

A Comparison of the Patient Wife in Boccaccio, Petrarch, Chaucer, and Lope

Carol Jamison and William O. Deaver¹

Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Chaucer all told versions of the Patient Wife narrative that could be read both literally and metaphorically. Literally, the narrative served as both a lesson in wifely obedience and as a commentary on the patriarchal social order of the Middle Ages. As an allegory, the tale had biblical implications about the necessity of obedience to one's heavenly ruler. The popularity of this tale lasted well beyond the Middle Ages, making its way into Renaissance dramatic comedies. Some of these Renaissance versions eliminate the metaphorical possibilities of the narrative and mitigate Griselda's situation by pairing the patient wife motif with a tamed shrew motif. However, in *El ejemplo de casadas* (*The Wives' Example*), Lope de Vega prevents a dramatic version of the tale that does not abandon the metaphorical possibilities of the medieval versions. This essay examines the political and religious implications of Lope's dramatic version of Patient Griselda. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2024 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

KEYWORDS: Patient Wife, Griselda, Lope de Vega, Chaucer.

Medieval secular saints' lives depicted laypeople who performed noble, often miraculous, deeds and lived devout lives. These narratives were quite popular in the Middle Ages, and the tale of Griselda, or the Patient

¹ **Carol Parrish Jamison**, Ph.D., specializes in linguistics and medieval literature at Georgia Southern University. Her book *The Chivalric Code of Westeros* was released in 2018 by McFarland Press. She has recently published articles on medieval chivalry, medieval sin literature, and medievalism. Her work has appeared in journals including *Studies in Philology*, *Studies in Medievalism*, *Journal of Historical Linguistics*, *ADF/ADE Bulletin*, and *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching*.

The late **William Deaver**, Ph.D., was a professor at Georgia Southern University for twenty-five years where he taught Spanish and Spanish American Literature / Culture. He was an esteemed scholar and a beloved professor and colleague. Dr. Deaver published prolifically in journals such as *Neophilologus*, *Theory in Action*, *Crítica hispánica* and *Romance Notes*. This article is his final piece of scholarship.