blood jewel, and she is the bounty of land and sea. She is simply faultless and thereby commands awe, respect, and honour. "Blow..." provides a wonderful blending of the two poles of effictio. Within this type of detailed and blended effictio, the physical externals and the spiritual internals of woman artistically fuse and formulate a concentrated portrait of the conventionalized feminine ideal.

The diction within all the lyrics, and certainly in "Blow," is well chosen and therefore more precise. For the most part, basic features and colours remain traditional within the formulaic hair to torso sequence in the conventional black, white, red, and yellow colour combinations: hair is yellow, eyes are gray, shining, eyebrows are black, skin (face, neck) is white, and cheeks and lips are red. The colour associations also remain consistent: white (pearl, lily, swan, snow, milk, crystal, ivory, whale); red (rose, ruby, coral); black (berries, night); and, yellow (gold, sunbeam, marigold). However, in these examples, the uses of the formula range from the somewhat general associations within the
Vendome and Vinsauf models in "Alysoun" and "Catalogue of Delights" to more specific representations in "Fair Maid of Ribblesdale" and "Blow Northern Wynd." For example, complexion is no longer simply "white as milk" but whiter than morning milk, or any milk, whiter than the swan, white as the whale bone. These vivid colour "visuals" as well as the other "white" similes: snow, pearl, crystal, milk, ivory (whal), and lily; the "red" similes of blood, ruby and rose, and the gold similes of sun, beam, brightness, and "night" erasing evil, now become essential staples of the effictio formula. It is no longer sufficient that the beautiful woman's cheeks be red—they must blush with the red of the reddest rose; similarly, her hair must shine with a newly spun-gold shimmer, or with golden threads. Her mouth is more than sweet; it is "ful" of incense and spices, and as Chaucer will detail, it is honeyed. Her teeth, still ivory, are now evenly set ("FM" 40). Her breasts, once round and high are now two apples from paradise. Her belt is now one of beaten gold that trickles to her toe, one carved with rubies and emeralds and an ivory buckle (61+). The sense that "if some amplification is good then more amplification is better" is also operative in the representations of the woman's neck. If a long neck signifies beauty, then a longer neck must intimate more beauty; again, in "Fair Maid" the poet exaggerates the traditional long neck with an even longer swan like neck: swannes swyre swythe wel ysette/a sponne lengore then ("FM" 43+). Also her arms are exceptionally long—an elne longe. The hyperbole, in this respect, does not detract from the portrait but rather enhances an art whose significance lies in identifying then illuminating the best (of the best).
Another important amplification is seen in the embellished costuming in "Fair Maid." Her belt is emphasized, much like Alisoun's in The Miller's Tale and the Green Knight's in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. In this lyric, the poet details her belt of beaten gold that travels from waist to toe. The ornate belt is encrusted and carved with precious gems: rubies, emeralds, and ivory. Here, according to Ransom, "it becomes clear that the woman in question is not a peasant but an aristocrat...but her social standing is immaterial"(52). I cannot agree. The poet has taken great measure to emphasize her ornamental wealth as well as her wealth of virtues and fine breeding. He therefore places some significance on her birth. Clearly, she knows riches, and she knows gentility. According to Brook, the aristocratic nature is well illustrated in the English lyrics. The fair maid who is an example of an aristocrat wears her gilded belt adorned with the gems that signify love and felicity, and "moreover she can read romances" (Harley 11). She is genteel and educated. Her noted wealth therefore is an asset and enhancement to her representation.

These amplified and precise examples of effictio are wonderful of early versions of the formula. And for the most part, they remain consistent with Vendome and Vinsauf's original examples. Still, they go beyond simple imitation and are original in their own right. First, they
depart from the clear descent and in the process provide perhaps the first modification of the route. Second, they enhance the colours and particulars within the description, and finally, they clearly emphasize the importance of the woman's countenance, or moral profile. The formulaic concept of ideal woman has thrived within and survived this early and crucial rhetorical transition from the early to mid fourteenth century. This should prove no surprise however—the ideal is, after all, the fairest, loveliest, brightest, sweetest, and purest in the land.

As noted earlier, to represent the feminine ideal in rhetorical terms seems a simple and effective process. The poet who needs to paint a portrait of perfect woman develops an effictio. But what is the poet to do when he needs to craft an exciting, hyperbolic, amplified portrait, but the object of portraiture is not an ideal woman nor any woman for that matter? What rhetorical "figure" does he apply to a male? The effictio.

He simply takes full advantage of the well defined rhetorical tradition (to date) and chooses a conventional effictio (to start), then modifies it according to his specific needs. And it seems that this is precisely what the Gawain-poet did, for it seems evident that there is a link between the "rhetorical precepts and the stylistic practice of Gawain. It is possible that the Gawain poet knew the works of Matthew and Geoffrey, but there is no need to assume this: he could equally well have
derived his knowledge from the rhetorical training of the schools..." (Pearsall, "Descriptio" 34). Whether his source is direct or indirect, the Gawain-poet provides one of the best examples of medieval elaborate description and one based on fundamentally the same artistic principle—that is, description through enumeration of sophisticated detail (131). Moreover, the Gawain poet will use this formula to expose the duality of character inherent within the Green Knight. This portrait of the Green Knight is an important example of a modified effictio. Consider this modernized version of the Green Knight—from the romance Sir Gawain and the Green Knight:

From throat to thigh he was so thickest and square,
His loins and limbs were so long and great,
That he was half a giant on earth, I believe:
Yet mainly and most of all a man he seemed,
And the handsomest of horsemen, though huge at that;
For though at back and at breast his body was broad,
His hips and haunches were elegant and small,
And perfectly proportioned were all parts of the man.

And garments of green girt the fellow about—
A two-third length tunic, tight at the waist,
A comely cloak on top, accomplished with lining
Of the finest fur to be found, made of one piece,
Marvellous fur-trimmed material, with matching hood
Lying back from his locks and laid on his shoulders;
Fitly held up hose, in hue the same green,
That was caught at the calf, with clinking spurs beneath
Of bright gold on bases of embroidered silk,
But no iron shoe armoured that horseman's feet,
And verily his vesture was all vivid green,
So were the bars on his belt and the brilliants set
In ravishing array on the rich accoutrements
About himself and his saddle on silken work.

Yes garbled in green was the gallant rider,
And the hair of his head was the same hue as his horse,
And floated finely like a fan around his shoulders;
And a great bushy beard on his breast flowing down,
With heavy hair hanging from his head,
Was shorn below the shoulder, sheared right round,
So that half his arms were under the encircling hair,
Covered as by a king's cape, that closes at the neck.

Such a horse, such a horseman, in the whole wide world,
Was never seen or observed by those assembled before...

Not one.
Lightning-like he seemed
And swift to strike and stun.
His dreadful blows, men deemed,
Once dealt, meant death was done.

Yet hauberk and helmet had he none,
Nor plastron nor plate-armour proper to combat,
Nor shield for shoving, nor sharp spear for lunging;
But he held a holly cluster in one hand, holly
That is the greenest when groves are gaunt and bare,
And an ax in this other hand, huge and monstrous,
A hideous helmet smatter for anyone to tell of;
The head of the axe was an ell rod long.
Of green hammered gold and steel was the socket,
And the blade was burnished bright, with a broad
And graven in green with graceful designs.
A cord curved round it, was caught at the head,
Then hitched to the haft at intervals in loops,
With costly tassels attached thereto in plenty
On bosses of bright green embroidered richly.

The rider wrenched himself round in his saddle
And rolled his red eyes about roughly and strangely,
Bending his brows, bristling and bright, on all,
His beard swaying as he strained to see who would rise.

...On the ground the Green Knight stood,
With head slightly slanting to expose the flesh,
His long and lovely locks he laid over his crown,
Baring the naked neck for the business now due.

...The fair head fell from the neck, struck the floor
And the people spurned it as it rolled around...

(Trapp 290+)

At first glance, two assumptions are usually formed: the mode of portrait seems rather unsystematic; and, the Green Knight is a monster/wild man void of redeeming qualities. But, neither theory is valid. The portrait has always lent itself to many interpretations, and yet, there
should be no debate as to the impact or significance of this description. Over ninety graphic lines are devoted to this "carefully detailed portrait" (Benson, Art 58) where "everything becomes superlative" ("Meaning" 296); the description is concrete, visual, vibrant, and effective. In fact, the presence of the Green Knight "looms physically upon the scene with far more force" (Borroff 114) as a result of this description. Clearly, the Gawain poet was a "very conscious artist, conscious of what he wanted to do and what he was doing" (Speirs, Gawain 299), and what he wanted to do was to make use of the designated components of traditional effictio only to manipulate or modify them, if you will, into an early example of a disjointed effictio. In doing so, the poet illuminates an ideal male figure who is clearly unconventional yet who in fact conforms to the obligatory standards. The traditional components of the physiognomic descending catalogue established thus far in this study are clear. Therefore, if the Gawain poet wishes to depict, in vivid rhetorical terms, the gender counterpart of the feminine ideal, it seems quite natural that he would select and then adjust this traditional form of amplified portraiture. In short, he will reinforce and/or reinvent the familiar, and in the process, he will in fact formulate a new precept. Moreover, this imaginative, dichotomous imitation/reinvention will in turn serve as a fixed model --one that will be imitated and in turn be further modified.

Traditionally speaking, the disjointed Green Knight effictio does list
physical features in a descending format, provide the appropriate countenance associations, include some conventional colouring, detail ornate costume, and in essence, characterize the ideal. Still, its importance lies in its departure from rather than its adherence to the established convention. The departure which includes a male object of description, a rearranged route, and adjusted colouring does not jar the insular calibrated balance of the portrait. Instead, it serves to produce a "wonderful interpretation" (Schnyder 41).

There is a descending catalogue structure at work within this description, but the route is clearly rearranged. Instead of a clear descent (with or without the repeating torso scan), the poet chooses to provide his formulaic descent of the GK's physical features in eight (and not three as Benson suggests, Art 58) separate and somewhat parallel sections. In the first place, he descends north to south, from throat to thigh (138-9) and north to south, from breast to hips (144); second, he crafts a deliberate figure-eight patterned scan as he guides us from waist (tunic)--shoulders (hood)--legs (hose)--feet (shoes)--waist (belt); third, he catalogues the GK north to south, from hair to neck (180-6); fourth is a countenance reference; fifth, next, he surveys the torso (203-8), by guiding the reader from the breast (mail shirt), north to the head (helmet), and south to the hands (holly and axe). Concerning this last section specifically, there has been some debate. Again, Benson sees the "ful clene" description as being "interrupted" when the poet
catalogues the GK's "equipment" (Art 58). I cannot agree. The misconception here lies in the assumption that the GK's equipment is nothing more than a superfluously ornamental and unintentional inclusion within the portrait. On the contrary, the helmet, mail shirt, and axe are placed here deliberately in that they clearly serve to solidify who the Green Knight is and of what he is fashioned. They represent his art, his power, and his being and should not be considered a separate but rather a calculated amalgam of his existence (much like Prospero's book and mantle in The Tempest). The instrumental battle garb, a clear associative physiognomic link to his powerful and noble character (an unconventional but an ideal knight), is as essential to a complete representation of the Green Knight as are the Fair Maid's belt, Alisoun's girdle, or Emily's braid. The "equipment" section should therefore be regarded with the same level of distinction as his throat-thigh, breasthips, and hair-neck sections; the sixth section provides an additional descent from eyes-brows-beard (304-6), and there is no further mention of the head until after the GK has been struck, some 100 lines after, in section seven, when the head and lovely hair reference echoes the traditional beginning of the original formula (418); the final section is extremely important because the obligatory fair reference establishes the GK as physically beautiful and worthy of the rhetorical tribute (427).

The rearranged route noted, let us explore the colourization within the portrait. Without doubt, when the Green Knight, "one of the most
awesome figures in all of English literature" (White 223), enters the
court, the most ostensible colour at work is green. According to Eagen,
"not one" hero in myth or romance "is totally green- skin, beard, and
hair, or possesses a totally green horse" (65), yet we learn that he was
"all a glittering green" (White 150); his garments were green (151); his
cloak, hood, and hose were green (153-7); "his vesture was all vivid
green" (161); his saddle was embellished in "gay green gauds" (167) and
bows "with their green stones" (172); his horse was "green and huge of
grain" (175); the GK and his horse had green hair (181); the GK held
green holly (207) and an axe "graven in green with graceful designs"
(216) with tassels "of bright green embroidered rich" (220).
Traditionally, the colour green encourages an amalgam of arbitrary
symbolic interpretations, in reference to source and meaning, and
evidence of this colour within this portrait proves equally confusing.
Again, according to the language of colours green represents:

fertility, plenty, Venus
birth
life, new life, rebirth (spiritual), Immortality
joy, vigor, contentment
freshness

 cleanness, chastity

love
merriment

SPRING} newness, youth}
inexperience
enthusiasm in this life
Hope } immortality
never failing return of Spring

Victory } spring over
winter
Nature's buds } promise

Many scholars including Kittredge and Lewis Spence have searched diligently for the source of the Green Knight's greenness, but "even if they were able to find one or two green-skinned literary characters, they would probably shed little light on this poem" (Benson, Art 91). The ritual green man is certainly a familiar figure in folklore, as the May King or the Corn King with his entire body usually covered with leaves (69). Green in this respect has come to symbolize the May season and the rebirth of vegetation. Celtic fairies and ghosts are green. Green is the colour of the vegetation God (Nitze), the tree God, and the Irish Sun God (Buchanan). Green is the Egyptian symbol of fertility and the Christian symbol of hope, rebirth, peace and temperance. It may represent spring, youth, natural vitality, life, rebirth, death, and the supernatural. But, what does green mean in this case? Although Joseph Campbell (80), A.H. Krappe, and Heinrich Zimmer equate the colour with death (77) and Dale Randall (485) and D.W. Robertson ("Green" 41) interpret the GK's greenness as a diabolical influence, I must agree
with Hans Schnyder who equates the GK's greenness with his being "spiritually alive in faith, hope, and charity, being fertile in the production of good works" (42). This character is the ideal knight, the gender counterpart to the feminine ideal, therefore, we must accept the colour green as a positive reinforcement of this fact.

Another extremely important colour within the description is red. In fact, Robert White suggests, "in some ways, the most striking detail of all the GK's colouring is his "red eyes" (304). Although the Gawain-poet does not apply the traditional light, grey colouring, the GK's eyes are bright and sparkling--red. And in that this red (which would normally apply to cheeks and lips) provides further insight into the physiognomic nature of the GK, this modification serves to embellish the characterization. What does the colour modification denote?

Specifically, the Middle Ages manual *Secreta Secretorum* dictates "if eghen be Reed, he that hauys hem ys coraious, stalworth, and myghty" (115); moreover, "he that haue rede sparkelynge eyen, his fierse and corageous" (233). If the eyes are truly a window to the soul, then these red eyes clearly expose the GK's favorable attributes as dictated in the manual. The GK possesses courage, fierceness, strength, and nobility. Three of the traits are categorically constructive, but the term fierceness easily lends itself to an ambiguous if not negative implication. For example, the GK as "wild man" association, so noted in the studies of Richard Bernheimer and LA. Paton, are interesting approaches, but
again, this effictio representation of the GK, is not negative.

Granted, unchecked, fierceness may result in rampant indiscriminate violence, but the GK, although somewhat threatening in appearance upon entering the hall, is no threat, nor does the Gawain-poet mean him to be: he is huge, but he is perfectly proportioned; he is gallant, ravishing, and handsomer than others; he does hold an axe (a Biblical reference to Matt.3:10 ?), still, he is not fully armed, and although it is observed that he is indeed capable of casting a "dreadful and deadly blow", at this time, he does not wear the equipment "proper" for this mode of "combat": "he has not come with hostile intentions; he wants to speak reason to the king. If he were armed for a serious fight, no member of the Round Table could in the least hope to be his match" (Schnyder 41). To further demonstrate his peaceful purpose, he carries a holly branch (again reinforcing the greenness within the portrait as temperance and peace):

now it is well known that in the European countries north of the Alps the holly was—and still is—used at Christmas festivities as a substitute for palm branches. The German 'Stechpalme' for holly clearly reveals the function of the plant. The palm branch is, of course, one of the most popular Christian symbols. In the allegorical interpretation of it the green colour—in other word—exactly
the element it has in common with the holly—plays a pre-eminent role. The greenness of
the palm is neither destroyed by the cold
winter nor by the heat of summer. Medieval
theologists saw in that fact an allegorical
expression of the concept that the spiritual
life of the just is neither affected by the
cold torpor and the negligence of the spirit
nor by the hot desires of the flesh, and that
the faithful are not overcome by the different
'temperatures' of prosperity and adversity.
The palm branch furthermore adorns the hand of
the victor who has defeated the flesh, the
world, and the devil. (42)

The GK's fierceness, often misinterpreted but clearly a form of
restrained strength and power, is a positive association. So is his size,
which is so easily mistaken as wild like and grotesque: "though at first
he seems almost gigantic, half etayn" (140), actually, he towers only by
a head or so over other men (332). Apart from his green hue
(temperance, peace, and hope) and separate head, he is represented as a
fine, handsome, human figure." In fact, after the testing of Gawain has
been completed, the GK again becomes gallant, benevolent, and full of
goodwill (Loomis 20). Marie Borroff concurs yet focuses on the term
"myriest." Again a countenance association, the term is clearly intended
to make the GK attractive: "the Gawain poet does not wish to make the
GK monstrous in size, neither does he wish to make him repellent. He
now praises his comeliness in form" (Stylistic 114). All said, within the
framework of this effictio, the Green Knight emerges a fine, temperate,
capable, and worthy knight.

Within this brief exploration into the portrait of the GK, any one of the noted cryptic references is certainly indicative of why good critics have disagreed so widely in their interpretations of the Green Knight. Seen from one angle, he is an attractive character who, it seems, could have been patterned on one of the contemporary noblemen with whom he has been identified; from another angle, he is a frightening figure who does indeed resemble some of the supernatural 'originals' that have been adduced to explain him. He is composed of contradictions (Benson, Art 62). Indeed, the GK is composed of contradictions, and it is exactly this complex composition that makes the portrait intriguing. The GK is above all an example of a fair, beautiful, well proportioned, gallant, temperate, faithful and noble "ideal" man -- one whose character is further exposed at the Bercilak castle in effictio:

Gawain gazed at the gallant who had greeted him well
And it seemed to him the stronghold possessed a brave lord,
A powerful man in his prime, of stupendous size.
Broad and bright was his beard, all beaver hued;
Strong and sturdy he stood on his stalwart legs;
His face was as fire, free was his speech,
And he seemed a suitable man
To be a prince of a people with companions of mettle
There amid merry talk the man was disrobed,
And stripped of his battle-sark and his splendid clothes.
Retainers readily brought him rich robes
Of the choicest kind to choose and to change into.
In a trice when he took one, and was attired in it,
And it sat on him in style, with spreading skirts,
It certainly seemed to those assembled if spring
In all its hues were evident before them;
His lithe limbs below the garment were gleaming with
beauty.
Jesus never made, so men judged, more gentle and handsome

A knight:

From wherever in the world he were,
At sight it seemed he might
Be a prince without a peer
In a field where fell men fight. 841-74

When the dual natures or individual personages of GK /Bercilak are
examined within the framework of the effictio convention, Bercilak's
catalogue clearly functions as an embellishment and fortification of the
GK's positive qualities. When ultimately unmasked, the GK, as Bercilak
remains powerful, strong, striking, and without peer-- moreover, he now
embodies perfection in the form of a beautiful, gentle, handsome prince.
Also interesting is the fact that Bercilak reflects the same green hue-- in
fact, he embodies "every hue of springtime" and all that this represents:
spiritual life, hope, temperance and peace. Now, "it is fairly obvious
that the Gawain poet took special pleasure in striving after a perfect
combination ...the two fold function of the GK is doubtless completely
compatible...one cannot help the impression that he was fascinated by
the dual aspect of things and that he consequently tended to stress the duality by giving each component and individual bodily shape...both the GK and the lord of the castle assume an individual personality although they are one and the same person, or better, one and the same idea" (Schnyder 58). The portraits then are complimentary, and in the words of Robertson, the "two are not opposite" ("Green" 25). As the original tradition dictates: Fortunate above all others, whom grace of form adorns, HE becomes a phoenix without peer (Miller 196). In essence, he does. The effictio, then, proves the perfect technique to use to symbolize this duality, and the portrait of the GK goes beyond the basic, stock portraiture seen earlier in the century and presents an early example of the modified, multidimensional character. The Green Knight, an unnatural but marvelous man (Bloomfield 50) does not totally conform to the original, cloned version of the ideal knight in either form or substance. Neither then should his effictio.
CHAPTER THREE

CHAUCERIAN EFFICTIO: IMITATION

"The role of the artist is to shape and adorn the materials of his art"

(Jordan 9)

Chaucer knew of the traditional formula. He imitated it, and more important, he modified it. He was a learned poet who was perhaps no longer inspired by the standard rhetorical prototype. Or, perhaps he was simply moved to extract the extraordinary from the ordinary and to encourage the common to emerge sublime. Whatever his motivation, Chaucer manages to "produce a quantity of poetry which far exceeds this simple prescription" (Muscatine 174)...poetry which includes effective examples of effictio in modified form. His examples conform to the original concept in that they are complete physical/moral representations that mingle details of an iconographical nature with other details in order to produce an effect of considerable versimiltude
(Robertson, Preface 242). Consider, for example, his imitative yet inventive representation of Emelye in The Knight's Tale.

Clearly as "a learned poet, Chaucer knew Dante's Commedia and Petrarch's Canzonieri and made sparing use of them. He was familiar with Boccaccio's major Latin works, and he must have been aware of the Decameron, but he gave his time and attention to the vernacular works of Boccaccio's Neapolitan period and especially to the Teseida. Studies of his translations and adaptations have shown that he knew the poem so well that he could run lines from distant parts together in a seamless English fabric" (Boitani 50ff). There seems no debate then that Chaucer's source for Emelye in the Knight's Tale, with its "high degree of structural consistency, governed by the conventions" (Jordan 152) is Boccaccio's Emilia in Teseida delle Nozze d'Emilia. Boccacio's now familiar tale, begun in mid 1339 and completed in the 1340's, is a recognizable one: "una storia d'amore e dunque la sostanza del poema: Due amici divengon rivali per amore: si azzuffano, ma la lotta vien troncata e rimandata, e il duello convertito in una giostra" (A love story makes up... the substance of the poem. Two friends become rivals in love; they have a scuffle, but the fight is interrupted and postponed, and the duel is converted into a joust) (Volpi 186).

The original version recounts the relationship between two cousins,
Arcita and Palemone, and the fierce rivalry that ensues when each desires the same woman, Emilia, a traditional medieval beauty—fifteen years of age. During the course of Boccaccio’s adventurous tale, the knights fall in love with the maiden from afar, separate for a time, reunite, then perform chivalric battle (at the insistence of Theseus, the king) to win her hand. Initially, Arcita wins the tournament (and, the prize, Emilia), but, in true Boethian fashion, Arcita soon succumbs to a riding accident, leaving the more virtuous Palemone the victor. Emilia is the primary cause for most of the significant action within the tale and is introduced with a traditional description. For the duration of the tale however, she remains nothing more than a decorative prop. She motivates the suitors to heated battle and provides the necessary incentive for their insipid but predictable medieval masculine antics, the rather delicate blending of comic and serious effects of which can be seen when Arcita and Palemone are struck by the arrow of Emilia’s beauty (Anderson 70). Emilia is clearly aware of her beauty, and she is equally aware of and essentially at ease with the fact that it is her appearance that motivates the two to rival for her attention. Consequently, this residual impact receives full treatment in the tale: as the narrator describes the effect of Emilia’s beauty on the imprisoned cousins, he pauses over the disproportion between the intensity of their newly conceived desire and Emilia’s response to the ardent glances she has noticed coming from their window. What they desire and what she is pleased to have them desire, is “si poca di cosa.”
In fact, according to Boccaccio:

Ne la recava a cio pensier d'amore  
che ella avesse, ma la vanitate  
che innata han le femine nel core,  
di fare altrui veder la lor biltate;  
e quasi nude d'ogni altro valore  
contente son di quella esser lodate. (3.30)

She was not prompted by any thought 
or feeling of love, but by vanity, 
which women have innate in their 
hearts in making others see their 
beauty. Almost stripped of any 
other worth, they are satisfied 
to be praised for beauty, and by 
contriving to please by their 
charm, they enslave others while 
they keep themselves free. (trans. Mc Coy)

Emilia clearly is represented as an unresponsive heroine. Even though 
erfate is never within her control, she, as traditional medieval love 
object, seems not to care about the events that will determine whom she 
will love and/or whom she does ultimately marry. To her, these remain 
insignificant concerns. Rather, she cares about her appearance and its 
influence on those who view her. Emilia then, Boccaccio's stock, one 
dimensional heroine, is predictable on all counts: attractive, pure, most 
desirable, and quite "content to be admired for her beauty alone" 
(Anderson 71). Her Chaucerian counterpart, Emelye, seems also
indifferent to her situation, in that her only speech is her invocation to Diana. And although Robert Jordan sees no clear reason "why Emelye should pray to Diana" (172), her doing so distinguishes her, and her precise motivation for doing so will become quite clear after we examine Chaucer's use of colour. Emelye, often misunderstood, is sometimes viewed as the victim of a "one way affair...seen from the point of view of the man, whose feelings are of great interest and may be analyzed at length" (Spearling 11). Emelye may seem, on the surface, nothing more than a "colourless abstraction" (Wright 49). I think not. In Chaucer's hands, she is hardly colourless, and her duality of character is in fact concrete, as we will explore. Moreover, Chaucer's representation is clearly inventive and progressive, for despite her traditional external complacency and passivity to her life's course, Chaucer's Emelye, "seen" through the abbreviated effictio formula is in fact, powerful. She has the power to move her men to desperate measures after a condensed and distant glimpse ignites the fire of love in the hearts of Palamon and Arcite (Jordan 161).

Obviously, Chaucer recognized in Boccaccio's plot one of those "love" problems to be solved, perhaps foolish, perhaps valid (Muscantine 176) --two men vie for the beautiful, available lady. According to Charles Muscatine however, Chaucer's plot differs slightly:
In the Teseide there is one hero, Arcita, who loves and is eventually loved by Emilia, a young woman characterized by a natural coquetry, an admiration for a good looking young knight, and sympathy for the wounded hero. Palemone is a secondary figure, necessary to the plot because he brings about the death of Arcita. The story is a tragedy, caused by the mistake of Arcita praying to Mars rather than to Venus. In Chaucer's story there are two heroes who are practically indistinguishable from each other, and a heroine who is merely a name. In the Italian poem it is possible to feel the interest in hero and heroine which is necessary if one is to be moved by a story...
In Chaucer's version, on the other hand, it is hard to believe that anyone can sympathize with either hero or care which one wins Emelye. (176)

I cannot agree. The Emelye portrait does move the reader, and furthermore, Chaucer's effictio will affect each suitor differently; it will distinguish Arcite's attraction and intentions from Palamon's. And yes, Chaucer's imitative plot is indeed simple, as Robert Jordan suggests: the first two parts elaborate the experience of noble love for a lady; the second two parts, centering on the tourney, display the noble enterprise of fighting for her. In the tale, the action is minimal (160). But, the plot has never been the moving force behind this work..."it is in the description that the greatness of the Knight's Tale resides...it is preeminently a web of splendidly pictured tapestry in which the eye may
take delight, and on which memory may fondly linger" (Root 172). I agree that the significance of the story lies in its pictures.

It is noteworthy that despite the wonderful Italian original, Chaucer does not imitate Boccaccio's description of Emilia precisely either in length or representation. Instead, he weaves Emilia's conventional portrait into a miniaturized yet clearly more riveting tapestry of Emelye. Moreover, Chaucer embellishes Emilia's one dimensional vision and threads into Emelye's portrait a more complex morality. As Jordan notes, Chaucer's *effictio* of Emelye "offers a magnificent representation, primarily in visual and architectonic terms, of a profound and humane philosophical concept" (153):

That Emelye, that fairer was to sene  
Fairer than is the lylie upon his stalke grene  
Fressher than the may with flowers newe  
For with the rose colour stroof hire hewe. (1035-38)

Yclothed was she fresh, for to devyse:  
Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse  
Bitynde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse.  
(1048-50)

In somewhat of a "poetic pageant" (Muscatine 181), we confront the
representation of Emelye, so fresh and embodied within the confines of springtime. We are moved. She is breathtaking, and we can understand why her two competitive suitors, Palamon and Arcite would risk their relationship for Emelye's attention. Chaucer's striking vision no doubt threatens their bond when each is moved to love after a distant look from a prison window. After "that first sense of shock which is common to all vivid emotions as they arise and which transcends the common antithesis of pain and pleasure" (Lewis 237), the two knights will ultimately compromise their kinship and actively compete for this Emelye, at this point--an unattainable conquest. In fact, when "both love her from afar without fighting over who saw her first or who deserves her more" (Wing 140), it is because of Chaucer's effective visual representation.

Emelye's brief effictio reveals a fair, blond beauty. At the beginning, she seems to conform to the established formula. Still, Chaucer deliberately condenses Boccaccio's formulaic portrait. Boccaccio presents his ideal with white skin, golden hair, shining eyes, white hands, cheeks like rose, small mouth, little pink chin, firm breasts, and well broad-hips in a more specific catalogue. Chaucer eliminates many of these physical features. In fact, on the surface, Emelye simply is fair and has long blond hair. There are no eyes, nose, mouth and the like itemized. Chaucer's description of Emelye is indeed abbreviated, yet, the strategic route, precise colouring, and complex moral profile will
offer the reader a complete and more complex representation. Moreover, Chaucer's Emelye with her scant descriptives will emerge much more recognizable and clearly more multidimensional than Boccaccio's Emilia with her copious catalogue.

In a clear imitation of the original convention, Chaucer begins at the head and notes how Emelye is fresh and fair of complexion. After this formulaic introduction, a traditional descent begins. Emelye's effictio route travels from face, south to the nape of the neck until Chaucer has deliberately guided the reader to the one physical attribute he intends to maximize, Emelye's braid—golden, lush, and so very long—thirty-six inches. This visual representation heeds Geoffroi of Vinsauf's directive within the Poetria Nova: "Let her hair, braided and bound at her back, bind in its gold" (38). After Chaucer's hesitation upon the yard long length of her hair, the route effortlessly travels further south revealing the curvature of her torso and ends further south at the base of her spine. When the catalogue ceases, the reader is left to linger where the descent has ended, for Chaucer deliberately opts not to catalogue Emelye beyond this point. In either case, however, the emphasis rests on Emelye's braid. In essence, we, with Chaucer's guidance and because of his designated route down her curved form, become voyeurs. And as voyeurs, we are left to our own rather personal responses, which depending on our perspective, will view Emelye's braid as appealing and/or alluring. Chaucer's route therefore is designed to elicit either a
corporeal or non corporeal response from the reader much like it does from her two sworn yet self serving "brothers" willing to compete to the death in order to possess Emelye's "fresshe beautee" (1118). In fact, when we recall each respective response to Chaucer's representation of Emelye, each knight captures, visually and morally, the Emelye of his dreams; in fact, their meeting is "an aesthetic occasion entailing a structural impact, which we experience directly" (Jordan 163). For example, Palamon initially queries "womman or goddess?" (1157), though he essentially envisions the latter, and Arcite ostensibly elucidates:

Thow shalt, quod he, be rather fals than I;
And thou art fals, I telle thee outrely,
For paramour I loved hire first er thow.

What wiltow seyen? Thou woost nat yet now
Wheither she be a womman or goddesse!

Thyn is afeccioun of hoolynesse,
And myn is love as to a creature. (1153-1159)

Clearly, Palamon and Arcite are not "indistinguishable" (Muscatine 176), for each man reacts to the same vision differently: Palamon's love is no doubt exalted, and sacred while Arcite's love is exalted, and carnal. Each man extracts an accurate, genuine, but polar impression of Emelye
which we can share in our imaginations because of Chaucer's manipulative descriptive route with its duplicitous disposition. It is no coincidence that there remains an problematic attraction to this maiden somewhere between pure and sexual love. We wonder, as do her suitors, is she heavenly goddess or earthly woman? Does she indeed represent the white of Diana or the crimson of Venus? Or might she be a deliberate manufactured blend of the two? Emelye, formulaically fair and blond, and therefore the conventional essence of beauty/virtue is clearly "appraised" during this unconventional descent.

The route is untraditional. It is abbreviated. Chaucer will also adjust the colour pallet. Thus far, the effictio lists three "pure" colours—yellow/gold (hair), white (skin), and red (hue). But, as the effictio continues, Chaucer not only reinforces the red and white as separate symbols, but more important, he introduces an especially significant colour combination, red/white. In order to appreciate Chaucer's use of colour, let us examine Emelye within her environment. She is first observed outdoors on a bright May morning:

She walketh up and doun, and as hire liste
She gadereth floures, part white and red
To make a subtil gerlan for hire hede;
And as an aungel hevenysshly she soong. (1051-55)
For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe,
noot which was the fairer of hem two.

Of course, the first association Chaucer wishes to make is that Emelye is one with nature. She clearly blends with her landscape. She is fragrant flower, fresh air, and pure blue sky. In fact, she embodies all that is natural, and therefore earthly. But, Chaucer also compares Emelye to an angel. Therefore, at the same time, she embodies all that is unearthly: the chaste, unattainable, untouchable, heavenly spirit. Again, Chaucer incorporates an intentionally ambiguous reference. This "lovely Emelye, whose coloring competes with the flowers and whose voice competes with the angels" (Jordan 162) is an earthly apparition, a Heavenly vision comprised of flesh and bones. The time of year Chaucer represents is also noteworthy. Emelye not only walks in May, but, as Susan Wing observes, will ever be associated with May (143) and with springtime. This association is a rich one. Spring is clearly the time when the essence of nature is born, or reborn, when life is its most fertile, and when buds are about to blossom into fruition. It is the quintessential time of ripeness. The fresh naturalness of the young girl that springs from the comparisons with the flowers, as noted by Speirs (122), then, is quite significant. She walks among the world of spring flowers so effortlessly and indistinguishably because within her natural state she herself is somewhere between innocent bud and mature blossom. Emelye's nature is complex yet so clear because of Chaucer's deliberate representation. Here is Emelye so inherently fresh and so
inherently desirable. And again, each facet of her dualism will appeal to the appropriate suitor: Palamon is attracted to her angelic, unearthliness and consequently wishes to marry and to cherish her. And in the same respect, and to the same degree, Arcite who wishes to bed her passionately, sees only the Emelye whose flesh smolders.

To return to the colouring within the portrait, Chaucer adds to the traditional yellow/gold the pure colours of white, and red. Generally speaking, throughout his tale, Chaucer will use these colours separately as "medieval iconographical staples," as explored in Blanch and Wassermann's study (184). Emelye's skin is white, her cheeks red. She is also compared to the white lily, an especially beloved comparison generally used for the fair maiden (Curry 82) and to the red rose (1035–40), to emphasize the glow and bloom on the cheeks of the fair maiden (Curry 92). Traditionally, the white lily is reserved for purity i.e.: good woman, and the red rose represents love i.e.: desirable (and not necessarily or automatically immoral) woman. Given Emelye's restrained (white) sexuality (red), these floral associations are accurate. Had he used the precise formula of "white as lily and red as rose," he would have introduced "by far the most beloved of all comparisons in picturing the dazzling loveliness of charming woman" (Curry 94)—clearly, not his intention at this time. Emelye is indeed dazzling, but at the same time, she is a non traditional representation. Within the language of colour, then, Chaucer's separate use of white, and red is
clearly symbolic. White, of course, signifies purity, holiness, joy, and innocence and is "synonymous with beautiful" (26). Red remains the symbol of ardent love—either the exalted love for Christ (hence the blood association), or the carnal lusty love of the flesh. "Ardent" must remain the consistent term in this symbolization, for a true red signification commands the fiery element of passion, pure or otherwise. It is also important to note that each of these colours is reinforced, outside the effictio, during the tale. For example, in Emelye's speech to Diana, she pleads for her white maidenhood (2322) with a clear reference to the red blood of consummation (2333-40); and, near the end of the tale, Chaucer alludes to white alabaster and red coral (1910). Additionally, these colours reinforce the familiar white as Virgin Mary (purity)/red as Venus (carnality) significations. Moreover, we cannot overlook the extensive descriptions of the associative temples in Part Three. Chaucer provides thirty-seven lines for the temple of Diana, whose chastity is symbolized in white (for Emelye); eighty-three lines for the temple of Mars, whose warlike passion is symbolized in red (for Arcite); and forty-eight lines for the temple of Venus whose smoldering passion is symbolized in red (for Palamon). Also noteworthy, "Diana's temple, representing the still point of neutrality, is centered between the contending forces of Mars and Venus and stabilizes the total configuration. The three temples taken together constitute a visual, tangible image (Jordan 177). Indeed. Chaucer has strategically and symbolically constructed a "red" framework that borders the "white" on all sides. It is no wonder she prays. One side of Emelye is feeling a
natural sexual response to Arcite's lust for her while the other side is actively restraining this awakening sexuality and clutching on to her prized maidenhood. It seems then, in a symbolic sense, the white Emelye has no escape from the red within her and/or the red that surrounds her. The sexually inexperienced Emelye, clearly confused by these new feelings, senses that her chastity, perhaps for the first time, is in real danger. She therefore turns to Diana, who has always guided her:

'O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,  
To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene,  
Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe  
Goddess of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe...' (2322)

She would rather Diana banish those red elements that threaten her than confront them:

And Palamon, that hath swich love to me  
And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore,  
This grace I preye thee withoute more:  
As sende love an pees bitwixe them two,  
And fro me turne awey hir herties...(2336)

Given the separate presence of red and white (along with the deliberate
blend of the two, as we will note) and given Emelye's recognition to, but no real experience of, the natural feelings within her, there is a clear reason why Emelye invokes Diana. Emelye truly fears for her chastity. Who else then would she ask to intercede?

Thus far, the Chaucerian colour associations are separate emblems, and they correspond to the separate elements within Emelye: angelic virgin and earthy woman. Chaucer, however, needs to reinforce Emelye's inherent duality. Therefore, he will introduce and incorporate a colour blend in the form of the red/white combination— as an "ontological unity" (Blanch and Wasserman 184). When Emelye gathers the flowers for her hair, the color she chooses is dramatic and significant. Chaucer has, after all, categorized her in part as an angel, and these flowers represent her natural, earthly halo, yet one more associative dichotomy. A halo of flowers on the golden hair of the medieval fair maiden is quite common in that "beautifully tressed hair is often adorned with...flowers" (Curry 34), and predictably, Emelye is suitably crowned to provoke exactly the kind of attention she gets.... But her crown is comprised of "floures, part white and rede" (1053), flowers whose colour represent virtues (Robertson, Preface 225). Does Chaucer imply that, much like other bouquets he has crafted, this wreath is comprised of white flowers and red flowers? According to Joseph Eagen:
In the *House of Fame*, Venus' garland of red and white roses symbolizes ardent and chaste love, and the Squire's red and white flowers suggest his ardent nature and joyfulness. (22)

Or, does he suggest that each flower is, in turn, a combination of white and red? Although at first glance, this seems an minor consideration, Chaucer's intention is significant. As summarized in Blanch and Wasserman's study, "Chaucer's use of white and red together represents a type of 'visual onomatopoeia' where the visual aspect of the sign, the joinedness represented by the 'and' becomes the signified rather than any individual referents associated with the particular colors" (177). In the language of colour, "tints receive their meanings from the colours which composed" (Eagen 15); therefore, Chaucer's white/red onomatopoeia precisely defines both Emelye's countenance and her moral dilemma.

As noted earlier, Chaucer begins the *effictio* traditionally and never crafts her as exclusively white or red. Additionally, the deliberate route and the reactions of the two hopeful lovers confirm the signification of the colour blend: purity within passion and passion within purity, or, the moral profile Geoffrey specifically dictates: "Let her countenance
emulate dawn: not red, nor yet white--but at once neither of those colours and both" (36). Consequently, when Chaucer blends the red and the white, this is a conscious, strategic selection: "clearly then on the basis of consistent treatment of the two colors, Chaucer well understood their meanings, not merely their separate emblems, but in particular, as dynamic and complementary--and even extricable--parts of a whole" (Blanch and Wasserman 184). Moreover, Emelye's representation is no longer simplistic for she embodies that "tense equilibrium between the consciously noble...and the potentially explosive demands of personal passion" (Jordan 153). The red and white emblem, therefore, must be taken within the context of the flowers being not singularly coloured but rather as a fused combination of the two colours--partly red and white: part pure and part desirable, part Diana and part Venus...the feminine image split...Emelye et al.

Does this non traditional emblematic fusion disturb the reader? I think not. It is certainly a refreshing alternative to the established ideal, and we are drawn to Chaucer's more humanized representation rather than the predictable moral clones represented by traditional portraiture. To date, this is the most vibrant example of effictio. And, since Emelye reflects the inherent sexual complexity within each of us, she is clearly recognizable: "everybody knew her. She was always the same and the frequency of descriptions shows she corresponded to a profound need and recurrent image of the mind...we respond to Emily because of the
scores of other golden hairdo girls, bright, pure, gay...which have been the vehicles for so many daydreams, secret desires, aspirations, hopes, and fears" (Brewer, *Ideal* 267). She is fair. She is loved. And, she is truly a beauty, for "beauty is that which is lovable, and that which is lovable is harmonious, proportionate-'equal' (Robertson, *Preface* 134). Moreover, she has been given two proportionate, polar, and equal essences that have harmoniously blended. By design then, when Chaucer modifies the catalogue, route, and colouring within his most abbreviated effectio, he does in fact illuminate the tint within Emelye. At the same time, he surely validates the tint and awakens the "dawn" within each of us.

Clearly some scholars regard Chaucer's portraits as inconsequential ornaments devoid of thematic significance, "metaphors--quick likenesses to be noted and then passed by" (Kolve 307). Yet, they are not simply superfluous decor; They provide insight into the character. Chaucer's effectio of Emelye illuminates not only her external beauty but also her emotional dilemma. And although Chauncey Wood acknowledges that the outer description will serve to illuminate the inner notatio (87), he fails to attach sufficient value to Chaucer's clear unconventional use of this rhetorical tradition—especially when Chaucer chooses to expose the duality within his characters. Taking the effectio far beyond both the Vendome/ Vinsauf specifications and the early poetic models, Geoffrey Chaucer imaginatively incorporates, artistically manipulates, and
essentially restructures the tradition: "traditional mimetic theory, which openly posited a distance—however skillfully disguised—between real object and artificial imitation, could no longer serve the new sense of intimacy, of interpenetration, between the artists' experience and his expression" (Jordan 5). Despite the genre, whether it be exemplum, fabliau, or romance, the reader is presented with Chaucer's clear, systematic catalogues. These catalogues provide, in a contextual framework, significant insight into the motivation and actions of the "characters;" moreover, despite the degree to which each "character is integrated within, and integral to the tale, when Chaucer the rhetorician adheres to the effictio requisites or when Chaucer the artist modifies the route, the colouring, and the subjects, the result is consistently powerful.

Chaucer imitates Geoffroi's "termes, colours, and figures"—of a traditional didactic and technical kind. Moreover, Chaucer chooses to adapt from Geoffrey the lines which "state his prime principle of functionality," and this suggests he saw what was truly important in this poetic (Dronke 171). No doubt familiar with the concept of the feminine ideal, Chaucer affirms the need to describe a subject who may be, in form and/or substance, less than "ideal." He re-invents accordingly, and this inventive development within the tradition rather than any attempt to break away from it, is especially significant. And although he often describes a figure whose stereotypical or iconographical identity is clear (Holley 45), Chaucer often describes
those who in fact do not conform to traditional stereotypes without compromising the established rhetorical standards. The traditional components prevail despite the deliberate modifications. Moreover, his subject whether it be woman, male (ideal or otherwise), or animal emerges more dynamic, and multi-dimensional. In Chaucer's hands, the portraits seem to challenge the stereotypes and result in a more holistic picture than the early more traditional examples. Jill Mann suggests, from first line to last, Chaucer's portraits remain determinable and remarkably realistic:

The portraits in both the rhetorical and moralizing traditions aim at producing a strong and unified emotional effect, whether of admiration or disgust...It is therefore much easier to imagine that Chaucer saw the possibility of combining the two affective tendencies of admiration and vituperation—whose separation in other portraits gave an impression of artificiality in such a way as to reproduce the complex response which we normally have to real people. (184)

Chaucer's word pictures, according to the established tradition, will continue to force the reader to consider more than the subject's physical attributes. For example, formulaic "beauty," by this time conventionalized, is challenged when Chaucer's effictio introduces
innovative physical/countenance associations within each of his subjects. Consequently, the hesitant Emelye composite will differ from those of the adulteress Alisoun or the progressive Alysoun of Bath; as Keirnan notes, "the catalogue device, when it is used intelligently, forces a reader to look at a woman in the way she is meant to be looked at under the particular circumstances" (6). What the reader needs to recognize, then is that the Chaucerian effictio will provide the more traditional poet's details within reconstructed frameworks: "we simply cannot ignore the rhetorically framed images, for Chaucer's art emphasizes the placement of details inside a meaningful space, and the relationship among those elements produces the sense of looking and stepping in to gain perspective" (Holley 142). The result is an amalgam of complex multi dimensional portraits, clearly discernible as "independently fashioned and purposely juxtaposed elements" manufactured by the maistre composer of parts... (Jordan 154). In Alisoun's (Miller's Tale) portrait, for example, Chaucer wants his reader to focus on Alisoun's genitals. He therefore guides us to this area (and focuses on her girdle), and lingers, scans, and scans again until the emphasis is blatant and clear. Alisoun is her girdle, no more, no less. With Emelye, the focus is a braid, and with Absolon, the emphasis is his costume.

And because Chaucer's art lies in his manufactured insight (Holly 143), he will modify the more traditional components, the subject, route,
colouring, and moral associations. In this view, then, Chaucer's art of poetry is "primarily a manipulative art, consisting in the conscious, deliberate disposition of clearly delimited parts" (Jordan 34) --an art that Chaucer would expect his reader--as he expected his own immediate audience --to appreciate (122). Chaucerian disposition, certainly more dramatic than those noted in the early lyric examples, may include:

**The Subject:** He will sometimes apply the convention to an untraditional subject. He might create an *effictio* for someone who simply does not exemplify the concept of beauty: externally or internally. Chaucer does this with the younger Alisoun, Alysoun of Bath, and Maylore in the *Reeve's Tale* (not discussed in this study). He might catalogue a male or an animal as in the portraits of Absolon and Chauntecleer--a rooster. He might offer an *effictio* as presented through the eyes of an unworthy narrator--such as the lewd Miller.

**The Route:** He alters the traditional descending pattern by adjusting the routes. He will sometimes begin traditionally then guide the reader into an alternate but equally strategic route: "these alternate routes, detours, or short cuts, are duly noted. One woman is rendered more tantalizing than another because her poet begins with her fingers, and rather like a romantic Frenchman of the old movies, proceeds up her arm to her mouth" (Kiernan 6). Chaucer's inventive routes methodically guide the
reader's eyes to the place [s] where he wants them to gaze, to intrude, to hesitate, to linger, or to savour—depending on the response dictated. As Wood notes, "while the artist who paints a picture can only emphasize or de-emphasize significant features through size, color, and placement, and the artist who illuminates a book can determine response only to the extent that he employs openings and registers, the artist who draws a word picture reveals his signs in a sequence he determines absolutely, and which an auditor must follow and a reader probably will follow" (Wood 83). Chaucer might in fact descend as anticipated then return and focus upon the designated physical feature or a particular piece of clothing. This is done in order to elicit a specific response, as in the emphasis upon Alisoun's loins (for her lustiness) and Emelye's braid (for her repressed and inherent sexuality). Perhaps he will travel from this point only to return to the designated site, then linger. Only afterwards, will he complete the descent to the feet. He may repeat a complete survey if he wants the reader to see the complete representation once more, as he does with Alisoun. Additionally, he might emphasize one physical attribute then cease altogether. Chaucer uses this technique in the Emelye effiectio where the impact of Emelye's braid is a sufficient visual to capture her natural and healthy vitality.

The Colouring: Chaucer "makes free use of traditional symbolic colour meanings" (qtd. Eagen 17). At times, he is consistent with traditional codes of white, black, red, and gold. In fact, according to Eagen, in
Chaucer's writings, red is the most frequently used, then white, and black; blue appears seventeen times, grey--fifteen, brown--nine, and purple--twice. Generally speaking, in The Prioress' Tale, for example, he uses white (purity, innocence, faith, joy and triumph) for the garments...all the figures were clothed alike in white garments, partly as it is the colour in which the saints are always represented, and also as it symbolizes faith (Moore 184). Similarly, in The Second Nun's Tale, the old man's white robe, used in the traditional sense, symbolizes holiness and honesty. White is used in colour combinations as well: green, white, and red seem to be the predominant colours in The Knight's Tale...white for triumph and purity" (Martin 74). Red and white, the only predominant colours in The Prioress' Tale "should express the Christian symbolism of purity and martyrdom," while the red and white in the Squire's Tale represents "ardent nature and joyfulness" (89), and the red and white in Emelye's effectio signifies her complexity of character. Black, the symbol of darkness, is important in Troilus and Creseyde as it is the colour of Creseyde's robe when she is sent to the alien camp (parting). It also signifies her "Black" widowhood, as it is the symbol for "death and fasting" (106). Chaucer's favorite colour, red, represents courage, love, passion, martyrdom, and war. The Wife of Bath exulted red, for she "had Mars rising, and the powerful Mars takes authority in her life...her red hair and face indicated her love mastery, her uninhibited amorousness, and her frank sensualism." Red is used for love and war in the Knight's Tale and for martyrdom in The Second Nun's Tale. Most credit Chaucer as "most visually colorful in the
Knight's Tale, but he does use traditional colour elsewhere:

Chauntecleer's gorgeous colors blaze out against the widow's sooty bower and dry ditch; the Wife's red hat, Alisoun's milk-white apron and sloe-black eyebrows, Cecille's green and white associations, the blue stone of Creseyde's ring, Dorigen's black rocks, the blue firmament of the Merchant's Tale, the Pardoner's, Absolon's, and Thopas' yellow locks, Virginia's rose-like coloring, the gold and pearl of the apotheosized daisy, the dazzling gold of the eagle guide, the Black Knight and Blanche herself... (Holley 40)

Still, whenever it is conducive to his representation, he deviates from the traditional colour significations: "clearly, Chaucer does not seem to exploit color and decoration for visual effect so much as for a code his audience would understand... he is quite conscious of his art" (40). Chaucer's precise selection and use of colour is important in the Emelye portrait because it illuminates her complex character and troubled inner state. His blend of the red and white colours, for example, clearly serves to establish the moral complexity of one who is not exclusively, white (pure), or red (passionate). It will prove equally effective in the four examples in the next chapter.
The Moral Profile: Chaucer similarly modifies the concept of fair/beauty = purity/nobility. Within the framework of effictio, this is his most dynamic alteration. Traditionally, ideal woman is represented with a corresponding moral profile, or as Vinsauf categorizes: a countenance --ideal woman was consistently and predictably virtuous. Beauty equaled virtue, and there was no existing rhetorical formula for the non traditional (visual/moral) representation. Chaucer, however provides one for Emelye, Alisoun, and Alysoun. Again, Chaucer does not dismiss but rather restructures the equation in order to address the moral ambiguity within his subjects. Certainly, he recognizes how "true beauty and delight are to be found in the inner region, and that whatever impresses the outer region as being beautiful should be referred to the inner region for judgment" (Robertson, Preface 70). But, more important, he recognizes human faults and frailties, addresses them, and ultimately crafts clearly more human portraits. And in that Chaucer thought of himself as a 'makere,' an artisan working in words and rhyme, and not a philosopher or a preacher" (Kolve 316), he is clearly non judgmental. In fact, he leaves the ultimate moral interpretation to his reader: "he will satisfy us but take no responsibility" (Brewer, Chaucer 2)-- he merely presents the components necessary for an appropriate response. Again, Chaucer's physical/moral versions become more complex-- certainly more humanized and less "android" than the early "black and white" (no pun intended) examples, and ultimately, the result is fascinating: if germane, beauty remains identifiable, and it predictably coexists with exemplary virtue in the conventional mode. But, more
important, the unconventional woman, that is to say the woman who is neither definitive virgin nor salacious temptress is also rhetorically represented: specifically, the duality within the "feminine image split" so defined by Brewer, as the "two broadly positive images of the feminine to which he gives full, if apparently contradictory, assent: that of the official culture, represented by the Virgin Mary... and that of the unofficial culture, or cultures, an image represented by Venus on the courtly mythological level" (17) is explored in the Chaucerian, especially within the Emelye and the elder Alysoun, effictio examples.

Chaucer's creative contribution to the preceptive portrait proves especially refreshing in that "his aim is to breathe life into tradition and convention rather than simply to abandon them because they are merely 'old and somdeel strait'" (Blanch and Wasserman 190). Ultimately, Chaucer is able to imitate the requisites and to modify at will. And, whatever the rhetorical components, his portraits are complete and complex. In the next chapter, I will examine Chauntecleer, Alysoun, Alisoun, and Absolon, examples of effictio that are even more dramatic.
CHAPTER FOUR: CHAUCERIAN INVENTION

"There is no clearer case of original genius"

[Speirs 31]

We have thus far explored Chaucer's knowledge, imitation, and deliberate modification of the effictio. In the following four examples, Chaucer again uses the tradition, but in a more dramatic and innovative mode. He applies the convention to a flamboyant, libidinous male farm animal, to a flamboyant, progressive female, to a flamboyant, young adulteress, and finally, to a flamboyant, fair male. And again, in each non traditional example, he presents imitation and modification and effectively illuminates the inherent countenance within the subject. The following four explorations will illuminate representative catalogues that clearly reflect Chaucer's artistic use of the rhetorical extreme.

In the Nun's Priest's Tale, Chaucer is especially imaginative when he departs from the convention by describing not a woman (ideal or humanized), but a rooster. Chaucer's subject is a royal, prideful, and
libidinous cock. There is no doubt that this catalogue is inventive and vibrant; in fact, "the verisimilitude of the representation, fantastic as it is if taken literally, is a tribute to Chaucer's ability to make ideas 'come to life' to give to airy nothings a local habitation and a name" (Robertson, Preface 252). The name given is Chauntecleer, the generic source— the twelfth century Reynard the Fox tale, the animal epic quite popular in the Lower Rhine regions. The more direct sources are Marie de France's "De l'oe de del gupil," and, as William Pratt specifies, Branch 2 of the Roman de Renart. The plot is simple: the rooster, after experiencing a prophetic dream detailing impending danger from a four footed dog-like beast, awakes, rhetorically affirms his prophecy, falls in love with the "faire damoysele" (4060) Pertelote (a hen) from afar (much like Emelye's knights), then foolishly ignores the exemplum within his own warning. The beast, in the form of a fox, arrives, flatters Chauntecleer's singing ability, and predictably overpowers the rooster. Eventually, the rooster's glib rhetoric saves him, and he tricks the fox, who has Chauntecleer fixed solidly in his mouth:

'Sire, if that I were as ye,  
Yet sholde I seyen, as wys God helpe me,  
Truth again, ye proud cheerless la!  
A verray pestilence upon yow falle!  
Now I am come unto the wodes syde;  
Maugree youre heed, the cok shal heere abide.  
I wol hym ete, in feith and that anon!' (3407-13)
The destined to be outwitted fox opens his mouth to reply, and Chauntecleer escapes. The rooster will now expound a verbal exemplum, in exalted form:

'And first I shrewse myself, bothe blood and bones, 
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones. 
Thou shalt namoore thurgh thy flatterye 
Do me to synge and wynke with myn ye; 
For he that wynketh, whan he sholde see, 
Al wilfully, God lat him nevere thee!' (3428-34)

Within this "magnificent tale" (Brody 34), Chaucer includes many components of the more traditional beast fable. As noted above, he includes a moral, one where "we are made to contemplate our habitual assumptions concerning the grandeur, dignity, and meaningfulness of the human condition in new and ironic lights. It seeks to alter our habitual gestures of self regard and self-aggrandizement, and in its competence to achieve that effect lies its highest potential for the moral transformation of its audience" (Kolve 316). And Chauntecleer proves the perfect vehicle for Chaucer's maxim. The rooster struts, boasts, errs, and learns accordingly, and the message, much like the portrait, is at the same time unobtrusive, sardonic, and legitimate. As Speirs notes:

For only a refusal to allow that a tale purporting to be about a cock and a hen could be more than light entertainment
with an improving `moral' added
(though its `skill' as a little masterpiece
of `comic art' might be admired) could
have hindered recognition of the moral
fable of Chauntecleer and Pertelote as
a great and wise poem about human nature,
a humane masterpiece. (185)

It is important to note that along with the formulaic moral, this "humane masterpiece" includes: the prideful boasts, prophetic dream factor, inflated speech, and allegorical referents. Chaucer also includes the requisite four rhetorical styles of usage: the intimate, conversational, didactic, and literary as well as "the subjects of serious speculation, Fate, Free Will, Fore-knowledge Absolute" (Brewer, Chaucer 21). And although the above abstract seems simplistic, Chaucer's version of the beast epic is a complicated, clever, and calculated rhetorical parody, for throughout the tale and especially in his portrait of Chauntecleer, Chaucer is in complete control of his tongue in cheek style, "at once...cosmic and...comic" (Muscatine 238):

...it is easy to characterize the literary style because Chaucer wished to parody the ornate, poetic style encouraged in so many treatises on rhetoric. In this tale, there are too many figures and tropes discussed by medieval rhetoricians, too many of the exclamatio's, repetitio's, and sententia's.

(Gallick 233)
Clearly, Chaucer's incentive is to address the rhetorical establishment and its ornamental preoccupation. Within the tale, for example, he offers a tribute to his mentor, rhetorician Geofroi of Vinsauf. Chaucer acknowledges Geoffrey's rhetorical contribution and even addresses him "O Gaufre, deere maister soverayn" (3347). While this may be, as Frese and Gallick interpret, an example of objective and biting satire, I prefer to acknowledge this address as an expression of gratitude in that his predecessor provided him with a clear model to parody. Imitation, even if modified, is the sincerest form of flattery, and Chaucer the student has learned wisely and well. He has, in fact, appropriately imitated the early model, and moreover, he has creatively surpassed Geofroi's original prototype.

Also included within the framework of this generic parody is a significant satirical modification of the effictio. His artistic representation of Chauntecleer, "the servant of Venus" (Gallick 242) with his harem of seven hens, hovers between the conventional and the absurd and is truly brilliant:

His comb was redder than the fyn coral,  
And batailled as it were a castel wall;  
His byle was blak, and as the jet it shoon;  
Lyk asure were his legges and his toon;
His nails were whitter than the lylie flour;  
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.  

(2859-2864)

First note how Chaucer completely adheres to the traditional descent. There is no modification. He begins the effictio at the top of the head, and for the remainder of the catalogue, he travels directly south to the face, legs, feet, and toenails. Chaucer lists Chauntecleer's physical attributes so conventionally that for an instant, we respond to the rhetorical formula and its human-like specifics and almost forget that the subject is, in fact, a bird. His "chickens are amazingly convincing as chickens, and they are, at the same time, amusingly human" (Robertson, Preface 252)... capable in fact "of seducing some of us into accepting the absurd reality of the chickens, or at least of not critically questioning it" (Brody 34). But Chauntecleer is a rooster, and this effictio application is the poet's most dramatic innovation. Chaucer consciously applies this convention, one normally reserved for the human "ideal," to an object other than human. He no doubt holds this bird in high regard, wishes to expose Chauntecleer's exemplary and noble, if not penitent, attributes, recognizes the impact of this particular form, and methodically creates a unique image for him. Essentially, Chaucer's use of and adherence to the traditional formula within the portrait signals Chauntecleer's worthiness while his modifications therein merely signal Chauntecleer's untraditional "form."
Also note the pallet of gold, white, black, and red. On the surface, it appears that Chaucer adheres to the traditional colours. While he deliberately reinforces the basic colour wheel, however, he artistically reassigns the colours to the point of absurdity. For example, Chauntecleer's complexion is gold much like the original hair colour reference. But this gold is not "gilde" (Leg. Gd. Woman, 249), or "gold wyre" (Troy H, 641), "sunbeame" gold (Dest. Tr. 9139). It is "burned" gold. This colourization is thereby modified on two levels. First of all, Chaucer has transferred the complexion and hair significations. Secondly, Chauntecleer's complexion is not "bright of hew," white as snow, or even fresh of colour, and there seems no precedent for a burned gold complexion. Therefore this colour application is especially innovative. Does Chaucer suggest that Chauntecleer's face is darkened yellow? Is this referent ultimately unflattering? Moreover, are we to assume that since "white is commonly used to describe ...handsome men" (Curry 80), and yellow skin normally denotes one who is "exceedingly ugly" (90) that this combination of the two as in dark gold or "dark or brown skin should be considered ugly?" (86). Hardly. This "burned" skin is most likely a reference to tanned golden skin. And in this case, the reference is a favorable one—one that echoes the skin of worthy "knights exposed to hardships in battle" (87). And from a base agricultural perspective, since chickens do spend much of their day in the sun, it is not unreasonable that their "skin" would be tanned. Moreover, Chaucer's "independent description of Curteyse must be
recorded. Nothing was ever missaid of her and 'Cleer broun she was'" (Rom. Rose, 1262). So, in using the specific colour combination and transferring the hair/skin references, Chaucer's rhetorical satire merely disrupts the established convention without condemning Chauntecleer. In fact, "part of the humour here is that these descriptions are ordinarily reserved for a beautiful woman's complexion and hair, respectively" (Kiernan 11). In much the same way, Chauntecleer's nails, rather than the complexion, are white; therefore the significations of honesty and purity are included within the framework of the portrait. Similarly, black eyebrows, a conventional characteristic of loveliness, is transferred to a black bill. Blue/gray eyes becomes blue legs and toes, and the loyal and faithful precedent is preserved. Finally, the red reserved for lips and cheeks appear as a fine comb. If it is Chaucer's intention to equate the comb with hair, this presents another amusing variation. In that within the language of colour, red hair is hardly ever mentioned directly, "whether red hair is to be considered ugly cannot be determined" (18). Still, the indulgent, ostensible "crown" seems to reflect the countenance of the prideful but regal rooster. Chaucer is clearly playing an inventive but calculated game with these colours and their corresponding attributes. Therefore, to attempt to place precise formulaic significations upon these misappropriated ingredients seems equally absurd. The point to be taken is that Chaucer's precise disarray of the established colours results in an insightful and humourous representation where "the splendid comparisons (and colours) lavished on a cock produce a burlesque in which the gorgeous creature is seen as
a proud—perhaps vainglorious—prince of a romance or 'tragedy' "
(Speirs 186).

Much like the untraditional attributes and the untraditional colour applications, Chauntecleer's countenance is equally surreal. Here we encounter a "free," or noble, (3352) rooster who experiences life, love, and lessons, and Chauntecleer remains as he was crafted, in short, a pompous omniscient royal (ruler of the barnyard) with culpable human frailties. Moreover, his countenance reflects the god/human dichotomy we explored in the Emelye effictio, within a male portrait perspective of course. Chaucer modifies the convention even further by creating this image split, this earthy/princely duality, for a barnyard animal. In fact, "the greatness of the poetic humour of Chaucer consists in the variety and complex blends of contrasts of several kind...most laughter arises, however, when the balance between the official and the unofficial is fairly even" (Brewer, Chaucer 21). And when the portrait is complete and the moral internalized, the balance of Chauntecleer's representation remains "fairly even" and remarkably genuine. In fact, "the special charm lies in the poet's ability to suspend reality through rhetorical invention" (Robertson, Preface 252), and Chauntecleer is believable as the Royal Rooster Extraordinaire. Note how Chauntecleer reacts to the fox's flattery:

This Chauntecleer stood hye upon his toos,
Strechynge his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe lode for the nones. (3331-3)

Chauntecleer, the prideful, richly ornamental and exalted rhetorician, quasi-traditional in his manufactured appearance, emanates a presence to equal that of any ruler. Appropriately wise, independent, advantaged, and distanced from his unofficial subjects as he sits "on his perch" (2883), Chauntecleer is at the same time "officially" integrated within his landscape. In fact, "the gentil cock had in his governaunce, seven hennes for to doon al his plesaunce" (2865), he is convincing and influential when he speaks. In short, he shines:

`Womman is mannes joye and al his blis
For whan I feel a-nyght your soft syde
Al be it that I may nat on yow ryde,
For that oure perch is maad so nawre, allas--
I am so ful of jooye and of solas...`
And with that word he fley doun fro the beem,
For it was day, and eke his hennes alle,
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he hadde founde a corn, lay in the yerd.
Real was he, he was namoore aserd.
He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad hire eke as ofte, er it was pryme.
He looked as it were a grym leoun,
And on his toos he rometh up and doun;
Hym deigned nat to sette his foot to grounde.
He chukketh whan he hath a corn yfounde,
And to hym rennen than his wyvves alle.
Thus roial, as a prince in his halle. (3166-84)
Once more, because of Chaucer's *effictio* with its wonderful mixture of old and new, Chauntecleer's image is vibrant. The handsome prince, whose halle is his barnyard, rules with eloquence and panache, and consequently, his *effictio* reflects a "male" who possesses all of necessary formulaic of the ideal and who, rivals the Green Knight where "in al the land... nas his peer" (2850).

In an equally effective rhetorical reinvention, we encounter Alysoun, the inimitable Wife of Bath and one of Chaucer's most memorable pilgrims:

Hir coverchiefs ful fine weren of ground
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sunday weren upon hir heed,
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed...
Ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe.
Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve...[del omis]
Gat-tothed was she, soothe ly for to seye.
Upon an amblere esily she sat,
Ywympled wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hire hipes large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.

(462-73)

On the surface, and from a visual perspective, Alysoun does not
resemble the traditional lady fair, nor should she, given Chaucer's directives. Neither her external nor her internal composition is conventional. As we have seen in the two examples thus far, Chaucerian effictio seems to enhance and/or elaborate upon the earlier models. In this one, Chaucer takes great pains to create a new breed of woman, one who holds her own on her own terms. In short, Chaucer creates in Alysoun, "a new female type" (Knapp 51)—the noble, candid, masculine-like, and sexually knowledgeable survivor.

This route is more conventional than either Emelye's or Chauntecleer's. We are guided through two complete surveys. Chaucer begins the portrait at the top of Alysoun's head with its covering then travels south in a complete descent to her feet. Immediately after this survey, he travels directly north to her face. At this point, he lingers there and surveys her mouth, certainly another sexual referent. The route then travels further north to her head, for a second full viewing of her face. He then directs a second complete survey of her entire torso, north, from her head, to the southernmost point, to her feet. Note also how Chaucer gently, but deliberately:

avoids describing her from the neck to the knees. There is no 'Medyll gent and small' to describe, but only 'hipes large' to allude to on the rapid race to the feet. [Alysoun] is too big and too unenticing to
describe in detail. If Chaucer had stopped with a description of the face as he had done with Criseyde, for example, [Alysoun's] obesity would be more a matter of conjecture...
The effect is a description of [Alysoun's] girth almost solely by implication. (Keirnan 13)

We are left then, despite the two body scans, to imagine Alysoun's midtorso. Chaucer never provides the details to complete this visual. She is clearly not small framed; she presents instead an alternative image with a large, bold, and vibrant form—one to be reckoned with. Actually, many of the specifics in this portrait echo those within Chauntecleer's in that many of the conventional requisites of feature, route, and colour are included but are dramatically modified in order to accommodate the unconventional object of description.

And once again, the colours are extremely important to Alysoun's complete representation. The traditional white, red, and black significations are modified to enhance Alysoun's unorthodox embodiment. Essentially then, her representation, in Chaucerian fashion, initially seems problematic. For example, she is conventionally fair, but she also has an unconventionally bold face. Traditional woman must have a gentle sweet face, and it is the man's face that is conventionally strong and bold. She is fair, or feminine, but, in this case, the woman's face is bold, and clearly masculine. Curiously, Chaucer also crafts her with "reed of hewe," a "highly appreciated"
signification that reinforces the rich red bloom on the cheeks of women...and that expresses the glow and bloom on the cheeks of fair heroines (Curry 92). This reference along with the "fair" association is clearly complimentary. Moreover, her teeth are rather unusual. In that "beautiful teeth of both men and women must be well cleansed, well proportioned, and evenly set, and above all as white as ivory or as whale's bone... the mark of feminine loveliness (69+), Alysoun's non traditional mouth with its teeth, and its white and black colour combination, is interesting as well. The secular perspective sees her gat toothedness as indicative of her uninhibited carnal sexual appetite, one she is most candid about. She does, after all, boast of conquering, cuckoldng, or courting the many husbands in her life. Therefore, this sexual association seems appropriate. Still, the more sacred perspective infers how the black and white combination "came to symbolize penance and humility from its association with ashes and with the garments of the monks" (Eagen 15). The Alysoun who truthfully confesses her trysts, loves, hates, sacrifices, mistreatments, and regrets on all sides also seems humble and penitent. Therefore, the latter perspective seems equally valid. True, she is quite worldly, but she seems cognizant of her less than admirable experiences. Additionally, red is most predominant- not on her lips but on her legs. And this is another bi gendered reference, along with her face. Alysoun's legs, much like the traditional good knight's, are "long, straight and strong" (Curry 124). And whereas "the limbs of women must above all be white" (118), Alysoun's are vibrant red, the sign of carnal/sacred love. A Chaucerian dichotomy has
been incorporated within this portrait as well. She clearly has an "image split," but where Emelye's duality is a combination of Venus/Diana, and Chauntecleer's is animal/human (royal), Alysoun's duality reflects the masculine/feminine facets of her composition. She is woman, yet she is not submissive or coy. She is not definitively gentle or feminine; she is not even sexually passive. She clearly exhibits traditional masculine attributes and traits. Therefore, Alysoun inherits the physical and countenance qualities from both genders. And it is this bi-gendered representation that lends itself to misinterpretation. The Alysoun debate ranges from her being categorized as a non submissive wife to an unnaturally perverse feminist who refuses to "wax and multiply." From self serving sinner to salacious seductress, Donald B. Sands suggests she has a character disorder while Beryl Rowland diagnoses her behaviour as neurotic. She is to Jordan, an "antifeminist" (226); to Brewer, she is an "unofficial feminist" (Wo B 20); to Robertson, "she still seems feminine." Ultimately, she is all of these and none of these, and each of these diverse but 'definitive' interpretations "is a tribute to the justness of the ideas which produced her" (Preface 331).

Note also how Chaucer includes the details of her costume: ten pounds of kerchiefs, a pair of spurs, a foot mantel on her hips, "a ful wympel wel" (470), and most notably, a broad hat. There are no sleek sheaths, wide ornamental belts, or bright gemstones within this portrait. Again, Chaucer reinforces her duality through a combination of feminine
(hat, wimple) and masculine (spurs, mantle) costume.

Slowly, we recognize how different Alysoun's countenance is as well. She is verbal, she is in control (soveraynetee), she is insightful on social, economic, and academic levels. She collects several men, has no children, relishes authority, and is most likely, according to Rowland, an entrepreneur. And essentially, when the entire composite is assessed, Alysoun is bi gendered, and moreover, she represents the best and worst in all of us. Beryl Rowland summarizes:

In the case of the Wife's portrait, Chaucer's authenticating devices are so successful that even today Alys is discussed as a woman who seems to have once lived and still does: at best, she is a 'high and gallant symbol of humanity in which weakness and fortitude are inextricably mixed', 'a subtle Charmer', a fun-loving woman or even a religious one. At worst, she is a 'bad lot', 'a battered personality', 'a hardened sinner', 'a bossy woman who longs to be mastered in the bedroom' or a 'chip off old Dipsa's block'. *(Wyf* 138)

Alysoun does possess the fortitude to offset her weakness, which she unabashedly shares. Again, she is certainly not coy about her sexuality;
therefore, there is no euphemised "dawn" within Alysoun. She is the embodiment of every hue of red, and she offers no apologies for her scarlet hue:

In wyfhol I wol use myn instrument
As frely as my Maker hath it sent. (149-150)

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 goode felawe.

(614-18)

Indeed, she seems comfortable with her sexuality. Chaucer has crafted her as such. Moreover, she recognizes a double standard and is merely confronting and then debating a tradition that is not for her. She is no sadist; she is simply strong willed (Jordan 222):

Crist was a mayde and shapen as a man,
And many a seint, sith the world bigan;
yet lyved evere in parfit chastitee.
I nyl envye no virginitee.
Lat hem be breed of pured whete seed,
And lat us wyves hoten barly breed, (139-44)

Chaucer's portrait admits Alysoun is neither the classic virgin (white bread), nor the non repentant whore (barley bread). Although Alysoun
defies definitive categorization, I will label her as an ingenious and extroverted liberal female who benefits from her advantageous male attributes. A woman who is able to observe, to react, then to adapt to the situation (positive or negative) at hand. A chameleon of sorts who possesses the innate ability to successfully coexist. This then, makes her a survivor rather than a dysfunctional victim:

In swich estaat as God hath cleped us
I wol persever.

(147-8)

And, despite wide girth, toothless grin, brimmed hat, and crimson hose, she does. Moreover, she does so as a good wif (454) and a worthy womman (468). She is, as Chaucer defines her, a worthy woman, a newly conceptualized feminine ideal to be reckoned with. Ultimately, The Wife of Bath emerges from her efficio, survives our scrutiny, imprints our memory, and evokes the stuff hopes and dreams are made of.

This elder Alyson is certainly not the only "untraditional" wife in the collection, for Chaucer provides us with younger feminine example in the Miller's Tale. In fact, to begin, Edmund Reiss suggests that their countenances as well as their identical names, are hardly coincidental:

Speaking of her fifth husband, [Wife of Bath]
she tells how he had been a clerk at Oxford and had boarded at the home of her gossip, whose name was Alisoun (527-32). As readers have long realized, the Wife would seem to be referring to the situation at the beginning of the Miller’s Tale; and it is though Alisoun in this tale is a young version of the Wife of Bath, whose name is, not accidentally, Alisoun... Focusing attention on particulars, it in fact demands that they be reexamined and reassessed in terms of their new context; and, at the same time, our awareness of the repetition gives additional meaning to what is at hand.

(30)

And I suggest once we reexamine and reassess Alisoun in a new context, we will discover that this wife of Oxford (Alisoun) is no "younger version" of the wife of Bath (Alysoun).

Within the Miller’s Tale, the young and friendly carpenter’s wife is Alisoun of Oxford. The direct source of the tale is unknown, and the plot is a combination of three rather common episodes: the misplaced kiss, the flood prophecy, and the branding with a hot iron. This fabliau/courtly romance parody centers on an adulterous marriage. Participating are the older husband, "sely, gnof" John, his young wife "joly" Alisoun, and her two suitors, vain "hende" Nicholas, and the more vain "myrie" Absolon. Fun and frolic abound when the carnal Alisoun
and the lecherous Nicholas manipulate trustful John—who believes he can save everyone from the impending flood (prophesized in a dream). Verbal signals cross, liaisons are covered, uncovered, and discovered, kisses are strategically misplaced. Raymond Tripp observes: "in the Miller's Tale the offenders are punished in kind, not with death and dismemberment, but with humbling humiliation. They are all one way or another presumptuous and they suffer accordingly [except, it would seem, Alisoun]" (211). Ultimately, theirs becomes a very public private life. Accordingly, Alisoun's portrait is overt, erotically detailed, and, as Tripp concludes, this effictio illustrates what happens when rules are broken (208). Consider Alisoun:

Fair was this yonge wyf, and therwithal
As any wezele hir body gent and smal.
A ceynt she werede, barred al of silk,
A barmcloth 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 coler aboute,
Of col-blak silk, withinne and eek without
The tapes of hir white voluper
Were of the same suyte of hir coler;
Hir filet brood of silk, and set ful hye.
And sikerly she hadde a likerous ye;
Ful smale ypuulled were hir browes two,
And tho were bent and blake as any sloo.
She was ful moo r blissful on to see
Than is the newe pere-jonette tree,
And softer than the wolle is of wether.
And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether,
Tasseled with silk, and perled with latoun...

Thereto she koude skippe and make game,
As any kyme or calf folwynge his dame.
Hir moute was sweete as bragot or the meeth,
Or hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
Wynsynge she was, as is a joly coat,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
A brooch she baar upon hir howe coler,
As brood as is the boos of a bokeler.
Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye.

Even with so many specifics offered in this especially long portrait, we cannot help but grasp that she is animal-like, soft to the touch, sprightly, and fragrant. But these terms remain arbitrary. Is the young wife animalistic, decadent, and licentious or is she merely energetic and playful? Theories abound. Rowland concentrates on the weasel association, while Nitzsche relishes the sensuous food connotations. Moreover, one reader is captivated by the very qualities that repulse another. And although such a detailed albeit ambiguous representation lends itself to varied interpretation, one factor is determinable. Chaucer's rhetorical rule- breaking within this modified effictio will expose a societal rule breaker— the unconventional, uninhibited, and unfaithful wife.
Chaucer clearly departs from the conventional route. After the traditional "fair" reference the reader expects a full head to toe survey. Chaucer will not descend in a conventional mode and moreover wastes no time in zeroing in on the most important feature in this portrait: her loins. After he focuses on the site of her passions, he provides a thorough tour of her body. North to her torso, further north to her head, then completely south to her legs, and north only to her loin area once more. Moreover, we will survey her body from an up and down, "bifore and eek bihynde, withinne and withoute" perspective before we stand back for a complete visual. The overall perception is a pear shaped figure who is rendered desirable and delectable because Chaucer deliberately intertwines within the catalogue of physical features, animal and edible referents. Keirnan notes, the reader's eye is kept busy as the body, belt, apron, loins, smock, collar, cap, collar, headband, eyes, brows, girdle, purse, complexion, mouth, brooch, low collar, shoes, and legs are observed (14). The attire here is so integrated that it blends with her physical features. For example, the strategically emphasized brooch encourages the reader to imagine her breasts. Similarly, we concentrate on Alisoun's girdle and silk 'purse' because of the associative clothing within this route. When we travel from her head (cap) to her breastbone (collar) to her head (cap ribbons) to her waist (girdle), loins (purse), feet (shoes), and finally to her legs (laces), the crude, lecherous Miller has deliberately urged us to scan her genitals each time we course
her torso: "the reader's eye follows the Miller's to the girdle, and from there, by means of a strategically hung purse to the zone that so preoccupies the Miller: `And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether,/ Tasseled with silk, and perled with latoun.' The Miller's description of Alisoun began at her loins, and the Miller is on his way back as he concludes. His preoccupation with this region is very startlingly reinforced when Nicholas grabs Alisoun by the 'queynte' and then by the 'haunchebones'(3276-79)" (15). Also note that during the survey, she is compared to a swallow, a kid, a calf, and a colt and described as joly, likerous (flirtatious), blisful (pleasing), newe, a gay popelote (little doll), wench, sweete mouth, long and upright -- and, with skin "softer than the wolle is of a wether" (3249)--obviously soft to the touch, and soft enough to touch. Also interesting is how this portrait differs from the earlier Alysoun's in physical emphasis. The elder wife's oversized body is hardly addressed while her bold/fair face is, and here, scant attention (eyebrows) is given to Alisoun's face. There is no mention of white skin, red cheeks, lips, or light eyes, in that these attributes don't matter. And because Chaucer has no intention of our `savouring' anything other than Alisoun's most functional attribute, he maximizes only her body.

Note also the altered colouring. The predominant colours are black and white although a suggestion of red is introduced when Chaucer compares her sweet mouth to a horde of apples. The only physical reference is her black eyebrows which are conspicuously plucked.
Chaucer deliberately dresses her in white with black accoutrements. She is clad in a white cap, smock, collar, and an apron, "whit as morne milk" (3234) -- ironically, the attire suggests purity. From a fashion perspective, she embodies respectability as she resembles a nurse, virginal milk maiden, or sister of mercy. Furthermore, black is embroidered on her collar and on the cap's ribbons. Her ensemble is perhaps a mocked inversion of a nun's dressage. Robertson observes:

As we read it, we find that although she wears what Dominicans called the colors of holiness--black and white--she makes a vivid animal appeal to each of the five senses...Here the outward holiness is contrasted once more very briefly and humorously with sensual appeal. (Preface 248)

How deliciously strategic of Chaucer -- to dress this unfaithful wife as an illusion of purity. Within the confines of sexuality, she then becomes an object of lust in sacred garb. This image clearly addresses the pure and white as morn milk early representations. Alisoun of Oxford is neither. Deliberately then, Chaucer reinforces here how the externals do indeed illuminate the internals-- that the substance or, in this case, the lack of substance, "without" does in fact reflect the qualities "withinne." Generically speaking, this isn't ideal woman, or ideal wife--
externally. Chaucer will therefore use the modified *effictio* in order to dictate once again how the countenance, or lack thereof, does spring from the visual composite as written...how there is a definite correspondence or association between the two poles—even if that association is a negative one. A sexually promiscuous, self-centered Alisoun then, who, in my opinion, has no reverence for her vows or penitence for her faults, is depicted as such through a modified portrait route that focuses on her loins, through colouring that irreverently emphasizes reversal of the black and white significations, and through costume that parodies respectable garb. Basically, Alisoun is rhetorically represented as a woman with little substance... no face...little worth, and with her loins as her singular feature.

Granted, there exist many studies that attempt to explicate Alisoun. For example, Beryl Rowland appreciates Chaucer's comparison between Alisoun and weasel, between the "whit as morne milk" and the white ermine fur, and between the "plucked eyebrows" and the "sprouting hairs" above the animal's eyes. Moreover, she observes:

The image of the weasel is also implicit in the description of Alisoun's youthful, animal playfulness, in the reference to the countrified perfume of her mouth, and in the association with fermented honey, stale ale and stored apples. ("Identified" 4)
John Speirs also acknowledges these natural references and equates them with Alisoun's wilder nature, and with her freshness and sweetness (129). I am much less generous. I agree that the weasel could not be a more appropriate referent for this libidinous woman, but I see Chaucer's weasel comparison as essentially negative as this animal does not normally encourage positive reaction. And yes, the natural edibles offered are representative of olfactory pleasure. However, the weasel must pirate these sensory delights, stalking in the night, stealing, then devouring his "booty." Chaucer's Alisoun behaves in a similar manner. She instinctively stalks and steals before devouring her conquest with little thought of John. She reacts to her urges much like an animal, with no reason, and clearly with no judgment.

As for Edmund Reiss' suggestion that the younger Alisoun will evolve into the elder Alysoun, I think not. While they both share a name, an enormous sexual appetite, and a penchant for attracting and seducing their men, Alisoun of Oxford would have to mature more gracefully, gain wisdom, dispense with one man (even at graveside) before acquiring another, and above all, she would have to procure a heart and soul in order to emulate her predecessor on all counts. Ultimately, her biographical profile reveals an Alysoun of Bath with a true heart and a noble countenance, one that offsets her unconventional
external image while Alisoun of Oxford has neither a conventional "face" nor the nobility to overcome this deliberate rhetorical omission. She is merely a "primerole, a piggesyne, For any lord to leggen in his bedde" (3268-9). In fact, the younger Alisoun has much to learn before she could mature into the forthright Alysoun. She would, in fact, have to be reinvented accordingly--as a representative of the new female type rather than one of the 'oldest' female types.

We have explored Chaucer's inventive physiognomic representations of an earthly/ angelic maiden, a humanized/royal rooster, a sexual male/ woman, and a common/animalistic wife. Each example is complex and complete. In our final Chaucerian effictio, we will observe how the poet applies this tradition to a male who is clearly more of the feminine ideal than the designated heroine within the tale. Absolon, the parish clerk in the Miller's Tale is perhaps Chaucer's most unusual portrait because within its framework, the poet includes many of the early formulaic reserved for a woman, yet at the same time, he modifies the composite to glorify this male subject. The result is a unique, ironic representation of a bi-gendered lover.

Certainly, of the three men within this tale: John the wealthy, older, trusting husband; Nicholas, the crude, sardonic seducer, and Absolon, the hopelessly enamoured and shamefully duped lover-in-waiting, it is
Absolon who is portrayed in the most facetious fashion:

Now was ther of that chirch a parrishh clerk,
The which that was ycleped Absolon.
Crul was his heer, and as gold it shoon,
And strouted as a fanne large and brode;
Ful streight and evene lay his joly shode.
His rode was reed, his eyen greye as goos.
With poules wyndow corven on his shoos,
In hoses rede he wente fetisly.
Yclad he was ful smal and properely
Al in a kirtel of a lyght waget;
Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes set.
And therupon he hadde a gay surplys
As whit as is the blosme upon the rys.
A myrie child he was, so God me save. (3312-25)

Note Chaucer's visual. Here is a petitely proportioned subject with long golden curls, blushing cheeks, light grey eyes, and flowing ensemble. Quite traditional. Note also the descent. We travel from north (hair) directly south to face to eyes to shoes. Next, we travel north to view his torso (gown). This traditional route provides one and a half scans before focusing on the subject's ensemble, a most insightful inclusion within the composite. Note also how many of the early formulaic attributes are included. First, he is fair. Second, his hair rivals that of the feminine ideal in both hue and style. In fact, "practically every detailed description of beauty depends largely for its effects upon
the colour, length, and condition of the hair" (Curry 11). And, much like the early descriptions of Eve and Helen who also possess the exemplary "lovely" hair of gold, Absolon's hair spread much like a fan, and it shoon like gold. Moreover, besides being of a certain hue, beautiful hair must be long and curled (26). Absolon's conforms. Moreover, his hair is an essential confirmation of his countenance as "noble and handsome men wear long hair that falls down over the shoulders. This is considered a mark of dignity and position" (26-9). His grey eyes are also ultra traditional in that the eyes of both men and women, to be considered beautiful, must be bright and radiant, and above all in the colour grey...even though "the exact colour grey, is not what we today would call grey; rather it probably carries with it the idea of light blue" (52). Chaucer includes the referent "ful streit" for Absolon's hair where the conventional association would be for his nose. Moreover, his cheeks are the "highly appreciated florid" (92) as Chaucer reinforces the original red and white colour combination in this portrait. Thus far then, Absolon has long golden hair, white skin, grey eyes, and red cheeks. His resemblance to the maiden in "Catalogue of Delights" is unmistakable.

The colouring within the effictio is at the same time conventional and resourceful. The basic pallet includes the requisite gold (hair), red (hose), and white (coverlet) references, and the signification of these colours has been explained. Chaucer also adds colourful mosaic shoes reminiscent of stained glass and especially appropriate for Absolon's
vocation. Moreover, Absolon is presented in a light blue tunic, and Chaucer’s inclusion of the colour blue for Absolon’s clothing is especially noteworthy. Symbolically and "aesthetically, the colour blue possessed immense significance in the Middle Ages... It is hard to say whether the rarity and costliness of fine blues in cloths and pigments had a share in the origin of the esteem and honour in which the colour was held; or whether blue was chosen for the Virgin’s robes because blue garments were rare and precious in medieval Europe... Whatever the explanation for its rarity, blue carried the most exalted symbolism in the Middle Ages: heavenly contemplation and Divine truth; constancy, fidelity, and loyalty; honour, virtue, and hope (Eagen 21-2). Given the composite, Absolon essentially emerges, within a rhetorical framework, as an exalted male representation of the feminine ideal, clearly a more complimentary representation than Alisoun. It is not surprising then that Charles Muscatine would assume that the young clerk is nothing more than a sissified dandy or a parody of an expert courtly lover (229). Certainly Chaucer mocks on many levels, as we have noted, but does he mean in this case to mock the trope, clerics, or even the Madonna? I think not.

Rather, Chaucer intends to provide a physiognomic representation of the less than burly, boastful, sexually skillful male. He will therefore illuminate, in this representative effictio, the sensitive, shamefully loyal, preceptive "nerd" who clearly wears his heart on his sleeve and who
ultimately does not win the lady's favour. The image Chaucer paints is therefore deliberate. He provides the perfect trope, the traditional route, appropriate attributes, associative costume, and representative colouring. Absolon who loves purely and honestly, if not too wisely then seems almost the perfect antithesis to Alysoun of Bath. Where she possesses masculinity (strength and power) within her femininity, Absolon possesses femininity (sensitivity) within his masculinity. They are both literate, candid caricatures. She knows her Scripture and classics, and he is after all a clerk, a "man" of learning (870).

Absolon's name and image are not exclusive to this tale. For example, his early namesake can be found in the Bible. The Biblical Absolom, son of David of Israel and Maachah in 2 Samuel was clearly a beautiful man and a "pillar" of his people. Additionally, Paul Beichner notes that Peter Riga, after the twelfth century, recreates the popular conception of Absolom as the ideal of physical beauty. Riga provides a full and elegant inventory of Absolom's perfection from crown to toe, he duly conforms to the rules and models of the "arts of poetry" ("Hair" 224):

Nature showered him with so many of her gifts that she was in want, thereafter, while he was the Phoenix without an equal. Not one blemish did she leave on him; beauty cloaked him from head to foot. Crown, forehead,
eyes, nose, teeth, mouth, cheeks, chin, neck, head, breasts, feet— all beautiful without spot. (223)

Moreover, Riga crafts, in a second edition, a longer and certainly more elaborate portrait where he uses the beautiful man as an integral part of his portrait of The Blessed Virgin. Additionally, the fourteenth century image of the Biblical Absolon in the "Queen Mary's Psalter" painting is also a beautiful representation. He is in fact hanging by his luxurious hair. Had Chaucer needed artful inspiration, he clearly had sufficient models from which he could craft his clerk. And had he imitated from the above examples, Chaucer's version moves beyond the emblematic to the physiognomic in that we grasp the essence of Absolon's noble countenance as well as his untraditional appearance.

Chaucer might have easily described Absolon in a more masculine mode. He might have crafted him with bolder face, brawny torso, and armour. He might have dressed him without the blue and white that is so associated with the Madonna. He might have chosen a less pious affiliation. But, he didn't. He chose instead to mold him much like the Biblical icon and a notable rhetorical image. He chose instead to supply his clerk with a bi-gendered countenance. In fact, Chaucer's approach to Absolon seems as elaborate as the clerk's approach to Alisoun; he falls into 'love-longynge' so profound:
That of no wyf took he noon offrynge.
For curteisie, he seyde, he wolde noon.

No wonder is thogh that I swelte and swete-
l moorne as dooth a lamb after the tete.
Ywis, lemman, I have swich love-longynge,
That lik a turtel trewe is my moornynge.
I may nat ete na moore than a mayde.'(468)

His heart is exposed for all to see. Raymond Tripp observes:

Absolon is at once the most pitiable and
dislikable character in this triad of
males... Yet for all this he is human
and sensitive, which means vulnerable.

(210)

Indeed, Chaucer's Absolon lends himself to raised eyebrows and the
varied responses that accompany such an interesting composite. But
such was the case in the Emelye, Alysoun, Chauntecleer, and Alisoun
composites as well. And much like he intends to expose every facet
within their characterizations, Chaucer intends to expose Absolon as a
handsome, intelligent, sensitive woman/male. His duality much like the
others' is represented in a complex, cohesive, and comprehensive
What then is Chaucer's most important contribution within this rhetorical framework? His concrete portraiture, his presentation of man and woman within their strata, have long since been recognized and validated. But within these portraits, his examples of effictio, traditional or not, have been dismissed and/or categorized as mere ornamental decoration. I must therefore strongly validate his strategic and quite deliberate effictio artistry. Chaucer not only chose this medieval trope to illuminate an external and internal representation, but he magnified, modified, and mocked accordingly. He detailed with such microcosmic realism that the parts emerged greater than the whole until Chaucer's blend of male and female, human and animal, old and new, sacred and profane, and ridiculous and sublime is established tradition redefined.
CHAPTER FIVE

SPENSERIAN PORTRAITURE:
ABUNDANCE AND ABBREVIATION

"In liuing colours and right hew" (Spenser, F.Q.3.4)

The Gawain poet and Geoffrey Chaucer imitate and alter early examples of effictio, and Edmund Spenser follows rhetorical suit. And although Spenser's knowledge of the precise terminology in his time is dubious given the still existing confusion of rhetorical labels, what is clear is his reliance on Chaucer and this medieval convention. Given his close imitation of the traditional effictio in Belphoebe in the Faerie Queene (2.3) and his deliberate modification in the Rosalind "portrait" in the Shephearde's Calendar's January eclogue, it is certain Spenser was aware of the variety of effects that he might produce with the trope. Therefore, the Spenserian examples I will explore are dramatic. Specifically, Belphoebe is represented in a splendid eighty-one line effictio that cements her majestic/erotic presence within the epic while
Rosalind seems, at first glance, a mere mention. Moreover, Belphoebe, because of her amplified description, is clearly exalted, and Rosalind, although integral to the sequence of events, is minimized within the text. Ultimately, each *effictio*, intense in tone and treatment, will illuminate the woman's internal/external profile thereby reinforcing, in the words of Spenser, "how all things as they were created, doe grow/ The substance is not chaunged, nor altered/ But th'only forme and outward fashion " (F.O. 3.7.34).

First consider Belphoebe, whose name is "rather clearly a hybrid from the Latin 'bellus,' handsome, and the Greek "pure radiant" (Draper 100)...complex Belphoebe, the divine/desirable huntress foster daughter of chaste Diana, the rhetorical essence of fire/water and seductress/saviour and perhaps the most definitive representation of the feminine ideal thus far represented in *effictio*:

Her face so faire as flesh it seemed not,  
But heauenly pourtraict of bright Angels hew,  
Cleare as the skie, withouten blame or blot,  
Through goodly mixture of complexions dew;  
And in her cheekes the vermeil red did shew  
Like roses in a bed of lilies shed,  
The which ambrosiall odours from them threw  
And gazers sense with double pleasure fed,  
Hable to heale the sicke, and to reuiue the ded.
In her faire eyes two liuing lamps did flame,
    Kindled aboue at th'heauenly makers light,
And darted fyrie beames out of the same,
    So passing persant, and so wondrous bright,
That quite bereau'd the rash beholders sight:
    In them the blinded god his lustfull fire
To kindle oft assyd, but had no might;
    For with dredd Maiestie, and awfull ire,
She broke his wanton darts, and quenched base desire.

Her iuorie forhead, full of bountie braue,
    Like a broad table did it selfe dispred,
For Loue his loftie triumphes to engrae,
    And write the battels of his great godhed:
All good and honour might therein be red:
    For there their dwelling was. And when she spake,
Sweet words, like dropping honny she did shed,
    And twixt the perles and rubins softly brake
A siluer sound, that heauenly musicke seemd to make.

Vpon her eyelids many Graces sate,
    Vnder her shadow of her euen browes,
Working belgards, and amorous retrate,
    And euerie one her with a grace endowes:
And euerie one with meekenesse to her bowes.
    So glorious mirrhour of celestiall grace,
And soueraine moniment of mortall vowes,
    How shall fraile pen descriue her heauenly face,
For feare through want of skill her beautie to disgrace?
So faire, and thousand thousand times more faire
She seemd, when she presented was to sight,
And was yclad, for heat of scorching aire,
All in a silken Camus lyly whight,
Purfled vpon with many a folded plight,
Which all aboue besprinckled was throughout,
With golden aygules, that glistred bright,
Like twinkling starres, and all the skirt about
Was hemd with golden fringe.

Below her ham her weed did somewhat traine,
And her streit legs most brauely were embayld
In gilden buskins of costly Cordwaine,
All bard with golden bendes, which were entayld
With curious antickes, and full faire aumayld:
Before they fastned were vnder her knee
In a rich Jewell, and therein entrayld
The ends of all their knots, that none might see,
How they within their fouldings close enwrapped bee.

Like two faire marble pillours they were seene,
Which doe the temple of the Gods support,
Whom all the people decke with girlands greene,
And honour in their festiuall resort;
Those same with stately grace, and princely port
She taught to tread, when she her selfe would grace,
But with the wooddie Nymphes when she did sport,
Or when the flying Libbard she did chace,
She could them nimbly moue, and after fly apace.
And in her hand a sharpe bore-speare she held,
   And at her backe a bow and quiuer gay,
Stuft with steele-headed darts, wherewith she queld
The saluage beastes in her victorious play,
Knit with a golden bauldricke, which forelay
Athwart her snowy brest, and did diuide
her daintie paps; which like young fruit in May
Now little gan to swell, and being tide,
Through her thin weed their places only signifide.

Her yellow lockes crisped, like golden wyre,
   About her shoulders weren loosely shed,
And when the winde amongst them did inspyre,
They waued like a penon wide dispredd,
And low behinde her backe were scattered:
And whether art it were, or heedlesse hap,
As through the flouring forrest rash she fled,
In her rude haires sweet flowres themselues did lap,
And flourishing fresh leaues and blossomes did enwrap.

At once, Spenser provides a complex dualistic character in
Belphoebe. She is clearly the radiant perennial virgin with classic
"faireness" and grace and who clothed in sheer white and sparkling gold
is the ideal embodiment of celestial chastity. At the same time,
however, she is the earthy energetic beauty who dressed in full hunting
gear is the embodiment of eroticism. She is the ultra feminine tomboy.
She boasts the feminine "equipment" to entice men, and does so; still, she guards her body, her divine temple, with instrumental bauldricks and knots. In this representation, Spenser sends a clear mixed message: Belphoebe is an ideal enigma.

She is "faire ...a thousand thousand times." Actually, the referent is repeated only six times during the portrait; therefore, the first formulaic requisite is well met. The route is also traditional. The descent is clearly designed to maximize Belphoebe's duality after an elaborate treatment of Belphoebe's face and facial features. We learn she has a heavenly face, red cheeks, shining eyes, a broad forehead, sweet mouth, graced eyelids, even brows, and again, a heavenly face. The angelic comparison at this point is apparent. Spenser then travels down her torso (camus) to her legs (buskins), knees, genitals (unseen but alluded to with the term "knots"), and legs. He then returns to her hand (spear), back (quiver), breasts, top of her head (hair), down to her shoulders (hair), and finally, to her back. The complete route affords the reader two and a half scans of the woman. All of Vinsauf's directives are included within the catalogue: face, cheeks, eyes, forehead, mouth, eyelids, eyebrows, torso (costume), feet, legs, knee, hand, breasts, hair, shoulders, spine. Moreover, Spenser incorporates many standard formulaic clichés: a bright faire face; "large, broad, high, smooth" (Curry 42) white forehead; shining (lights, beams, lamps) eyes; sweet honeyed mouth, echoing the Song of Solomon 4:11, and of course Chaucer's
Alisoun: perles and rubies, perfume of the lily or the rose (67) mouth; cheeks like roses; breasts white as snow; twinkling stars, long strait legs; and beautiful hair that ...in the popular mode of the Middle English poet...shines like gold wire, or is as yellow as gold wire (16). Spenser adheres to the language of colour code, but he emphasizes the colours of white, red, and especially gold. These are clearly Biblical, heavenly if you will, significations, but here, they denote military ornamentation as well. Specifically, Spenser uses white for her complexion (faire), forehead (ivory), breasts (snow), teeth (perles), and costume (lily white); red for cheeks (roses) and mouth (ruby); gold for hair (wire) and costume (ornamental dressage); and green for the natural garland, although J.B. Fletcher suggests that "Spenser's eye for visible nature was so little focused that for vegetation he has only the adjectives 'green,' 'pallid- green,' and 'pallid' " (158). Again, the rose, pearls and rubies, and lily significations can be traced to the Song of Solomon.

Also within the survey, Spenser incorporates two deliberate, sexually strategic elements that encourage the reader to "trust the rectified sensory pleasure of Belphoebe's presence, to have the courage of the wishes she both arouses and feeds, and to gaze on her frankly" (Krier 72). Although Spenser makes no specific mention of her genitals, there is erotic energy about when he carefully escorts the reader from Belphoebe's knees to her groin, or rather to the tight, elusive "knots" of her costume, the knots "that none might see." This is an especially
significant referent in view of Belphoebe's constant celibacy, a condition "close enwrapped be," one tested and successfully maintained despite "human" encroachment. Moreover, Spenser orchestrates a wonderful appetizer, a teaser if you will, when he travels to her breasts. The mode of description now shifts from ornamental to the instrumental, to her weapons and defenses, and suddenly, a bauldrick appears to guard her before Spenser lingers upon the breasts, in an unobtrusive mode, and where before there seemed only a camus. He effortlessly shifts from the thin, sheer, white silk sheath, complete with shimmering stars, one that might fully reveal her swelling breasts, to a protective, solid, impenetrable bauldrick, the second tangible reflection of her impenetrable chastity.

There can be no debate then with respect to Belphoebe's countenance and "trew nobility" (3.5.32). She is the celestially chosen, the fairest...farre above the rest" (3.0.1) embodying, like Diana, all the beauty, all the free activity and all the positive human development that the ideal of chastity conceived as virginity, and moving on the natural level, without motivation and direction from religion will permit....(Woodhouse 72). Pure and unspotted at birth, she is conceived by the sun's rays, and, "since the sun generates souls, like rays and sparks of fire...to make the soul an ethereal, fiery substance, a ray of light," she will forever remain chaste. Belphoebe, neither requesting nor returning carnal love for any man (despite the fact she extracts very
human, and predictable, reactions from any man who sees her), is the
most traditional example thus far of "one of these beings, all elementary
purity and chastity" (qtd. Greenlaw 3. 250). Especially relevant is
Spenser's metaphor for Belphoebe's eyes, "liuing lamps," which recalls
Luke 12: 33:

'Your eye is the lamp of your body. When
your eyes are good, your whole body also
is full of light. But when they are bad,
your body is also full of darkness. See
to it then that the light within you is not
darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is
full of light, and no part of it dark, it
will be completely lighted as when the light
of a lamp shines on you.'

Her living lamp eyes are a most appropriate reflection of her inner light.
Physiognomically speaking then, Belphoebe, like Emelye, seems a
gilded, heavenly vision...a goddess in sheer white and jeweled opulence
with a heavenly aura despite the fact that hers is no angel costume. It is
clearly the radiance, self confidence, and shining light that colourizes
her. In fact, much like Arcite, Timias questions 'Angell, or Goddesse, do
I call thee right?' (3.5.35), and Trompart's reaction is no different when
he categorizes her as "some powre celestiall" (2.3.44) and exclaims: "O
Goddess (for such I take thee to be)/ For neither doth thy face terrestriall
shew/ Nor voyce sound mortall" (2.3.33). Braggadochio sees only a "goodly Ladie clad in hunters weeds/that seemd to be a woman of great birth/And by her stately portance, borne of heauenly birth" (2.3.21). She, clearly a superlative creation, is also an imitation of an important precedent, for she recalls the image of a Virgilian Venus in disguise in Aeneid 1. And although in this instance, Spenser’s image echoes Virgil’s, we must never forget that in reality Spenser, not Braggadochio, is Aeneas. Aeneas is of course mesmerized by a goddess who seems to appear from nowhere, and Braggadochio, "in an unprogressive episode" (qtd. Greenlaw 3, 315) reacts in much the same manner. Moreover, when Timias swears his allegiance to Belphoebe and promises to "dye rather, dye and dying do her serve" (3.5.46), it is because he is equally enthralled. She presents so brilliant a figure.

Yet, much like Chaucer's Emelye, Spenser incorporates within the divine of the portrait a distinct sexual undercurrent. Consequently, because of Belphoebe's earthy accoutrements, drawn on erotic motifs, we recognize that Belphoebe is indeed human. Complete with phallic spear and arrow and sub-textually framed in Spenser's flame, lustful fire, and wanton, base desire, she sports the ornamentation and weaponry of the vibrant huntress. Certainly, she is most comfortable in the woodlands chasing and hunting deer, most comfortable "where true honour can be found, amid the toils and dangers of a strenuous life" (Dowden 321). Belphoebe, like Emelye who blends so well with
Mother Earth, is indelibly fused with her landscape "immersed fully and innocently in a resplendence both spiritual and natural" (Krier 71). When her isolated "earthly paradise" (Williams 214) is invaded, so to speak, by Braggadochio and later by Timias, Spenser conveys not only her "grandeur but also her girlishness" (Krier 75), and Belphoebe remains completely loyal to her agenda. When she does arouse those who come in contact with her, due in part to the erotic impulses that surround her representation, the men are merely responding to the natural side of Belphoebe. They are not perverse, they are enthralled, and they are enticed—and the sacred and secular which coexists within her composition, that is the complex angel/huntress combination, certainly warrant their very complex reaction. Specifically, during the episode where Belphoebe nurses the squire, Timias responds from a sacred, secular, and most important, an unselfish perspective: "in this connection may be noted the effort of the young squire not to reveal his love for Belphoebe. Chaste love withholds the expression of itself if harm to its object may be the issue" (qtd. Greenlaw 3, 312). In fact, it seems his reaction echoes Arcite's—he is in awe of her grace and beauty, yet surely he must appreciate her vitality. Belphoebe, again, much like Emelye, extracts unsolicited love from a man who is obviously enamoured with her physical splendour in the first place and who then is impressed with her tender heart. Her representation produces a confusion of effect it never intends when "in the real world, the arrows of Diana can have an effect hard to be distinguished from that of the arrows of Cupid; the chaste honor can turn, however unintentionally,
into the chaste of love. Belphoebe, set apart by her innocent birth and by Diana's training, and at home in her own paradise, seems never fully to comprehend the people she meets..."(Williams 211). That is why when Belphoebe heals Timias, he falls hopelessly in love and she is doing simply what comes naturally to her: "when she loves, her love is but compassion. This is true to human nature: such boundless activities as Belphoebe rejoiced in are the aptest type of that vitality, both moral and material, which suffices for itself, which can spend its energies forever without a return, and which needs no other support than its own inherent strength, and wave-like elasticity" (De Vere 261). Again, this is evidenced not only in the eighty-one line efficicio but in the Timias episode where "as Diana's huntress, she can be loved, but the love must be manifested as worship," and when she easily accepts Timias' love "as the adoration due to her, and as requiring nothing in return" (Williams 210). Moreover, in her final appearance (4.7) when the martial Belphoebe rescues her twin's chastity, we once more become voyeurs and observe when, where, how, and why Belphoebe is viewed, desired, and ultimately sanctified. On all counts, she emerges the victor, for Spenser has created the ultimate challenge in this example of the feminine ideal here, the self contained but approachable, the pure but desirable but most unattainable woman. Ultimately, she embodies the quest for the impossible.

The fact that Belphoebe is a glorious representation is certainly not a
new concept, and most critics agree that Belphoebe is a wondrous sight. For example, Camille Paglia observes: "Belphoebe bursts into the Faerie Queene like a divine epiphany. Spenser gives her one of the most dazzling theatrical entrances in art. Narrative action stops dead, while ten long stanzas minutely describe her appearance" (178); Rosemary Freeman acknowledges the "impressive presentation" (136), Hazlitt appraises this portrait as one of the "finest things in Spenser" (Lectures 38); Hughes interprets it as "shining" (lxviii-lxxxix) and Dodge as "pompously ornamental" (200), Winstanley as "amplified and elaborate" (xxxv) as does Blanchard (205); and, Legouis, much like Paglia, characterizes the description as "a picture on the grandest scale, with an extraordinary profusion of colours and details, filling ten stanzas—one for her face, one for her eyes, one for her forehead and mouth, one for her looks and smiles, one for her tunic, one for her buskins, one for her legs, one for her spear, bow and baldric, one for her hair, and so on" (Spenser 103). Predictably, the above evaluations rightfully recognize Spenser's descriptive splendor and praise his clear artistry, and I fully agree with them, however, not one designates this portrait as effictio despite the descending catalogue, traditional colouring, and most appropriate subject. Additionally, no one has placed sufficient emphasis on Spenser's effictio of Belphoebe in conjunction with his condensed effictio of her twin, Amoret, and the impact of their separate upbringings on their moral profiles. Let me suggest then that Spenser uses the descriptions of Belphoebe and her twin, both "immaculately conceived" by the Sun and both inherently chaste, to illuminate how these women,
who clearly remain chaste in adulthood, ultimately adopt the degree of chastity embodied by their foster parents and respective environments. Belphoebe, the more glorified of the two sisters simply because of her amplified effictio, is raised by Diana in the woodlands among the nymphs and will embody the type of chastity that refuses marriage, the type that subsists until death. And, Amoret, fostered in the Garden of Adonis, by Venus, and Psyche and her daughter Pleasure, will embody the type of chastity that subsists only until marriage. In other words, Spenser has created Belphoebe in the type of chastity "which expresses itself in celibacy" (Greenlaw 3. 389) and Amoret, the cherished child of love... as the type who has "learnt the preciousness of true love" (3. 385), yet each woman remains an example of the ideal. In fact, "either a woman is chaste or she is not. The education comes in the building up of those accessory interests, activities, and knowledge which protect chastity and throw the physical claims of life into proper focus" (qtd. Greenlaw 3, 323). And eventually, each woman will love wisely and well because of the "educational" input rendered.

But first, note the exceptional birth:

faire Belphoebe in her berth/
The Heavens so favourable were and free...
That all the gifts of grace and chastitee/
On her they poured forth in plenteous horne...
Her berth was of the wombe of Morning dew,
And her conception of the joyous Prime,
And all her creation did her shew
Pure and unspotted from all loathly crime

Her mother...she bore Belphoebe...Faire Amoretta in the
second place:
These two were twinnes, and twixt them two did share
The heritage of all celestial grace.
That all ther rest it seem'd they robbed bare
Of bountie, and of beautie, and all vertues rare...

(3.6.2,3,4)

It seems that Spenser has presented a simple scenario: one birth, two
offspring. And essentially, it is, for the two women termed in parallel
compliments: faire Belphoebe and Amoret, the "infant faire" (3.6. 51),
with "faire eyes" (4.7.35) and "heauenly vertues grace" clearly
compliment each other. In fact, "that Spenser did regard earthly love as
beautiful and pure is proved by the fact that Amoret is twin-sister to
Belphoebe and, like her, immaculately conceived" (Greenlaw 4. 235)
and has an identical physiognomic composite. Therefore, Amoret,
physically "faire" and morally, "shining with beauties light" (4.10.52),
resembles Belphoebe. Both sisters are fair, the first signification of
perfection, and more important, both are celestially favoured with rare
grace and chastity. At this point of their existence then, the "wondrously...begot" (3.6.6) twins boast an indistinguishable, heavenly, mystical if you will, connection. Still, theirs is not an adolescence without conflict. Soon after their birth, they are separated:

Each babe was taken by a goddess: Dame Phoebe to a nymph
her babe betooke,
To be vpbrught in perfect Maydenhed,
And of her selfe her name Belphoebe red:
But Venus hers thence farre away conuayed,
To be vpbrught in goodle womanhed,
And in her little loues stead, which was strayd,
Her Amoretta cald... (3.6.28)

And as they are separately nurtured, these "children of nature" gain separate educations in the ways of love: "Belphoebe is adopted by Diana and brought up among her nympha, while Amoret is placed by Venus in the Garden of Adonis, there to be brought up by Psyche with her daughter Pleasure 'In all the lore of love and goodly womanhead' (Woodhouse 72). It is no wonder then that Belphoebe and Amoret brought up in highly specialized environments come to reflect the moral profiles of the goddesses who raise them: Diana/white/purity vs. Venus/red/passion. Having been cultivated in separate locales by separate guardians, they mature differently and again, Belphoebe, whose chaste state is fixed, will be unable to return anything other than pure,
unselfish, non corporeal love where Amoret will realize connubial passion. This is not to infer that Amoret is less than noble, for Spenser is careful to guard her countenance:

So was she trayned vp from time to time,
In all chast vertue, and true bounti-hed
Till to her dew perfection she was ripened. (3.6.3)

until:

She to perfect ripenesse grew,
Of grace and beautie noble Paragone...

and as an example:

To all faire Ladies, that doe liue on ground. (3.6.52)

Amoret's morality is clearly intact. In fact, "Amoret is the very sister of Chastity; and indeed the Sun who is the light of the world created her...and beneath the crown of glory which Spenser placed on her head,
we see in Amoret a type of maiden long regarded as ideal. Needful of protection but strong in faithfulness, affectionate but wholly chaste, soft and sweet, yet capable of patient fortitude, Amoret would once have been called a 'good girl'" (qtd. Greenlaw 4 321). Had Amoret been raised by Diana, she would never have been equipped to recognize the temptation of lustful (Busyrane) or to experience the pain of pure and the pleasure of conjugal love with Scudamore. When the two, after some incipient episodes, unite, they discover "sweet loues content"
(4.10.26):

And yet such grace is giuen them from aboue,
That all the cares and euill which they meet,
May nought at all their settled mindes remoue,
But seeme against common sence to them most sweet;
(4.10.2)

Celibacy is clearly not the appropriate path for Amoret. And similarly, had Belphoebe been trained in the Garden of Adonis, who knows what might have transpired with the youthful, fair Timias?

At any rate, Spenser does fulfill his promise. These women, whose "relationship underlines, or is underlined by, that of Venus and Diana, who stand opposed to each other and yet have a devious and hidden
kind of kinship" (Williams 209), do grow as they were created, despite alternate lifestyles with alternate mentors. Both are pure and both are content and both are accordingly fulfilled. And it is only upon examining these women in view of their adolescent training that their effictio[s] become especially significant. The sisters, physiognomically similar at birth, clearly adopt their distinctive but complementary attitudes toward "love" from their separate but complementary white and red environments. And although the form and outward fashion are indeed changed, Belphoebe and her twin Amoret, "in liuing colours and right hew" (F.O. 3.4), clearly remain parallel examples of the feminine ideal.

Spenser obviously utilized the effictio quite effectively in his portraits of the twins in the Faerie Queene. He chose to adhere to the established formula for Belphoebe and to condense it for Amoret. And although "it does not seem to occur to serious critics that Spenser, like many of his talent, may sometimes wish to amuse himself—and others—with a bit of curious workmanship" (Greenlaw 2. 287), his treatment of Rosalind in the Shephearde's Calendar is ingenious. Note however that there can be no discussion of features, delineation of route, or signification of colour, for in the "January" eclogue, his representation of Rosalind is inventive, dramatic, and unorthodox.

When Spenser chooses an aborted effictio, the ultimate modification
of the trope, for Rosalind, his decision affects Rosalind, Colin, and the ending of the calendar. Therefore, I must ask: why would Spenser modify this form so dramatically when, as we have seen with Belphoebe, he could have easily imitated the established catalogue formula? Why alienate Colin's potential love interest literally, aesthetically, and socially from the onset of the calendar? Moreover, what function might this modified trope possibly serve within the confines of the text?

Based on Spenser's initial introduction of Rosalind and his fragmented references to her incorporated throughout the calendar, I suggest that Colin's creativity is impeded and his song is ultimately silenced because Spenser deliberately presents Rosalind, with her inventive rhetorical representation, as an incomplete and inadequate source of inspiration for the pastoral musician. Since Spenser introduces a Rosalind who is no more worthy of Colin's song than she is of Colin's affection, I think she is responsible for the eventual demise of his pastoral song.

Spenser introduces Rosalind in the 'January' eclogue through Colin's "teary flow of words" (Berger 44):
Before this reference, Spenser focuses on Colin's "stormy state" (23), "plight" (10), "payne" (14), "rage" (25), "sighes" (39), and "mournig pyne" (46) which solidifies Colin's role as the lovesick shepherd—"the pensife boy halfe in despite" (77). Colin's melancholy, at this point, is prompted by Rosalind's rejection, and this shepherd who identifies love as a most painful and unfulfilling process, will grieve in song, and will "fill the landscape with the music of his pain" (Bernard 312). Therefore in typical pastoral cyclic mode, love is thwarted, and Colin will sing, only to recreate his pain; his recreated pain will result in another song, and so on. And whether he sings to "persuade his beloved or to console himself and gently glorify his grief," the fact that Colin "revels in his loss and in his delight in self-expression and invention in finding as many ways as possible to say the same thing" (Berger 44) is reinforced in the December eclogue when he does indeed echo his formal complaint in much the same form.

At this point, we know nothing about Rosalind except that she is fair. Given the established rhetorical application of this term and the fact that she is the object of Colin's obsession—the heroine responsible for his January pain—there surely must be a more elaborate catalogue forthcoming. However, Spenser provides nothing more.
Why would Spenser begin the portrait conventionally then abruptly abort? In that we have evidence of his knowledge of the effictio, we must conclude that his severe modification is deliberate, for he does not provide the gold hair, white skin, red cheeks or lips; nor are there shining eyes. Curious workmanship indeed. Had he intended to present Rosalind as an enigmatic presence within Colin's life, Spenser could have easily listed ambiguous requisites and molded her in the sheer textures seen in the Belphoebe catalogue, but he didn't describe or dress Rosalind at all. Or, if he merely intended Rosalind as a catastrophic element in Colin's past, a disruptive catalyst if you will, he might have referred to Rosalind a single time; but, he didn't. In fact, with a less modified effictio, Rosalind's rejection would certainly justify Colin's function as shepherd: "to learne these woods, to wayle my woe, /And Teache the trees, their trickling teares to shedde" ("June" 96). Colin would still have sufficient cause to communicate his grief throughout the calendar. The pastoral otium, ideally unencumbered by secular love, would still be disrupted the moment that Colin's gaze became an audible whimper—a whimper exposing his indulgence into love. Colin could still share the wound that renders him `sleepless' ("Aug." 165), "pale and wanne" ("Jan." 8), and as Gross diagnoses, causes him to neglect his duties and personal welfare (22). Moreover, at this point, Colin would clearly be justified in breaking his pipe and laying down. Instead, Spenser creates an aborted effictio. For what reason?
Let me suggest that Spenser simply could not sanction a complete *effictio* or justify applying the convention traditionally reserved for the feminine ideal to a woman who did not conform to the tradition or to Colin's world on any level. Therefore, in a radical rhetorical modification, he uses the aborted *effictio* to establish her incompleteness and inadequacy. In one phrase, he introduces her, and in the very next instant, he stops. There are no specifics to recall, no identifiable requisites to analyze—she is fair, and she is gone. She is no mystery; she is no annoyance. She is simply not the ideal, thus the extreme initial representation and the economical treatment thereafter.

For example, nowhere in the calendar does Spenser physically develop Rosalind; the emphasis seems to be on her effect upon Colin. Spenser offers, through alternating speakers, only brief glimpses of Rosalind in intermittent references and scant phrases. In "January," Colin shares his awe as well as his grief: "Ah, God, that love should breede both joy and pain" (54); he confesses that Rosalind "laughs at his songs," "scornes his rurall musick," and "hates shepheard's devise" (65-8). In essence, after Colin portrays Rosalind as an unresponsive and insensitive woman, the scorned lover does what is expected—he tends to his flock and sings. In "April," Hobbinol calls Rosalind a "lasse" (10) as well as "fayre" (27). In "June," Colin refers to Rosalind's "golden locks"
(46), again an important requisite in traditional effictio, then he stops. Rosalind is also compared to a "weede" (103), where a more pleasant comparison might have been the tradition roses, lilies, or blackberries. Also in this month, Colin accuses:

Whether on hylls, or dales, or other where,
Beare witnesse all of thyso wicked deede:
And tell the lasse, whose flowre is woxe a weede,
And faultless fayth, is turned to faithless fere. (106-9)

Hobbinol, who echoes Colin's opinion, then labels her "faithless Rosalind." By "December," Rosalind is clearly the "loser lass" (119). Also note the subtle progression of their association and how the December or June Rosalind changes from the January Rosalind, from blossom to weed, from fair to faithless loser. As Gerald Gross notes, Rosalind rejects Colin on every level; therefore, theirs is an "unrequited and unfulfilled love" (11). There is no concrete evidence, in January, that she has ever tried to return his love, for at this point, Spenser has revealed only that Colin sees her, woos her, loves her, and is rejected by her. The relationship appears one sided, but the torment is clearly Colin's. But by "June," Rosalind has been "demoted" from fair to weed to faithless. This suggests she did indeed love him at one time but now loves elsewhere (Gross 11); we are given no specific reason. And
despite Colin's exaggerations in "April": "he plonged in payne, his
tressed locks dooth teare" (12) or his "December" rage from his
"unkynedly heat" (12) and "ranking wound" (94), Rosalind has been
quite finished with Colin for at least six months. Hers is obviously an
aborted love, much like her aborted representation.

It would seem that Spenser's intention, from "January" to "June," is to
categorize Rosalind as the incongruent invader, intruder, or alien if you
will, into Colin and his pastoral landscape. I must agree with Bernard's
suggestion that "Spenser goes out of his way to stress the delicate
balance between pastoral alienation" (316) in logistical, cultural, and
artistic modes. Clearly, Rosalind does not share Colin's landscape. We
know she lives in a nearby town, but she is not part of his world either in
a literal framework, as she never physically appears in the calendar, or
in a cultural framework, given that any distance within the concept of
the pastoral, no matter how insignificant, constitutes disassociation.

Because she is an intruder, she cannot possibly comprehend a world
where "Pan himselfe will pype and dance" ("June" 30) for "Algrind the
Meeke" ("July" 126) or a world of "grassie greene," of "damaske roses
and daffodillies set" with "bay leaves betweene" (55-62). Hers is a
world where the "Lordly briers must stand alone-disconsolate" ("Feb."
230), and where "rude society" acknowledges no delicious solitude.
Given this cultural imbalance then, how could Rosalind appreciate the
delicate bond between shepherd and song, or how could she recognize
Colin's rural art as an emblem of his existence and his grief. Moreover,
how could she possibly measure the desperate sacrifice of a song
silenced with the painful snap of a pipe?

Clearly, Spenser who literally aborts her portrait, intimates that she
cannot. Therefore, he does not create a kinder, gentler, more compatible
love interest who would share Colin's hills and dales; he does not create
the feminine ideal who might echo the lyrics to Colin's music. Rather, in
"January," Spenser creates Colin's anathema. And ultimately, in
"December," when Colin sits in his "secrete shade alone"(6) reflecting
upon his state and realizing the futility of pursuing his art in the near
future, he mourns:

Thus is my sommer worn away and wasted.
Thus is my haruest hastened all to rathe:
The eare that budded faire, is burnt and
blasted,
And all my hoped gaine is turnd to scathe.
Of all the seede, that in my youth was sowne,
Was noght but brakes and brambles to be
mowne.
My boughes with bloosomes that crowned were
at firste,
And promised of timely fruite such store,
Are left both bare and barrein now at erst
The flattring fruite is fallen to grownd before,
And rotted, ere thy were halfe mellow ripe. (97-107)

When Colin falls in love with a woman who is incapable, as I have suggested, of returning his affection, appreciating his lyrics, or savoring his harmonious environment, his song is doomed. Once Colin's joyful, "flowrd spring" ("Dec." 19) has been stung by the "heate of heedlesse lust," all of his hope for a spring that "would ever last" (21) is mortally wounded. He therefore must confront reality and recognize the fact that he now 'wreakes' of "wintrye ages waste" (29):

Ere the breme Winter breede you greater griefe,
Winter is come, that blowes the balefull breathe,
And after Winter commeth timely death. ("Dec." 148-50)

And while I agree with Gross' opinion that it is difficult to "complete the 'December' eclogue without a strong sense of depression" (22), I cannot agree when he interprets "timely" as an implicit suggestion of recurrence or cyclic rebirth (27). I see the term as a sign of Colin's lucid and temporal realization of final defeat. His love for Rosalind has not
proven ennobling, inspirational, nor productive. In fact, "January's" wasteful object of affection, Rosalind, has generated winter's wasteful demise of Colin's creativity:

The fragrant flowres that in my garden grewe,  
Bene withered, as they had bene gathered long.  
Theyr rootes bene dried vp for lacke of dewe. (108-11)

The "pensife boy halfe in despite" ("Jan." 77) renders "rotted halfe-mellow ripe" fruit ("Dec." 106) by the year's end. Therefore, it is time for Colin to lay to rest his broken art along with his broken dreams of an eternal spring. It is time to end his song; consequently, he has no alternative but to hang his pype upon a tree (141), offer some last minute advice to his flock, (145), and to say good-bye to his entire world:

Adieu delightes, that lulled me asleepe,  
Adieu my deare, whose loue I bought so deare:  
Adieu my little Lambes and loued sheepe,  
Adieu ye Woodes that oft my winnesse were:  
Adieu good Hobbino, that was so true,  
Tell Rosalind her Colin bids her adieu.(151-6)

And ultimately, it is insignificant whether as John Moore submits,
Colin "takes up the stern trumpet of the epic" (106), or, as A.C. Hamilton suggests, "he frees himself from earthy bondage and turns to Christ" (177). What is significant is that Colin hangs his pype in "December" and issues a final farewell to this pastoral song. Even more significant is Spenser's modification of the effictio, for it seems Spenser never intended for Colin to continue singing this shepherd song after the ending of the calendar. Therefore, Spenser creates Rosalind as the insufficient, less than exemplary vehicle that methodically serves to extinguish Colin's song. It is Spenser's dramatic aborted effictio, then, that renders an aborted love that ultimately renders the aborted song.

Given the glorified, elaborate representation of Belphebe as well as the negative terse representation of Rosalind, how could anyone seriously classify Edmund Spenser as "a poet whose loyalty to his own medieval roots limits his room for poetic maneuver" (qtd. Krier 79)? Limited? Hardly. Spenser who "makes the abstract concrete and material and personifies it like the painter or the actor"(Legouis 112) clearly recreates the best from the recreated best until the tradition of preceptive portraiture is once more reclaimed, redefined, and ultimately reinvented.
CONCLUSION

It is no wonder that there has been so much confusion with portrait nomenclature for so many years. Rhetoricians seem to thrive on defining their art, only to redefine it. This practice is not a detriment when it serves to solidify and strengthen the convention with each transition, modification, or imitation. This seems especially relevant with the effictio. Given its endurance, range of modification, impact, and influence since the sixth century, clearly the effictio has evolved from mere ornamental dressage to an important and powerful rhetorical tool. In its earliest traditional baseline structure, it catalogues, from head to toe and in specific colour significations, the fairest, purest, and most beautiful of all women. She has golden hair, white skin, black brows, and red cheeks and lips. She is compared to the whitest lily or pearl, the reddest rose or ruby, and the goldest shining sun. And whether she represents a sacred or secular love object, she is, in fact, as product of a somewhat simplistic rhetorical formula, a stock representation, no more —no less.

This predictable formula for the conceptualized feminine ideal is soon embellished and amplified to incorporate many additional
physical requisites. Ideal woman is at this point clearly defined with a lengthy list of designated attributes in significant colours, and more important, she is afforded a moral profile, or as Geoffroi of Vinsauf categorizes, a countenance, to rival her exemplary external representation. She is still fair; she is still pure, no more—no less.

Still, even this strict a formula encourages refinement and artistic expression. The route may be re-routed, the features rearranged, the colours modified. Woman, or at this point, any subject, as sometime after the eleventh century, the effictio is applied to males, animals, and women (who may or may not embody purity), is no longer a one dimensional representation. Catalogues are more complex, for the effictio has the power to provide an accurate, complete physiognomic portrait, one that illuminates the subject's moral profile along with its traditional catalogue of physical features. The tradition seems to energize within and upon reconstruction, therefore, artistic intervention and rhetorical invention are now firmly rooted along with the more traditional versions of effictio; variety abounds.

For example, the Gawain poet wishes to cement the dual characters of the Green Knight and Bercilak, to fuse their beings, if you will. Moreover, he wishes to illuminate the "true" countenance of his "menacing monster." He uses two examples of modified effictio to do
so. They are especially effective and significant with their detailed costumes, amplified requisites, and deliberate colour applications. The tradition proves a valuable method of representing the honour and strength within the Green Knight as well as the "green" within Bercilak. Much like the Gawain poet, Chaucer will craft a modified effictio for Emelye, Alysoun, Chauntecleer, Alisoun and Absolon, all multidimensional representations. And, Spenser will in turn re-establish the established tradition with his complex Belphoebe and his less than ideal Rosalind representations.

In short, the regenerative nature of this trope, the effictio, provides the sustenance for preceptive portraiture which provides fertile fuel for the effictio. Curiously, what began as a minute citation in an ancient text has with each application, amplification, and modification accumulated strength, energy, and depth. It has ultimately evolved into a dynamic, important, rhetorical force...a force that can no longer be dismissed.
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