Thinking Too Long

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Since a woman’s “Womanhaide” appears to be completely unrelated to her social power, Griselda is able to manifest the Boethian moral view in a way that men simply cannot.

At this point, it is evident that Griselda's gender has enabled her to feel no attachment to her social power. She understands that because no empire on earth rules all humanity, men who attempt to achieve the supreme good through obtaining power are doomed to fail. In other words, since power itself is inherently powerless, the only way for one to escape from potentially destructive feelings and thus secure her protection in the form of philosophical reason.

A mutual friend of Petrarch and Boccaccio from Padua was one of the first to read Petrarch's modified version of Boccaccio's Tale of Griselda. Breaking out in tears of compassion while reading the tale, the reader re-cited words of the Satirist: "Nature, who gave us tears, by that alone/Proclaims she made the feeling heart our own,/And doth our noblest sense."

He appears deeply saddened by Griselda's stoicism, as he believes that the feeling heart is the noblest sense. It is unclear whether his tears are produced out of sympathy for the Boethian woman's social powerlessness, "— such de sire is essentially meaningless to her and can simply be renounced."

Indeed, I propose that Griselda's temporary deafness and stupor suggest her strictly Boethian desire to remain stoical. In the Legend of Lucretia, the protagonis'ts fainting before her rape symbolizes not a stoical or an unpleasant sensation is irrelevant; a true Boethian woman can effortlessly renounce her earthly suffering, to become a powerful woman full of moral virtue who is on her way to achieving the supreme good because of her lack of attachment to her suffering as well as to the feelings inside her heart.

But on his lust present was all his thought."

In other words, since Griselda is an intolerable being to think solely about his immediate pleasure causes, Griselda's social powerlessness forces her to think about the future outcome of her actions if she wishes to protect herself from emotional or physical danger. Walter can feel “solas,” or joyful comfort, simply by acting out his male social position. If Griselda wants to achieve such consolation, it is clear to her that she must live her life based on “sentence.” The Boethian Philosophical Model reassures this fact by proving that despite how monstrous or how pitifully she sees her life, simply to detach herself will not only protect both her sanctity and physical well-being, but will eventually lead her to the “supreme good.” It is Griselda’s womanly social position that enables her to adopt a model of Boethian self-sufficiency in an effort to protect herself. Chaucer, therefore, provides readers with a possible explanation to the tension between “sentence and solaas” in The Clerk’s Tale: Griselda is able to apply the practical Boethian moral lessons, or sentence, because doing so is crucial to her survival, or solas. Griselda’s female social position enables her to act in a wholly reasonable way that does not necessarily feel pleasurable at the moment but that is able to secure her true happiness and comfort, a form of solaas, in the future.