**Checkpoint #2**

**Summary of Day 10, Story 10 in The Decameron by Boccaccio**

The story begins by introducing the Marquis of Saluzzo, by the name of Gualtieri, a man who now rules an estate but spends too much time hunting and not enough time focusing on the future of his estate which involves choosing a wife so that she can bear him children. When at last, after great pressure from his vassals, he declares he will choose a wife, his people express their happiness and are willing to accept whomever Gualtieri chooses. Upon this, the Marquis sets off to a local village where he intends on asking for the hand of a young and poor woman by the name of Griselda. Griselda is noted for her kindness, obedience, and hard work. However, Gualtieri is only willing to marry under one condition—that she always obey him and never question his demands, no matter how cruel or disagreeable. She agrees and they are married. Over time, despite his harsh commands, Gualteri asks that his two children be put to death, though he actually sends them to live with relatives in Bologna. And yet, never does Griselda though pained, express disagreement, and so she passes the test. Years later, as the ultimate test, the Marquis tells the court he is tired of his wife and wants to remarry. Upon the news, Griselda is sent back to her village in nothing but a shift and Gualtieri brings back his children, more importantly his daughter, and disguises her as his new wife. Griselda genuinely expresses her good wishes to the Marquis and his bride, once again passing the test. It is then when the truth unfolds, Griselda learns that Gualtieri never had their children killed but rather he sent them away to be raised elsewhere in order to prove that he chosen Griselda wisely. Because she passed his every test, despite his feigned cruelty, she once again becomes his wife and she is praised for her patience, agreeableness, obedience, and perseverance to please. They live a happy life from thereafter.

**Annotated Bibliography**

Leah Schwebel. “Redressing Griselda: Restoration through Translation in the Clerk's Tale.” *The Chaucer Review*, vol. 47, no. 3, 2013, pp. 274–299. *JSTOR*, JSTOR.

* In this article, Schewebel mainly concerns herself with the authorship of the original story of Griselda created by Boccaccio, and how both Petrarch and Chaucer chose to translate and borrow from it to create their own versions of the story. Schewebel argues that although Petrarch, as a friend of Boccaccio borrowed the story of Griselda in the claim that he only wanted to improve it for vernacular usage, Chaucer on the other hand failed to credit Boccaccio at all. The article aims to shed light on how this story is passed on through multiple authors and how this challenges the view of authorship in writing if Petrarch and Chaucer borrowed ideas from Boccaccio to claim as their own, but Chaucer had no intention of accrediting the original author, Boccaccio. This article written by Leah Schewebel, appears on the Chaucer Review, a journal that is published every quarter through Pennsylvania State University and edited through authors from Illinois State University is credible because the Chaucer Review is one of the leading journals of Chaucerian literature and literature of the Middle Ages. This source became of use of to me for background purposes in understanding how literature changes with translation and why it is important to learn a story’s origin in order to understand why it might have been altered and how to read it once it has been.

Bronfman, Judith. "GRISELDA (fl. 1350s)." *Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Katharina M. Wilson, and Nadia Margolis, ABC-CLIO, 1st edition, 2004. *Credo.*

* In this article, Bronfman discusses the history of the story of Griselda, known by her many names throughout history and from what I gathered, the story of Griselda was widely used to serve as a model for womanly patience and constancy. Despite the cruelty that surrounded the many tests of patience that Griselda faced, she was revered for her demonstrations of what was believed to be female virtue. She was often compared to a saint and placed in the likes of Virgin Mary and even Christ himself. Griselda also became a model for what men should look for in a wife and the story was passed on to men and women alike to illustrate the behavior of Griselda as the desired model of woman, even if perhaps this was not the goal intended by either Boccaccio or Petrarch. This source was helpful as it allowed me to draw the connections between Boccaccio’s Griselda and the how women of the time were perceived not just by men but also by other women, and how this story pushed the boundaries further towards the misconceptions that can be drawn from this story about how a virtuous woman should behave. As for the credibility of the source, I found it credible because the source is derived from Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia, which covers women anywhere from the third to fifteenth century containing 479 articles altogether and author Judith Bronfman has published a large variety of other pieces some of which are also featured within this encyclopedia, while others have found themselves published in outside journals.

Goodwin, Amy W. “The Griselda Game.” *The Chaucer Review*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2004, pp. 41–69. *JSTOR*.

* This source was greatly interesting because in it Goodwin discusses various contradictory perspectives from other scholars as to how to read and perceive Boccaccio and Petrarch’s versions of the story of Griselda. Mentions of an older article by Anne Middleton added an enlightening view of Boccaccio’s intent in writing Griselda. Middleton argues that Boccaccio’s Griselda story was meant to be a didactic tale versus Petrarch’s recreational, while author Charlotte Morse contradicts Middleton by claiming that Petrarch’s motives for editing and translating the tale only added to the story’s didactic and moral nature. Whichever perspective you agree with however doesn’t take away from the large amount of information that has been uncovered about the types of audience for these two tales. My greatest take from Goodwin as well as Middleton and Morse was that when focusing on Boccaccio’s version, the type of audience that most commonly heard this story is a huge giveaway towards its intended meaning. For example, if the story was told to those of higher class, it could be taken as nothing more than a story to entertain. Yet, if the story were to be told to people of lower status, it could be taken as a story for which one might wish to model after, seeing as Griselda was a poor woman who was able to gain status after enduring a cruelty that painted her as a virtuous figure, and thus desirable. I found this article very helpful to me and worth re-visiting in the future of this project. As for credibility, I would have to credit this as a largely credible source seeing as it was published in the Chaucer Review through Pennsylvania State University, and this review is largely well-known for its devotion to literature of the Middle Ages.

**Critical analysis/close reading**

1. “For quite some time Gualtieri had been impressed with the behavior of a poor girl who lived in a village not far from his home, and since she was also very beautiful, he thought that life with her ought to be rather agreeable. Thus, without searching any further, he resolved to marry her, and having summoned her father, who was very poor indeed, he made arrangements with him to take her as his wife (p. 332)”.

* When Gualtieri agrees to choose a wife, he first gives a speech regarding how he does not wish to have his marriage be arranged for him, for it is not possible for his vassals to know the character of a woman through lineage. Instead he chooses a poor village girl to wed, but the addition that because she is “very beautiful” and as such, “life with her ought to be agreeable”, arises questions about the morality of the Marquis, as well as the values of women at the time. It is rather profound that Gualtieri ignores lineage in this scenario, as this shows that he is somewhat ahead of times, yet it is quite foolish of him to make such an argument of having to choose a wife when he did not look any further than this one girl, implying that perhaps he had already made his choice long before setting out on his journey. That or, in order to make him seem more polished in the story, Boccaccio purposefully made it so that he feigned trouble in choosing a wife for a long time in order to get his vassals to agree to a marriage with a village girl.

2. “The young bride appeared to change her mind and her manners along with her clothes. As we have already said, she had a fine figure and lovely features, and in keeping with her beauty, she now became so charming, so pleasant, and so well-mannered that she did not seem like a shepherdess and the daughter of Giannucole, but like the child of some noble lord, leading everyone who had known her earlier to marvel at her transformation (p. 333-4).”

* This quotation made me think of the story of Cinderella both the modern and original Grimm tale, only because there are so many resemblances between her transformation and her marriage to a man of higher stature. I don’t know the dates per say but I do know that Boccaccio’s Decameron came first therefore the possibility exists that the Grimm brothers were influenced by either Boccaccio, Petrarch, or Chaucer to write some of their stories. Another thing that I noticed after looking at the quotation more closely is that later on in the story when Gualtieri sends off his son and daughter away to be raised elsewhere to fake their deaths, it made me think back to how Griselda’s quick-transformation to a noble lady could make more sense if she herself had been born noble and not know it. Is there a possibility that she herself had she been sent off perhaps by her father and raised elsewhere as a poor village girl? And could this then answer why Gualtieri sees something noble in her from the start, and why as soon as she is in the presence of nobility, her natural grace and nobility begins to unravel almost as if she had been noble born all along? It is an interesting idea and based on how the translations of this tale moved from a tale of morality to a tale meant to entertain as is revealed by Petrarch and Chaucer, the thought that the brothers Grimm began creating tales of morality and caution as well makes me think that this version of the story could’ve inspired their own.

3. “ What more is there left to say except that divine spirits may rain down from the heavens even into the houses of the poor, just as there are others in royal places who might be better suited to tending pigs than ruling men. Who aside from Griselda, would have suffered, not merely dry-eyed, but with a cheerful countenance, the cruel, unheard-of-trials to which Gualtieri subjected her? Perhaps it would have served him right if, instead, he had run into the kind of woman who, upon being thrown out of the house in her shift, would have found some guy to give her fur a good shaking and got a nice new dress in the bargain (p. 339).”

* This quotation makes the story seem like one that’s meant to be passed on as a story of morality. What I find interesting about it however is how as Boccaccio puts it, some men are born poor but deserve to be kings all the while other men have power when they deserve to tend to pigs. The lesson here seems to be that, if fortune is in one’s favor when a man or woman is in God’s good graces, that this man or woman should be rewarded. It all seems very ahead of its times. The portion however that mentions how only Griselda could have managed to withstand the types of tests and cruelty that she was exposed to as opposed to just saying any good woman makes Griselda appear as the exception and not the rule. In the last portion of this passage it mentions how should Gualtieri have gotten what he might’ve actually deserved, the type of woman he would have ended up with would have given him a run for his money, quite literally speaking, and she would have gotten “a nice new dress in the bargain.” It appears that this portion should apply to every other woman who is not Griselda, making Griselda seem almost saint-like.

Boccaccio, Giovanni, and Wayne A. Rebhorn. "Day 10, Story 10." *The Decameron*. N.p.: W.W. Norton, 2016. 331-39. Print.