Title	Griselda and her Virtues
Sub Title	
Author	松田, 隆美(Matsuda, Takami)
Publisher	慶應義塾大学藝文学会
Publication year	1997
Jtitle	藝文研究 (The geibun-kenkyu : journal of arts and letters). Vol.73, (1997. 12) ,p.27- 47
JaLC DOI	
Abstract	
Notes	安藤伸介, 岩崎春雄両教授退任記念論文集
Genre	Journal Article
URL	https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AN00072643-00730001-0027

Griselda and her Virtues

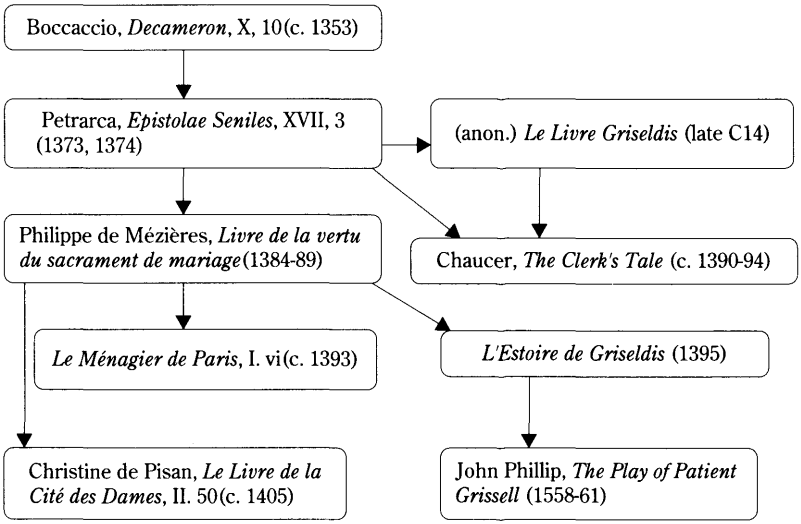
Takami Matsuda

Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale* is one of the most frequently discussed - as well as most controversial - tales in the *Canterbury Tales*. The tale leaves an uncomfortable aftertaste to the modern mind and no students of Chaucer in this century have found it easy to appreciate it. Whether one reads it as an exemplum, a sentimental fiction, a tale of marvel, a variation of a folkloric motif, or a theological or political allegory, it retains a paradox and admits no single interpretation.(1) It indeed proves to be 'the *Canterbury Tales*'s supreme test of its readers' interpretative powers' as Ann Middleton has commented.(2)

At the same time, there is no doubt that it was one of the most popular tales in the fifteenth century, if we judge by the number of translations and adaptations extant in several languages.(3) The relationship among various versions of the Griselda legend produced in Italy, France, and England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries has been studied in detail, especially with reference to Chaucer's sources.(4) This paper is concerned with late medieval examples of the story of Griselda from Boccaccio to John Phillip's *Play of Patient Grissell*, all of which are in some way related, one serving as the source of another. We will look at the characteristics of each version in terms of the virtue it promotes, while paying attention to supposed and actual readership of each. The difference in emphasis as regards Griselda's virtues can provide a clue to the nature of the tale's extreme popularity

in the late Middle Ages.

The story of Griselda, which was probably folkloric in its origin, received a full literary treatment in the final tale of Day 10 of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and gained unprecedented popularity soon afterwards when Petrarch, commenting favourably on what he considered to be the youthful achievement of Boccaccio, made a Latin translation of it in his letter to Boccaccio (*Epistolae Seniles*, xvii, 3). In the *Clerk's Tale* Chaucer used both Petrarch's Latin version and the anonymous French prose translation of it (*Le Livre Griseldis*). Another fourteenth-century French prose version based on Petrarch made by Philippe de Mézières became a source for Christine de Pizan's short version as well as of a verse drama entitled *L'Estoire de Griseldis*, which in turn became a source for the sixteenth-century English interlude known as the *Play of Patient Grissell*. The relationship can be diagrammed as follows:



1

The story of a patient woman who is finally rewarded is a popular folkloric motif which finds a number of analogues among Middle English narratives.[5] In the case of Griselda, however, the virtue she represents cannot be identified solely with patience. While patience is readily apparent in all versions of the Griselda story, each version adds some other virtues which make the heroine an exceptional figure.

In Boccaccio's version, both Walter and Griselda are described as 'savio' or 'savia' in several instances. The quality of 'saviezza' as well as 'pazienza' characterises Griselda as a virtuous figure. This adjective, which is translated as 'prudens' in Petrarch and rendered again as 'saige' in *Le Livre Griseldis*, broadly signifies prudence. Although primarily a cardinal virtue, prudence can also signify worldly wisdom which could deteriorate into shrewdness and deceit. As stated in the *Summa theologiae*, prudence is 'the correct reasoning for action and it is necessary for man to be well disposed toward the end which is made by right appetite'.[6] When prudence lacks this 'appetite for the good' ('appetitus bonum'), it simply becomes 'art' whose goodness does not presuppose the right appetite or, in some cases, deteriorates into vice which is called 'prudentia diaboli' or 'prudentia carnis'.[7]

When Griselda is said to be 'savia', it is implied that her word or action is directed toward a good end even if that is not readily apparent. Silence, the outward calmness and sometimes the cheerfulness of Griselda are interpreted as coming from her 'saviezza'. In delivering her son to Walter's sergeant, she may look deceptively calm; this, however, comes from her 'saviezza' :

... e se non fosse che carnalissima de' figliuoli, mentre gli piacea,

la veda, lei avrebbe creduto cio fare per più non curarsene, dove come savia lei farlo cognobbe.[8]

Griselda is again referred to as 'savia' when she remains apparently unchanged and cheerful in meeting Walter's new bride. She achieves self-control and constancy by 'saviezza' which in this context involves circumspection and foresight, both important components of the cardinal virtue of prudence.[9]

Walter's 'saviezza' is of a mixed kind. While his prudence allows him to perceive Griselda's hidden prudence both before and after marriage, his behaviour betrays a more limited kind of worldly wisdom or calculating shrewdness. He is called 'molto savio' by an ironic narrator for not wanting to marry (p.30) although for a ruler, this is actually nothing but a serious lack of foresight and prudence. At the end of the tale, Walter is held to be 'savissimo' by people, even though they acknowledge Griselda to be 'sopra tutti savissima'. This final word of praise, however, cannot be taken for what it is because it comes from the changeable people - condemned by Chaucer as 'stormy people! Unsad and evere untrewe! / ay undiscreet and chaungynge as a fane!' (IV.995-96)[10]- who apparenly considerd Walter's switch to a younger bride a prudent decision. Although Boccaccio does not call Walter 'savio' in this instance, Petrarch translated the same passage unequivaocally as 'erantque qui dicerent prudenter Valterium ac feliciter permutasse' (pp.57-58), implying that prudence here was merely calculating shrewdness. Boccaccio's version therefore illuminates Griselda's prudence by contrasting it to the false prudence which the changeable people see in Walter. The tale concerns the nature of prudence in the secular world, where true prudence is not readily apparent and cannot be reduced to making a clever choice in

marriage. Within the context of the *Decameron*, however, the story is essentially presented as a tale of marvel in a series of entertaining stories. It ends with an observation rather than a moral; there is nothing more for the narrator to do than to state the obvious, that the nobility of the spirit does not always accompany noble birth. In this respect, the tale moves entirely on a secular plain; prudence remains a secular virtue and Griselda has no choice but to suffer meekly in adversity without invoking divine help.

What Petrarch did was primarily to raise the status of the story to a more spiritual level and give it an exemplary character. Revising what was written for a mixed courtly audience into a virtuous tale for a male audience,[11] he added a possibility of interpreting it as an allegory between a human soul and God. The character of Griselda and the virtues she represents also changed accordingly. Petrarch translates neither of the passages where Griselda is described as 'savia' in Boccaccio; instead, she is presented as possessing a more limited kind of political prudence, managerial ability in dealing with the affairs of the state during Walter's absence and the flawless preparations for Walter's second wedding. Instead of prudence, the virtues central to the tale are fidelity and constancy. Walter marvels at Griselda's female constancy ('femine constantiam') and tests her fidelity ('fides') rather than patience as in Boccaccio. Biblical allusions in the text give these virtues a distinct religious overtone; Griselda is referred to as 'ancille in morem fidelissime' (p.57) echoing Luke 1.38, and speaks more elaborately of her complete submission to Walter and the authority he represents.

While Petrarch explains that the function of the tale is to lead his readers to emulate Griselda's constancy in submitting themselves to God, he does deny a more naive response to the tale either. Commenting

on the reactions of his friends who read the tale, Petrarch praises the gentle disposition of a Paduan reader who broke down in tears reading the story, and condemns instead the lack of receptive imagination in a Veronese whose initial response was to question the historicity of the tale. Such an unhindered response to the pathos of the tale is also what is consciously cultivated in Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale*, which was written for a mixed courtly audience as well as for the Canterbury pilgrims.

Just as in Petrarch, the *Clerk's Tale* seems to support two different levels of reading. While Chaucer translated Petrarch's claim to the exemplary and allegorical reading of the tale, he also added details which are intended to enhance the pathos of the tale. Walter's sergeant becomes a more unfeeling figure and Griselda's speech to Walter is often long with a hint of reproach. Long authorial intrusions at critical scenes arouse the righteous frustration against Walter and compassion for Griselda, guiding the readers to a literal and pathetic response, as was experienced by Petrarch's Paduan reader. Griselda's virtues also seem to be of two different types. At one level, they are specifically linked to her status as wife; she is praised for 'wifly patience' (IV.919) and 'wifly steadfastnesse' (IV.1050). The adjective 'wifly' appears neither in Petrarch nor in *Le Livre Griseldis*. The application of 'wifly' to these virtues can group them together with 'al the feet of wifly hoomlinesse' (IV.429), so that her patience and steadfastness become pragmatic domestic virtues in the same class as skills in domestic duties. These domesticated virtues undoubtedly appealed as the obvious moral point of the tale to some male members among the Canterbury pilgrims, including the Host and the Merchant, whose response was to bemoan personal woes in marriage.

At the same time, Petrarch's more abstract constancy also features prominently in the characterisation of Griselda. Griselda is

said to possess 'rype and sad corage' (IV.220) despite her youth. Maturity of Griselda in her youth stands in a marked contrast to Walter who is explicitly blamed by the narrator for lack of foresight. Maturity in youth suggests a 'puer senex' quality, a traditional attribute of a saint (seen most readily in the Infant Jesus refuting the doctors) in which the manifestation of wisdom is shown to be transcending the natural limitation of age, and in which the popular proverb, 'young saint, old devil', is also seen to be refuted.[12] Griselda is often described as 'sad', and her 'sadnesse' applies to both her outward appearance and inner self.[13] She continues to meet successive tests with the same 'sad' expression on her face as when she first met Walter (IV.293, 552, 693). It is finally this 'sadness' that convinces Walter that further tests to 'tempte his wif, hir sadnesse for to knowe' (IV.452) are unnecessary:

> And whan this Walter saugh hire pacience,
> Hir glade chiere, and no malice at al,
> And he so ofte had doon to hire offence,
> And she ay sad and constant as a wal,
> Continuynge evere hire innocence overal,
> This sturdy markys gan his herte dresse
> To rewen upon hire wyfly stedfastnesse. (IV.1044-50)

Petrach's 'constanciam' (or 'la constance et grant pacience' in *Le Livre Griseldis*)[14] is first rendered 'ay sad and constant as a wal', while it is then rephrased as 'wyfly stedfastenesse' (IV.1050) and 'thy stedfastnesse' (IV.1056). The meaning of 'sadness', however, is not limited to steadfastness or constancy, or to keeping the appearance unchanged despite the changes of fortune. As Jill Mann has shown, the word retains the older meanings of satisfaction and self-sufficiency, so

that it could imply in this context both the calm acceptance of adversity and the willing acceptance of misfortune or loss.[15] Griselda accepts the loss of her children with a 'sad visage', but without forsaking the love for them. Boccaccio probably tried to convey the similar idea by calling her 'savia', but the Chaucerian meaning comes out clearly in the final scene when Griselda holds her reunited children 'sadly' (IV.1100). The firmness of her grasp is the proof not so much of the joy of unexpected reunion as of her constancy in love for her children whom she 'stedfastly' (IV.1094) believed to have been lost.

The *Clerk's Tale* brings out the pathos inherent in the story and invites an immediate and unsophisticated response.[16] At the same time, Griselda's 'sadness' is not merely passive patience in adversity but a more positive attitude toward hardship, the willingness to accept and even welcome tribulation while remaining steadfast in love for what is lost. In the exemplary context, Griselda's 'sadness' resembles a religious virtue suitable for a martyr. Her virtue can become either secular or spiritual, according to the different levels of interpretation both of which the *Clerk's Tale* accommodates.

2

At the end of the fourteenth century, probably before Chaucer composed the *Clerk's Tale*, there already existed three French versions of the Griselda story, two independent prose translations of Petarch, the anonymous *Livre Griseldis* and another one by Phillippe de Mézières (c.1327-1405), and one verse drama based on Philippe de Mézières's translation. While *Le Livre Griseldis* is extant in about twenty MSS, Philippe de Mézières's version, which is included in his *Livre de la vertu du sacrement de mariage*, seems to have proved more popular both in terms of the number of extant MSS and the existence

of subsequent versions based on it. As a translation, whereas *Le Livre Griseldis* is a concise and faithful rendering of the original Latin, Philippe de Mézières's version includes some authorial additions affecting the tenor of the story.

The tale itself is preceded by a prologue which, conscious of the exemplary reading by Petrarch, urges the reader to follow this 'example de constance et d'obedience' both in secular marriage and in facing 'son espous immortel'.[17] Referring to nine female worthies, 'IX. dames qui par aucuns sont appellees preux', Philippe says that the 'proesse' of Griselda is more praiseworthy because she has conquered her self, 'vainqui soy meismes et demoura victorieuse' (p.357). The nature of Griselda's virtue is ultimately spiritual, since in the effort to follow Griselda's footsteps (although Philippe acknowledges, as does Petrarch, the difficulty of doing so for ladies nowadays), wives should 'plaire premierement a leur Espous immortel et apres a leur mari mortel' (p.357).

Philippe speaks more specifically about Griselda's virtues in the tale itself. Petrarch described Griselda as 'prudens' twice, referring first to her managerial ability during Walter's absence and then to her impeccable manner and preparations at Walter's second wedding. Both *Le Livre Griseldis* and Philippe de Mézières render the first instance as 'saige', but *Le Livre Griseldis* rephrases the latter. Philippe, on the other hand, retains 'prudence' and enhances it by adding another instance in which, despite Griselda's poor habit, 'si sambloit il bien a tous ceulx qui le veoyent par ses euvres qu'elle fust une femme de grant honnour et de merveilleuse prudence' (p.374). Similarly, succinct passages in Petrarch are sometimes replaced by longer ones including more detailed references to Griselda's virtues. In the final speech of Walter which reveals his true motive, Petrarch's single 'fides' is expanded into a list

of virtues :

> "Satis", inquit "mea Griselda, cogita et spetata michi fides est tua, nec sub celo aliquem esse puto qui tanta coniugalis amoris experimenta perceperit." (pp.59-61)

> "Griseldis, Griseldis," [dit le marquis], "il souffist assés. Ta vraye foy et ta loyaulté, l'amour de toy envers moy et ta constance, l'obedience et vraye humilité de toy bien esprouvees me sont trop bien congneues ; et croy qu'il n'a homme soubz le ciel qui par tant de experimens l'amour de mariage ait esprouvé et congneu comme j'ay fair en toy." (p.376)

The latter part of the sentence, in which Petrarch's Walter simply indicates the immensity of trial, also becomes words of praise for Griselda.

At another climactic scene of Griselda returning to her father, the pathos is heightened by the presence of the courtiers who accompany her in tears, as well as by repeated stress on Griselda's singular virtues :

> et de ce contente, nus piés et le chief descouvert, du palays se parti, acompaignie des barons, chevaliers et dames, qui tous l'acompaignoyent plourans, regretans ses grens vertus, loyaulté, et merveilleuse bonté, fortune maudissant. Chascun plouroit de pitié, mais elle une seule larme ne jeta, mais honnestement et vergongeusement, a grant silence, le chief enclin ainsi acompaigne vint a la maison de son povre pere Janicola,... (p. 372)

The narrator even adds a new detail which highlights Griselda's humility and political prudence; as she takes leave of the courtiers who accompanied her, she thanks them and asks them to obey and help their lord. Philippe de Mézières also inserts, as does Chaucer, narrative comments on Walter's trials, not so much to condemn Walter as to praise Griselda's constancy, addressing courtly audiences directly. Rather than being identified with a single virtue as in Boccaccio and Petrarch, Griselda becomes now a paragon of virtues: constancy, humility, patience, and prudence; a veritable mirror for married ladies.[18]

Philippe's version is the source of Christine de Pizan's short account of Griselda in the *Livre de la Cité des Dames* (1405) which was translated into English by Bryan Anslay as *The Book of the Cyte of Ladyes* (1521). The work is a collection of exemplary lives of the ladies of renown, pagan and ancient as well as Christian and modern, in which the story of Griselda appears in the section on the 'refutation of women's inconstancy'. Christine refutes the male attack on female inconstancy and fragility, arguing that numerous examples of male inconstancy in history give no legitimate ground for this one-sided criticism, instead of merely objecting to the claim. Her gender awareness calls into question the established literary tradition for misoginistic criticism, even though the extent and nature of Christine's feminist commitment are controversial issues.[19]

Predictably, her judgement on Walter is harsh. Despite the shortness of the text, Christine gives a rather detailed description of Griselda returning to her father, as Philippe de Mézières did, supplementing it with additional details such as the people cursing Walter instead of fortune. Christine also omits the people's praise of

Walter's prudence. She argues elsewhere that inconstancy is nothing but acting against commands of reason.[20] Since prudence as a cardinal virtue is primarily the ability to choose according to reason,[21] Walter's caprice makes him an example of inconstancy and imprudence which is opposed directly to Griselda.

In view of the context of the *Cité*, it comes as no surprise to find here all the virtues mentioned by Philippe de Mézières, but Christine makes one important addition. In the speech of Walter at the scene of reconciliation, Christine has translated Philippe de Mézières's list of Griselda's virtues - 'bonne chiere et grant constance' - as 'grete stablenesse, strenghte, and constaunce'.[22] In the *Cité*, the story of Griselda is introduced as one of the exmeplary tales about 'several very strong women', followed immediately by the story of Florence of Rome.[23] Griselda therefore becomes an example of fortitude as well as of constancy. As Quilligan argues, she is not an exception found only among ancient heroines and martyred saints, but a 'modern' example of the virtues which are necessary for every woman.[24]

The popularity of Philippe de Mézières's version can be attested by the fact that it also served as a source for *L'Estoire de Griseldis* - a verse drama dated 1395, consisting of 2608 lines of rhymed couplet. Although extant in only one MS which is carefully illustrated, it must have been fairly well known since it also survives as an imperfect printed edition of 1550 and became a source for John Phillip's *Play of Patient Grissell*.[25]

Being a drama, it introduces a number of new characters, whose presence was only referred to or not mentioned at all in Philippe de Mézières's version, such as the Count and Countess of Panago, lords and ladies of the court, a nurse, and shepherds. The play also has some pastoral element, as shepherds play the role of the observers who

comment sympathetically on the fortune of Griselda, their fellow shepherdess. The lines allotted to such relatively minor characters are mostly based upon narrative links in Philippe de Mézières's prose and are inserted mainly to comment directly upon Griselda's virtues. Poor maidens and shepherds lavish praise upon Griselda's humility and dignity in her marriage. Griselda herself first appears on stage as a good daughter who is obedient and caring to her father. Her love for her children, which Philippe de Mézières simply renders 'le grant amour qu'elle avoit a ses enfans quant ell les nourissoit' (p.369) following Petrarch closely, is evoked in independent scenes in which Griselda shows much maternal love. Her prudence is recognised by all at an early stage. Walter's sergeant says 'Dame, qui entre tous les saige / Estes poour saige reputee' (1711-12).[26] while Walter himself comments that 'De sa prudence me merveille, / Maiz sa constance esprouveray' (1329-34).

Griselda's constancy, however, is not merely passive patience, as is implied in Walter's speech before the second test:

> ... maiz un poy
> Vueil encor la mere esprouver,
> Savoir se je y pourray trouver
> Constance selon sa promesse.
> Encor vueil savoir sa prouesce. (1597-1601)

Constancy involves a measure of 'prouesce' which implies perseverance and fortitude, as in Christine de Pizan. Griselda is praised for a number of virtues just as in Philippe de Mézières or Christine de Pizan; *L'Estoire de Griseldis*, however, presents them more specifically in the context of the life of a medieval woman - daughter, wife, and mother.

Dramatisation highlights Griselda as an obedient daughter and a caring mother, while her patience and constancy as wife are also duly stressed. As a 'miroir des dames mariees' (10), *L'Estoire* positions Griselda's patience, obedience, constancy and prudence in a domestic setting, as the virtues recommended for a wife and a daughter. This domestic aspect in fact receives prominent attention as the story grows even more popular in the fifteenth century.

3

The popularity of the Griselda story at the turn of the fifteenth century can be seen most readily in a version included in *Le Ménagier de Paris* (c.1393), compiled by an elderly man as a book of instruction for his very young wife. The compiler explains that he included this tale of rather excessive cruelty because he simply wanted his wife to know of this now widely popular tale and reassures her rather patronisingly that he has no intention of putting her to similar tests. The text is based on Philippe de Mézières's version, without Philippe's prologue. The tale, appearing in the section that says 'vous soez humble et obéissant à celluy qui sera vostre mary',[27] makes a few significant alteration to its source although the *Ménagier* text otherwise follows Philippe's version closely throughout.[28] When Griselda thanks the courtiers who accompanied her to her father's house, she defends her husband in the speech much longer than that of Philippe de Mézières who first invented the scene:

> ... et leur dist et monstra par belles et doulces paroles que pour Dieu elles ne voulsissent ne dire, ne penser, ne croire que son seigneur le marquis eust aucunement tort vers elle, qu'il n'estoit mie ainsi, mais avoit bonne cause de faire tout ce qu'il luy plaisoit

d'elle qui bien estoit tenue de le souffrir er endurer. Et aussi véoient-elles bien que à elle n'en desplaisoit point, en elles admonestant que, pour l'amour de Dieu, elles voulsissent amer léalment leurs maris et très cordieusement et de toute leur puissance les servir et honnourer, et que plus grant bien et greigneur renommée ne meilleure louenge ne povoient-elles en la parfin acquérir, et leur dist adieu. (I, 118-99)

Feudal loyality is transformed into a lesson in domestic obedience, complying with the context of *Le Ménagier de Paris*. A similar shift of emphasis is also seen in Griselda's care for the dejected father ; the passage in Philippe de Mézières which simply says 'comment elle le confortoit' (p.373), is expanded as follows :

mais c'estoit un merveilleux bien de veoir comment bénignement, humblement et sagement, elle le servoit, et quant elle le véoit pensif, comment sagement elle le reconfortoit, et après le mettoit en parole d'autre matière. (119)

Just as in *L'Estoire de Griseldis*, this version clearly delineates wifely obedience and respect and care for parents. The tale itself is followed by the compiler's commentary which partly reproduces Petrarch's comment on the allegorical meaning of the tale ; the final moral of the tale, however, is on wifely obedience :

Ainsi, chère seur, comment j'ay dit devant que vous devez estre obéissant à cellui qui sera vostre mary, et que par bonne obéissance une preudefemme acquiert l'amour de son mary, et en la afin a de lui ce qu'elle désire : (I, 126)

This domestication of Griselda's virtues, from constancy and fortitude to wifely obedience and patience, is a tendency found in some fifteenth-century versions of the Griselda story which often appear, as in *Le Ménagier de Paris*, among manuscripts intended for instruction of women. Both Philippe de Mézières's version and *Le Livre Griseldis* are found immediately following *Le Livre du chevalier de la Tour Landry pour l'enseignement du filles* in several fifteenth-century MSS, where it was read in conjunction with this late fourteenth-century book of instruction for women.[29] Also Seth Lerer shows that the *Clerk's Tale* appears independently in Huntington Library MS HM 140, together with moral tales of Lydgate and a Middle English *Life of Job*. In the context of this didactic MS which 'narrates stories of the patience necessary to the childhood apprentice', the tale of Griselda primarily teaches self-control, patience in adversity, and the need to put a good face on worldly misfortune.[30]

The combination of wifely obedience and obedience to parents found in *Le Ménagier de Paris* also characterises John Phillip's *Play of Patient Grissell* which used *L'Estoire de Griseldis* as one of its sources. This is a hybrid play in which Walter is tempted by Politic Persuasion (Vice) to testing his wife's virtue. The full title of the play as it appears on the title-page, 'the Commodye of pacient and meeke Grissill, whearin is declared, the good example, of her pacience towardes her husband: and lykewise, the due obedience of Children, toward their Parentes, newly'[31] indicates clearly the twin themes of wifely and childhood obedience. The play begins with 'the Song of Patient Grissell' in which she declares her obedience to God and parents. Similar references often appear in Griselda's speech (227-33, 557-64), once taking the form of direct advice to children:

God graunt I may do as my mother mee willed,
Then God will prosper mee in tyme of neede,
Let all Children bee mindefull of obedience in deede:
Flye selfwill, which doth stoubbernes ingender,
To honor your Parents do dayly remember:
Be they neuer so poore or indigent,
If God haue blessed thee with store and increase,
Remember the paps of thy mother gaue thee nourishment,
To feede and cloth thee, their care did neuer cease,
Relieue and comfort theim, so end thy dayes in peace,
If not looke for Gods scourge and curssed maledictyon:
(596-606)

It is a characteristic of this play that references to Griselda's virtues appear within her own speech instead of being spoken by courtiers and other minor characters as in *L'Estoire de Griseldis*. She refers to the necessity of patience whenever she encounters hardship (1107, 1207-208, 1562-63, 1845-46, 1935-36). Patience and constancy are as it were household virtues for Griselda; they also appear as personifications and are introduced by Griselda to Janicula as medicine to expel woe and dispair (1808-11). On the other hand, in the final scene of reconciliation, Walter's praise of Griselda only refers to her faithful love (1941). Throughout the play, while Griselda remains apparently unshaken, fully in command of the virtues of patience and obedience, Walter is little more than a puppet tempted by Vice, who is clearly incapable of summarising his wife's virtues and praising her in his own words, as he did in all the versions of the story we have seen so far. Griselda's patience is praised instead by her daughter who promises in turn to

reward her with 'childlie obedience' (1962).

The play therefore leaves no doubt as to what virtues this comedy is meant to promote. In this sixteenth-century example of the Griselda story which ultimately goes back to Boccaccio and Petrarch, we can see that Griselda's virtues have shrunk to domesticated virtues of wifely patience and obedience. Furthermore, Phillip's play seems to end by assuring the continuing reciprocity of these virtues as Griselda's daughter promises to emulate her mother in her virtue, becoming a second Griselda in her turn. Even considering that this is a play, Griselda is almost verbose, voicing her woes and determination where fourteenth-century Griseldas, by Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Chaucer, always kept a telling silence when in deepest woe. Ironically even as Griselda apparently became a most 'perfected' figure, her virtues became a practical, limited kind of domestic patience and obedience. The play leaves little room for them to be elevated to more abstract virtues with a spiritual dimension, applicable to both sexes. A shift from the exemplary to the pragmatic in Griselda's virtues, which we have observed in the late medieval versions of the Griselda story, seems to have reached a dead end with John Phillip's *Play of Patient Grissell*, as it ends with the ominous foreboding of the recycling of domestic obedience and patience among the generations of modern women. Historically the shift is related to the growing popularity of the story among wider more middle-class readers as it became a typical exemplary tale in the books of instruction and courtesy books. The changing virtues of Griselda are closely associated with this change in the intended function of the tale, as well as with the author's stance to the readers he envisages.

NOTES

*I owe special thanks to Mr William Snell of Keio University for proofreading.

(1) For a review of recent criticism, see Charlotte C. Morse, 'Critical Approaches to the *Clerk's Tale*', in *Chaucer's Religious Tales,* ed. by C. David Benson and Elizabeth Robertson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990), pp.71-83.

(2) Anne Middleton, 'The Clerk and His Tale : Some Literary Contexts', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 2(1980), 121-50 (p. 121).

(3) See Raffaele Morabito, 'La Diffusione della storia di Griselda dal XIV a XX secolo', *Studi sul Boccaccio* 17(1988), 237-85 for bibliography.

(4) The most important study of the sources of the *Clerk's Tale* remains J. Burke Severs, *The Literary Relationships of Chaucer's Clerkes Tale* (Hamden CT : Archon Books, 1972). French translations of Petrarch's version are printed and discussed in Elie Golenistcheff-Koutouzoff, *L'Histoire de Griseldis en France au XIVe au XVe siècle* (Paris : Droz, 1933). Also cf. Robin Kirkpatrick, 'The Griselda Story in Boccaccio, Petrarch and Chaucer', in *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento*, ed. by Piero Boitani (Cambridge : Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983), pp.231-48.

(5) Karl Reichl, 'Griselda and the Patient Wife : the Popular Tradition in Middle English Narrative', in *La Storia di Griselda in Europa*, Griselda 2 (L'Aquila : Japadre Editore, 1990), pp.119-36.

(6) *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q.57, a.4 ; *Summa theologiae*, ed. by Pietro Caramello, 3 vols (Turin: Marietti, 1952-56). Cf. Odon Lottin, 'La Connexion des vertus morales acquises chez Saint Thomas d'Aquin et ses contemporains', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovcenienses*, 14 (1937), 585-99 (pp.593-94).

(7) *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q.57, a.4 ; II-II, q.55, a.1-2.

(8) *Griselda*. ed. by Luca Carlo Rossi (Palermo: Sellerio editore, 1991), p.46. All quotations from and references to the versions of the Griselda story by Boccaccio and Petrarch are from this edition.

(9) Macrobius, *In Somnium Scipionis*, I. 8 ; Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* trans. by W.H. Stahl (New York : Columbia Univ. Press, 1952 ; repr. 1990), p.122.

(10) All the quotations from and the references to Chaucer are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson and others, 3rd edn

(Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

(11) Charlotte C. Morse, 'The Exemplary Griselda', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 7(1985), 51-86 (p.83).

(12) John Burrow, '"Young Saint, Old Devil": Reflections on a Medieval Proverb', in *Essays on Medieval Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), pp.177-91.

(13) The semantic range of Griselda's 'sadness' is discussed in J.D. Burnley, *Chaucer's Language and the Philosophers' Tradition* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1979), pp.86-89.

(14) Severs, pp.286-87.

(15) Jill Mann, 'Satisfaction and Payment in Middle English Literature', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 5(1983), 17-48 (pp.40-45).

(16) Cf. Robert W. Frank, 'Pathos in Chaucer's Religious Tales', in Benson and Robertson, *Chacuer's Religious Tales*, pp.39-52 (pp.48-50).

(17) Philippe de Mézières, *Le Livre de la vertu du sacrament de mariage*, ed. by Joan B. Williamson (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1993), pp.356-57. All references to and quotations from Philippe de Mézières are from this edition.

(18) Philippe's version is entitled 'le miroir des dames mariees, c'est assavoir de la merveilleuse pacience et bonté de Griseldis, marquise de Saluce' (p.359).

(19) Cf. Sheila Delany, '"Mothers to Think Back through": Who are They? the Ambiguous Example of Christine de Pizan', in *Medieval Texts and Contemporary Readers*, ed. by Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987), pp.177-97; Maureen Quilligan, *The Allegory of Female Authority: Christine de Pizan's Cité des Dames* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987), pp.7-10.

(20) Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Earl J. Richards (London: Pan Books, 1983), p.169.

(21) See Takami Matsuda, *Death and Purgatory in Middle English Didactic Poetry* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), pp.174-82 for the medieval concept of prudence.

(22) Diane Bornstein, 'An Analogue to Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale*', *Chaucer Review* 15(1981), 322-31 (p.329).

(23) *The Book of the City of Ladies*, p.170.

(24) Quilligan, p.167.

(25) Judith Bronfman, *Chaucer's Clerk's Tale : the Griselda Story, Received, Rewritten, Illustrated* (New York : Garland, 1994), p.53.

(26) All quotations are from *L'Estoire de Griseldis*, ed. by Barbara M. Crag (Lawrence, KS : Univ. of Kansas Press, 1954).

(27) *Le Ménagier de Paris : traité de morale et d'économie domestique composé vers* 1393 *par un bourgeois parisien*, ed. by J. Pichon (1847 ; Genève : Slatkine, 1982), I, 96.

(28) Differences between the *Ménagier* text and Philippe de Mézières are discussed in *Le Ménagier de Paris*, ed. By Georgine E. Brereton and Janet M. Ferrier (Oxford : Clarendon, 1981), pp.333-35.

(29) *Le Livre du chevalier de la Tour Landry pour l'enseignement du filles*, ed. by Anatole de Montaiglon (Paris: P. Jannet, 1854), pp.xl-xliij ; Golenistcheff-Koutouzoff, pp.35-37, 130-31.

(30) Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers : Imagining the Author in Late -Medieval England* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton UP, 1993), pp.100-16 (p.101).

(31) John Phillip, *The Play of Patient Grissell* (1565), introd. by W.W. Greg, The Malone Society Reprints (London: Malone Society, 1909).