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ANÁLISIS DE LA HISTORIA DE GRISELDA DEL *DECAMERÓN* DESDE UNA
REESCRITURA PROTOFEMINISTA REALIZADA POR ELEANORA LOUISA
HERVEY

por

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RESUMEN

Esta investigación pretende ampliar los estudios del libro *The Feasts of Camelot: with the Tales that Were Told There* (1863) de la escritora victoriana Eleanora Louisa Hervey, quien ha sido históricamente relegada del canon literario. En este sentido, las escasas investigaciones sobre su obra, llevadas a cabo en su mayoría por la académica Renée Ward, han demostrado un interés por recuperar a esta autora y sus escritos; sin embargo, sigue existiendo un gran vacío respecto a esta materia. En la presente investigación se busca evaluar, a partir de la intertextualidad, si la obra mencionada se puede catalogar como una reescritura protofeminista bajo una perspectiva traductológica enfocada en la traducción feminista (Flotow, 1991, 1997, 2019; Castro, 2008). De este modo, se analizó la reescritura de la historia de Griselda que se encuentra en los capítulos VI y VII de *The Feasts of Camelot*, a partir de su comparación y contraste con tres textos: la versión de la historia de Griselda presentada primero, en el capítulo “Décima Narración” de la “Décima Jornada” del *Decamerón* de Boccaccio, y las reescrituras posteriores realizadas por Petrarca y Chaucer. Debido a la inclusión de cambios temáticos y de focalización en la narración de Hervey que se vinculan a estrategias de traducción feminista como el secuestro, la retraducción y la selección estratégica de textos, la investigación dio como resultado que la historia de Griselda presente en la obra de Hervey constituye una reescritura protofeminista.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to expand studies of the book *The Feasts of Camelot: with the Tales that Were Told There* (1863) by the Victorian writer Eleanora Louisa Hervey, who has been historically relegated from the literary canon. In this sense, the scarce research on her work, carried out mostly by the academic Renée Ward, has shown an interest in recovering this author and her writings. However, there is still a great gap in this area. The present research seeks to evaluate, based on intertextuality, whether the aforementioned text can be categorized as a protofeminist rewriting under the perspective of Translation Studies focused on feminist translation (Flotow, 1991, 1997, 2019; Castro, 2008). Thus, the rewriting of Griselda's story found in Chapters VI and VII of *The Feasts of Camelot* was analyzed based on its comparison and contrast with three texts: the version of Griselda's story first presented in the chapter “Décima Narración” in “Décima Jornada” of Boccaccio's *Decamerón*, and the later rewritings by Petrarch and Chaucer. Due to the inclusion of thematic and focal shifts in Hervey's narrative that are linked to feminist translation strategies such as hijacking, retranslation, and strategic text selection, the research resulted in the story of Griselda in Hervey's work constituting a protofeminist rewriting.

1. Introducción

1.2 Breve presentación del tema

La leyenda del rey Arturo y los caballeros de la Tabla Redonda posee una gran relevancia cultural y trascendencia histórica: abarca una parte importante de la literatura medieval, ha servido de inspiración para varios autores a lo largo del tiempo y hasta el día de hoy se siguen produciendo distintos materiales, tanto escritos como audiovisuales, que rescatan de alguna forma la leyenda (Coldham-Fussell et. al., 2022, p. 1). En la presente investigación, se analiza específicamente la obra *The Feasts of Camelot: with the Tales that Were Told There* escrita por Eleanora Louisa Hervey y publicada en 1863. Este texto es una reescritura, entendida de acuerdo con lo acuñado por Lefevere (1992), de una serie de cuentos sobre el rey Arturo y los caballeros de la Tabla Redonda, por lo que en el texto se modifica parte del canon de los mitos.

Las primeras versiones de las leyendas artúricas, que fueron escritas por hombres y han tenido una mayor difusión a lo largo del tiempo, en comparación con aquellas escritas por mujeres, presentan un patrón determinado por el realce de los personajes masculinos que luchan en distintas batallas o guerras (Coldham-Fussell et. al., 2022, p. 4), siendo la temática bélica un aspecto central de los diálogos intertextuales. Lo que distingue las obras escritas por mujeres es que tomaban la leyenda y la hacían relevante para una audiencia contemporánea (Wynne-Davies, 1996, p. 2), es decir, recuperaban las historias y las adaptaban según su contexto de producción y recepción. La académica Wynne-Davies ilustra esta dinámica de la siguiente manera: “when women have little authority in the present they may lay claim to the mythic potency of female power in an earlier age, thereby suggesting that this force may be reactivated in the future” (1996, pp. 2-3).

En particular, las obras de Hervey buscaban destacar las perspectivas y experiencias de las mujeres, al mismo tiempo que articulaban ideas progresivas sobre la maternidad y el matrimonio (Ward, 2022, p. 148). Sumado a esto, Hervey no solo toma el material artúrico para su reescritura, sino que, además, sigue otra práctica propia de las escritoras de la época: incorpora en su narrativa elementos y personajes

característicos de la literatura medieval de forma estratégica y original. Este es el caso de la historia de Griselda, que la autora toma del *Decamerón* e inserta en *The Feasts of Camelot: with the Tales that Were Told There*, con el fin de representar y expresar su ideología, así como también enfatizar las perspectivas de las mujeres (Ward, 2022). Por lo tanto, en la presente investigación, se propone clasificar la obra analizada como una reescritura protofeminista.

Por último, con el fin de fomentar la comprensión del análisis, se incluye el siguiente resumen de la historia de Griselda, que fue elaborado por Madeline Rüegg y extraído de “The Patient Griselda Myth and Marriage Anxieties on Early Modern English and Spanish Stages”:

The Patient Griselda myth tells the story of a marquis who is reluctant to get married, but, under pressure from his subjects, agrees to take a wife and chooses a poor young country girl for her virtues. Once married, he doubts his wife's perfection and therefore tests her for more than ten years by taking away her children, pretending to have them killed, and by repudiating her. Finally, the marquis asks her to prepare his second wedding with a young noble lady. This second wedding never occurs, since the marquis finally reveals that the bride and her brother are Griselda's children; what is actually celebrated is the family reunion and Griselda's patience. (Rüegg, 2018, p. 107).

1.3 Planteamiento del trabajo / problema de investigación

Pese a la relevancia y originalidad del trabajo de Hervey, existen escasas investigaciones y análisis sobre sus obras, siendo la académica Renée Ward quien ha dedicado algunos de sus trabajos al estudio de sus escritos, en uno específicamente realiza un análisis general de la obra *Feasts* en el que añade que si bien en Lupack & Lupack (1999) ya se había incluido a Hervey como una importante autora que ha sido ignorada y olvidada, aun así: “despite their early identification of the points of interest in this text, it has received no critical attention in the almost thirty years since” (Ward, 2022, p. 148). A partir de esto, es que este trabajo busca expandir los estudios de la obra *The Feasts of Camelot: with the Tales that Were Told There*, al querer evaluar si

esta puede catalogarse como una reescritura protofeminista bajo la perspectiva de los estudios de traducción con un enfoque en las reescrituras y la traducción feminista, como también en la intertextualidad, propia de los estudios literarios.

1.4 Objetivo general, objetivos específicos, pregunta de investigación o hipótesis

1.4.1 Objetivo general

Evaluar si los textos de llegada, correspondientes a los capítulos “Eliot the Harper’s Lay of Gwenelda of Wales” (VI) y “Sir Percival’s Tale of Bruno the Pitiless” (VII) del libro *The Feasts of Camelot: with the Tales that Were Told There* de Eleanora Louisa Hervey, pueden ser considerados como una reescritura protofeminista del capítulo “Décima Narración” de la “Décima Jornada” presente en el *Decamerón*.

1.4.2 Objetivos específicos

- a. Seleccionar fragmentos del texto de partida y de llegada que sirvan para caracterizar la representación del esposo, la representación de Griselda como persona autónoma y la representación de Griselda como madre.
- b. Analizar los cambios realizados por Hervey en cuanto a las representaciones de los personajes y cómo estos configuran la trama de la historia original.
- c. Vincular los cambios de la reescritura con estrategias de traducción feminista.

1.4.3 Pregunta de investigación

¿Se puede considerar que los capítulos VI y VII del libro de Hervey son una reescritura protofeminista del texto “Décima Narración” de la “Décima Jornada” del *Decamerón*, a partir de la forma en que la autora representa el personaje del esposo y a Griselda como persona autónoma y madre?

1.5 Justificación del interés y contribución o aporte del proyecto

En primer lugar, existe un interés en el estudio de esta obra en particular debido a que, si bien existen numerosas referencias a las leyendas artúricas en el período victoriano, el libro de Hervey es “one of the earliest works of original Arthurian fiction by a woman and still one of only a few unified collections of short Arthurian fiction” (Lupack & Lupack, 1999, p. 4). Asimismo, este trabajo presenta una contribución a los estudios de la obra de la autora Eleanora Louisa Hervey, que como se ya se explicó en secciones anteriores, presenta un gran vacío en lo que respecta a la investigación académica.

En segundo lugar, la realización de este proyecto de investigación enfocado en una reescritura protofeminista implica una contribución a los estudios de traducción, ya que, por un lado, existe una necesidad de profundizar y orientar estudios al análisis de reescrituras debido a la relevancia y complejidad que estas presentan (Lefevere, 1992). Por otro lado, debido a que la realización de más estudios enfocados en el ámbito de la traducción feminista contribuye a la reivindicación de autoras y sus obras que han quedado en el olvido, en gran parte, debido al canon literario que se encuentra fuertemente marcado por un sistema patriarcal que invisibiliza las perspectivas de las mujeres (Castro, 2008).

1.6 Perspectiva teórica

Este estudio tiene como tema principal la reescritura protofeminista, por lo tanto, para comprender y establecer este concepto, así como también el carácter intertextual que se presenta de forma clave en el proyecto, se hace referencia a diversos autores y sus perspectivas teóricas.

Respecto al concepto de reescritura se presenta, por una parte, a Eco (2008) que se refiere a las adaptaciones de los que denomina “pretextos” y, por otra, a Lefevere (1992) que desarrolla la “preescritura”. Si bien esta refleja la idea de Eco sobre los pretextos, se enfoca específicamente en la traductología para referirse a las reescrituras y el rol de los y las reescritoras.

A continuación, se presenta la teoría de la traducción feminista, haciendo referencia a las académicas e investigadoras Luise von Flotow (1997) y Olga Castro (2008), ya que sus escritos sirven como fundamento para establecer la vinculación intrínseca entre esta teoría y la reescritura mencionada anteriormente. Luego, se desarrollan las estrategias de traducción feminista de Flotow (1991; 2019), quien realiza un exhaustivo análisis de estas prácticas.

A partir del recorrido teórico mencionado, se desarrolla el concepto de reescritura protofeminista, pero para poder tener un mayor alcance en cuanto a lo que abarca este estudio, también se menciona a Genette (1989), con el fin último de comprender los diálogos intertextuales que componen la obra de Hervey y que dan paso a la noción de reescritura protofeminista.

1.7 Limitaciones del estudio

Este estudio se ve limitado por factores como la metodología empleada, ya que la selección de instancias a estudiar es subjetiva. También por el acceso al material, debido a restricciones del idioma, como, por ejemplo, en el caso del uso del *Decamerón* traducido al español y no en el italiano original para la comparación con el texto de llegada.

1.8 Destinatarios del proyecto

Los principales destinatarios de este proyecto son académicos y estudiantes de traducción y áreas afines como la literatura, debido a la interdisciplinariedad que presenta el estudio de la reescritura de una obra literaria, que estén interesados en la reescritura como una forma de traducción, la traducción feminista, y la literatura del período medieval.

1.9 Concordancia del proyecto final con los objetivos del Magíster

El presente trabajo presenta una concordancia con los objetivos principales del Magíster en Traducción Inglés-Español de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile al regirse por los conocimientos desarrollados en las asignaturas teóricas de Fundamentos de la Traducción y Traducción Literaria, al tratarse del análisis de una reescritura de una obra literaria que busca aportar en el desarrollo de la investigación de reescrituras feministas.

2. Marco Teórico

A partir de la pregunta de investigación que este proyecto busca responder, resulta importante primero establecer y definir a qué nos referimos con la idea de una “reescritura protofeminista”. Para esto, a continuación, se presentan definiciones de diversos conceptos teóricos que conforman el tema principal de esta investigación.

En primer lugar, para lograr entender el origen de la obra de Hervey, remitimos a la obra de Umberto Eco, *Decir casi lo mismo* (2008), y en particular al capítulo trece “Cuando cambia la materia”. Aquí Eco habla de las adaptaciones que llevan a la creación de una nueva obra, esto lo explica como la existencia de un texto de partida que sirve como estímulo a un traductor o escritor para crear una obra propia pero que, de cierta forma, implica una continuación de una fuente original. Lo que caracteriza esta creación, es que no puede ser considerada como una simple traducción. Eco menciona que las manipulaciones y adaptaciones que el escritor incorpora permiten apreciar la nueva obra de forma autónoma, incluso cuando la base de esta remita al texto original. Finalmente, el autor agrega que el escritor del nuevo texto puede no solo aludir a una única fuente, sino que también puede ser el caso de que añada más referencias en distintos niveles. De esta manera, el texto de partida consiste en un “pretexto” que se sirve para una creación original. Esto es precisamente lo que se plantea en esta investigación respecto a la obra *Feasts of Camelot*, ya que, si bien Hervey toma el texto inicial de Malory sobre la leyenda artúrica, el trabajo de esta va más allá de una traducción, ya que manipula la historia original, y además hace referencia a otras obras medievales, como *The Canterbury Tales*.

En segundo lugar, siguiendo la línea del “pretexto”, para referir a las reescrituras usamos el texto de André Lefevere, *Traducción, reescritura y la manipulación del canon literario* (1992) y, en específico, el primer capítulo denominado “Preescritura”. Aquí, Lefevere se dedica a explicar lo que son las “reescrituras” y el papel que cumplen los y las reescritoras que, como se mencionó anteriormente, son quienes toman un texto como fuente y lo manipulan con el fin de crear un texto nuevo. Es en este contexto que el autor menciona: “los reescritores crearon imágenes de un escritor, de una obra, de un periodo, a veces hasta de toda una

literatura” (p. 17), y que estas imágenes llegaron a tener tal impacto que en ocasiones llegaban a un mayor público que el original de manera que los lectores se hacían una idea del autor o de la obra fuente, a partir de lo que el reescritor exponía en su obra. Sumado a esto también destaca un factor de suma relevancia sobre el contexto de la creación y publicación de estas reescrituras: “(...) las reescrituras se producen al servicio, o bajo las limitaciones de determinadas corrientes ideológicas y/o poetológicas (...)” (pp. 17-18). Estas corrientes ideológicas y poetológicas tienen que ver con los motivos que llevan a la creación de estas obras y que están marcados por la ideología de los y las reescritoras o de las instituciones que controlan el grado de manipulación y adaptación que se realizará al texto de partida (pp. 20-21).

Tercero, en relación con estas motivaciones ideológicas que marcan el tono de las reescrituras, es que pasamos a hablar de la traducción feminista con el texto de Olga Castro, “Género y traducción: elementos discursivos para una reescritura feminista” (2008), que como ya nos adelanta el título, viene a presentar una unificación entre reescritura y la traducción feminista. Es así como Castro, a lo largo de este artículo, se da la tarea de mostrar la conexión inherente que surge entre la traducción y el feminismo. Por un lado, mencionando cómo la traducción ayudó a enriquecer el discurso feminista gracias a la publicación de obras traducidas que contribuyeron a difundir las diversas ideologías feministas (p. 286). Por otro lado, la autora muestra la reciprocidad de esta relación al hablar sobre cómo los feminismos enriquecieron los estudios de traducción al ayudar a consolidar la idea de la traducción como reescritura: “Esta noción defiende el afán de recreación y no de mera reproducción de la traducción, y en este sentido, otorga identidad propia y autonomía al texto traducido respecto del original, a la vez que aboga por la aspiración de visibilidad del traductor/a en su tarea profesional (...)” (p. 286). A través de esta idea, se hace notorio a partir de este recorrido conceptual cómo la traductología contempla una estrecha relación con los estudios de género y viceversa, de manera que queda en evidencia la interdisciplinaridad de los estudios de traducción que, como hemos podido ver, también se entrelazan con los estudios literarios, entre otros.

Ahora bien, aquí Castro habla de “reescrituras feministas”, por lo que resulta necesario establecer por qué en este trabajo se utiliza en su lugar el término

“protofeminista”. En pocas palabras, como es descrito en el libro *The Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain* de Ben Griffin (2012), esto se debe a que “the words ‘feminist’ and ‘feminism’ did not come into common usage until the early twentieth century but accurately convey the passionate concern that these early campaigners had with a range of issues that had in common women’s enforced subordination.” (p. 6). Es así que cuando se habla de feminismo en siglos anteriores, se opta por incluir el sufijo “proto”, o de la misma forma, también se utiliza el concepto de “feminismo premoderno”, para evitar caer en anacronismos,

Sumado a las ideas de Castro, también resulta importante incluir el texto de Luise von Flotow, *Translation and gender: Translating in the “era of feminism”* (1997), donde en el capítulo titulado “Gender and the Practice of Translation” además de mencionar la fase experimental de las escrituras y traducciones feministas, la autora también describe el carácter intervencionista de las traducciones que se distinguen por buscar ‘corregir’ los textos que se alejan de la perspectiva feminista y querer demostrar el poder de las traductoras para tomar decisiones (pp. 24-25). Asimismo, destaca el rol que cumple la traducción feminista al enfocarse en la recuperación de autoras y sus obras que fueron relegadas por el canon literario, de manera que menciona que la traducción ha sido clave en el proceso de redescubrimiento de estas obras y autoras (p. 30).

En cuarto lugar, para lograr comprender mejor cómo operan las traducciones y reescrituras feministas, nos vemos en la obligación nuevamente de citar a Flotow para hablar de las estrategias de traducción feminista. En primera instancia, en el texto *Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories* (1991), la autora destaca tres estrategias principales de traducción: la suplementación, la incorporación de prefacios y pies de página, y el secuestro (pp. 74-80). Estas estrategias se rigen por el carácter intervencionista de la traducción feminista y abogan por una visibilidad de la traductora, y una apropiación de la obra con fines ideológicos. El segundo texto de Flotow que queremos comentar es el capítulo “Translation” incluido en *The Bloomsbury handbook of 21st-century feminist theory* (2019), en el que la autora realiza un despliegue más extensivo de las estrategias de traducción feminista y las divide en dos grandes categorías. Por un lado, se encuentran las denominadas *Macro-*

Strategies que incluyen: las notas del traductor, prefacios y explicaciones; la no traducción y la selección estratégica de un texto; publicaciones, reseñas y críticas de carácter feminista; la retraducción; y, por último, la traducción gratuita (pp. 232-234). Por otro lado, Flotow denomina *Micro-Strategies* a las siguientes prácticas: los ajustes de estilo y gramática, y la traducción creativa/neologista (pp. 235-236).

En quinto y último lugar, para esta investigación resulta pertinente detenerse en el texto *Palimpsestos* de Gérard Genette (1989) para hablar de intertextualidad, un concepto propio de los estudios literarios, para poder ayudar a comprender mejor las referencias utilizadas por Hervey en su obra. En este libro, Genette usa el término *transtextualidad* que define como: “todo lo que pone al texto en relación, manifiesta o secreta, con otros textos” (pp. 9-10), y a partir de este concepto es que presenta cinco tipos de relaciones textuales que denomina: intertextualidad, paratexto, metatextualidad, architextualidad e hipertextualidad. La *intertextualidad* la define como: “una relación de copresencia entre dos o más textos, es decir, eidéticamente y frecuentemente, como la presencia efectiva de un texto en otro” (p. 10). A esta definición agrega que puede presentarse de tres formas diferentes: a modo de cita, plagio, y alusión. En cuanto al *paratexto*, se refiere a este como distintos tipos de señales accesorias que acompañan al texto, entre las que menciona se incluyen: el título, subtítulo, prefacios, notas al margen, ilustraciones, etc. (p. 11). La *metatextualidad* la explica como: “la relación —generalmente denominada «comentario»— que une un texto a otro texto que habla de él sin citarlo (convocarlo), e incluso, en el límite, sin nombrarlo. (...) La metatextualidad es por excelencia la relación crítica” (p. 13). En relación con la *architextualidad*, esta tiene que ver con la cualidad genérica de un texto y el autor la explica de la siguiente manera: “Se trata de una relación completamente muda que, como máximo, articula una mención paratextual (títulos, como en *Poesías*, *Ensayos*, *Le Roman de la Rose*, etc., o, más generalmente, subtítulos: la indicación *Novela*, *Relato*, *Poemas*, etc., que acompaña al título en la cubierta del libro), de pura pertenencia taxonómica” (p. 13). En último lugar, la *hipertextualidad* la presenta como: “toda relación que une un texto B (que llamaré *hipertexto*) a un texto anterior A (al que llamaré *hipotexto*) en el que se injerta de una manera que no es la del comentario” (p. 14). También, Genette añade que la

relación hipertextual puede ser del tipo donde el texto B no hable en ningún momento del texto A, pero que no podría existir sin A, debido a una operación que denomina *transformación*, de manera que el hipertexto evoca al hipotexto, pero de forma menos explícita (p. 14).

Un texto puede presentar una o más de estas relaciones textuales, en este caso se considera que el libro *Feasts of Camelot*, en general presenta una relación hipertextual con el libro *Le Morte d'Arthur* de 1485 escrito por Sir Thomas Malory, debido a que esta fue la obra más influyente en el periodo victoriano en la que se presenta la historia del rey Arturo y los caballeros de la Tabla Redonda (Ward, 2022). Siendo así que *Feasts* sería el hipertexto de esta obra. De una forma similar, los capítulos VI y VII de *Feasts* que presentan la historia de Griselda, corresponden al hipertexto del capítulo “Décima Narración” de la “Décima Jornada” del *Decamerón* de Boccaccio. Esta relación textual, consiste en una práctica hipertextual llamada *transposición* que es la más importante de todas y que consta de: “(...)obras cuya amplitud textual y ambición estética y/o ideológica llegan a enmascarar o a hacer olvidar su carácter hipertextual (...)” (p. 262), además, consiste como se mencionó antes, en una transformación seria del hipotexto y que, según Genette, surge a partir de distintos procedimientos transposicionales empleados por el o la escritora, que pueden ser: transformación temática (inversión ideológica), transfocalización (cambio del personaje focal) (p.367), transvocalización (paso de la primera a la tercera persona) y translación espacial (paso del Atlántico al Pacífico) (p. 263). Asimismo, y ya para finalizar este apartado, el autor también elabora en las prácticas transposicionales que se evidencian en la transformación de un hipotexto:

(...) las transposiciones en principio (y en su intención) puramente *formales*, y que sólo afectan al sentido accidentalmente o por una consecuencia perversa y no buscada, como la traducción (que es una transposición lingüística), y las transformaciones abiertas y deliberadamente *temáticas*, en las que la transformación del sentido forma parte explícitamente, y oficialmente, del propósito (...) (p. 263).

Siendo así, que la obra completa de Hervey, y en particular los capítulos VI y VII, quedan en la segunda categoría de transformaciones temáticas al configurar el sentido y propósito de las historias de sus respectivos hipotextos.

Finalmente, a partir de este recorrido conceptual y teórico es que se llega a comprender y establecer el concepto de “reescritura protofeminista”, así como también el carácter intertextual que se presenta de forma clave en este proyecto y que se analiza desde un enfoque traductológico.

3. Metodología

En esta sección se presenta en detalle la metodología empleada a lo largo de esta investigación que tiene como objetivo evaluar si el texto a analizar puede ser considerado como una reescritura protofeminista.

3.1. Delimitación y descripción del corpus de análisis y del corpus de referencia

3.1.1 Corpus de análisis

El corpus de análisis se divide en dos fuentes principales, el texto de partida y el texto llegada. Para comenzar se describe el texto de llegada dado que este es el material principal de la investigación. Esta obra se titula *The Feasts of Camelot: With the Tales that Were Told There*, de la escritora inglesa Eleanora Louisa Hervey publicada originalmente en 1863 por la editorial Bell and Daldy en inglés. En este trabajo se utiliza la edición publicada por R. Washbourne en 1877¹, y que consiste en el texto íntegro y sin ediciones de contenido. La única diferencia radica en que en la primera publicación el nombre de la autora aparecía como Mrs. T. K. Hervey, de modo que solo se destacaba el nombre del marido de la autora. Ya en la segunda publicación de la obra, el nombre de la autora aparece como Eleanora Louisa Hervey, manteniendo su apellido de casada, pero ahora incluyendo su propio nombre, existiendo así un mayor reconocimiento a su persona. Sumado a esto, bajo su nombre se añaden títulos

¹ Se accedió a esta edición gracias a la digitalización realizada por Google Books ([The Feasts of Camelot](#)).

de sus publicaciones previas, dando también un mayor reconocimiento a su trabajo como escritora.

En cuanto a la estructura y contenido de la obra, la historia se sitúa en Camelot, en la corte del rey Arturo durante el banquete de celebración de Pentecostés y posteriormente el banquete de Navidad. El libro está dividido en dos partes, La primera, *Whitsuntide* (Pentecostés), con la que comienza la narración y que consta de diez capítulos en los cuales cada uno corresponde a un cuento que es narrado por alguno de los personajes presentes en el banquete. Al final de la primera parte, el rey da por finalizada la celebración de *Whitsuntide* y se dice que volverán a reunirse para el banquete de navidad, y así es cómo comienza la segunda parte del libro, titulada *Christmas* (Navidad). Esta segunda parte consta de doce capítulos y repite la misma dinámica de narración enmarcada, presentando así un primer capítulo introductorio y once capítulos con distintos relatos contados por los invitados. En específico para este trabajo, solo se utilizan los capítulos VI “Eliot the Harper’s Lay of Gwenelda of Wales” y VII “Sir Percival’s Tale of Bruno the Pitiless” de la primera parte del libro (ver Anexo A). Esta selección se debe a que estos capítulos consisten en dos cuentos en los que la autora realiza una reescritura de la historia de Griselda de Boccaccio, la cual comienza en el capítulo VI de *Feasts of Camelot* y que luego es retomada por otro personaje en el capítulo VII. Esta historia resulta particularmente relevante al ser reconocida por haber sido utilizada para presentar un modelo de comportamiento para las mujeres en donde la mujer posee un rol inferior frente a su marido (Rüegg, 2018, p. 109-110).

Respecto al texto de partida que se comparará con la obra principal, este corresponde al *Decamerón* de Giovanni Boccaccio. Escrito de 1351 a 1353 en el dialecto italiano de Florencia. De acuerdo con las limitaciones mencionadas en la introducción, al no conocer el idioma original del libro, en este trabajo se utilizará la edición publicada por Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial de España en 2017, traducida al español por Juan G. de Luances en base al texto de Sansoni Editore de 1970². Sin embargo, esto no debiera afectar el análisis de la historia, ya que en el

² Edición adquirida en formato digital a través de la página web de [Penguin Random House](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/).

paratexto que incluye un comentario del traductor, no se menciona ningún cambio en cuanto al contenido presentado en italiano que pueda afectar la investigación. Del mismo modo, como se verá en la sección del análisis, se hará un énfasis en aspectos de la reescritura a nivel macro (de la narración), y no a nivel micro (enfocado en aspectos lingüísticos puntuales).

La narración abre con un proemio de Boccaccio en el que explica sus motivaciones y de qué tratará el libro. Seguido de esto, es que se presentan cien relatos divididos en diez jornadas, con diez relatos cada una. Estos relatos son narrados por siete mujeres y tres hombres, quienes, situados en Florencia en el año 1348, huían de la peste, y que en las diez jornadas del libro se dedican a contar historias para entretenerse. Llegado el final de la última jornada, el libro cierra con una conclusión del autor. Para el análisis solo nos centraremos en la “Décima Narración” de la “Décima jornada” (ver Anexo B), al ser la principal fuente de la historia de Griselda en la literatura (Cate, 1932).

3.1.2 Corpus de referencia

Para el análisis de la reescritura de Hervey, se planea utilizar como material de referencia dos textos que, al igual que los capítulos VI y VII de la obra *Feasts of Camelot*, se caracterizan por ser reescrituras de la historia de Griselda. Estos se presentan en la investigación con el objetivo de encontrar diferencias entre estas reescrituras previas a la aquí presentada como objeto de estudio, y así poder distinguir las particularidades e innovaciones de la autora. Sumado a esto, es necesario precisar que al igual que en el caso del *Decamerón*, para los textos de referencia también se usarán traducciones debido al desconocimiento de los idiomas en que se publican originalmente, pero por los mismos motivos mencionados anteriormente, esto no debiera significar un detrimento para la investigación.

Por un lado, se utilizará el libro *Letters of Old Age: Rerum Senilium Libri I-XVIII*, de Francesco Petrarca, publicada en 1992 por la editorial The Johns Hopkins University Press³. Este texto fue traducido del latín al inglés por Aldo S. Bernardo,

³ El libro se obtuvo a través de [Internet Archive](#), que realizó la digitalización.

Saul Levin, y Reta A. Bernardo, y consiste en una colección de cartas de Petrarca escritas entre 1361 y 1373. Para el trabajo, como texto de referencia utilizaremos solo la tercera carta del libro XVIII, presente en el segundo volumen y titulada *Sen. XVII, 3. To the same person, a wife's remarkable obedience and faithfulness* (ver Anexo C). Esta carta la dirigió a su amigo Boccaccio y en ella Petrarca realiza una traducción del italiano al latín del cuento de Griselda del *Decamerón*.

Por otro lado, el segundo texto de referencia a utilizar corresponde a *The Canterbury Tales: A Selection* de Geoffrey Chaucer, escrito entre 1387 y 1400 en inglés medio. Se trabajará con la edición publicada por Penguin Books en 2008 en formato físico y que presenta el texto en el inglés medio original con una traducción al inglés moderno en paralelo, realizada por Colin Wilcockson.

Esta edición, como ya nos adelanta el título, corresponde a una selección de nueve de los 24 cuentos originales de Chaucer. La obra comienza con el prólogo general que plantea la premisa de la historia, que al igual que el *Decamerón*, posee una estructura de narración enmarcada, que en este caso consiste en un grupo de peregrinos que van de Londres a Canterbury con el objetivo de visitar un santuario, y mientras van caminando, los variados personajes se turnan para relatar alguna historia. En este caso, solo nos centraremos en “The Clerk’s Prologue and Tale” (ver Anexo D), en donde el Universitario comenta que la historia que va a narrar la escuchó de Petrarca (haciendo referencia a que Chaucer escribe a partir de la traducción y reescritura de este), y procede así a contar también la historia de Griselda.

3.2. Descripción de los instrumentos o herramientas utilizadas

A partir del corpus de análisis establecido, como se plantea en los objetivos del trabajo, se buscará identificar fragmentos donde se observe la representación del esposo y la representación del personaje de Griselda como persona autónoma y como madre. Con este fin, la extracción de los fragmentos a estudiar se llevará a cabo de forma manual y se ingresarán en el programa Microsoft Word en una tabla (se presentará un ejemplo de la tabla en el siguiente apartado) para el texto partida y otra para el texto de llegada.

Este tipo de metodología de extracción de datos manual implica una limitación en cuanto a los criterios con los que se escogen los fragmentos a estudiar, ya que se verán marcados por la subjetividad de quien realiza la investigación, como suele ser el caso en los estudios de carácter cualitativo. No obstante, esto no afecta la viabilidad del estudio en la medida en que los criterios sean definidos y delimitados de forma apropiada por parte del investigador (Rojo, 2013, pp. 55-58).

3.3. Descripción del proceso de análisis de los datos

A continuación, se presenta una descripción del proceso de análisis empleado. Para comenzar, la selección de pasajes que se utiliza para evidenciar lo propuesto a lo largo de este trabajo, se basa en tres temas principales: la representación del esposo (introducción y valoración del actuar), la representación de Griselda como persona autónoma (disposición frente a su entrega total y toma de decisiones), y la representación de Griselda como madre (muestra de arrepentimiento, justificación de su actuar, y prioridad y preocupación por los hijos). Los temas y subtemas se incluyen como subsecciones en el apartado de resultados además estar codificados por diferentes colores. Aquí se presentan dos tablas, una para el texto de partida y otra para el de llegada, las cuales incluirán los fragmentos seleccionados para evidenciar los temas propuestos, como se puede ver a continuación:

Título (año)

“Capítulo”

Tabla #.	
Contexto del fragmento:	
Fragmento 1:	Fragmento 2:

Posterior a ambas tablas, se da paso al análisis comparativo entre los textos del corpus de análisis a partir de las evidencias aportadas por los fragmentos. En la primera parte, se define la relación hipertextual que presentan las obras al identificar las prácticas y procedimientos transposicionales utilizados. Una vez establecida la

conexión entre los textos, se realiza un análisis interpretativo de los fragmentos, con el fin de identificar los cambios que presentan los temas seleccionados en las obras. Es en esta parte del proceso en la cual se consulta el corpus de referencia para realizar una comparación a partir de los cambios realizados por Hervey en su reescritura. Finalmente, se vinculan estos cambios con estrategias de traducción feminista como la suplementación, la incorporación de prefacios y pies de página, y el secuestro.

En último lugar, se incluye un análisis final en el cual se muestran pasajes del cuento del *Decamerón* y las reescrituras de Petrarca y Chaucer en otro formato de tabla (después de este párrafo se muestra un ejemplo de la forma) que separa los pasajes de acuerdo con si se presentan antes, durante o tras la narración de las historias, y que representan comentarios de los respectivos narradores, con el fin de destacar el carácter intervencionista de la reescritura protofeminista de Hervey.

Tabla #
<i>Título</i>
Antes de comenzar la narración del cuento
Pasaje 1:
Durante la narración del cuento
Pasaje 2:
Después de terminada la narración del cuento
Pasaje 3:

4. Resultados

4.1. Presentación y análisis de los resultados

En esta sección se presentan los resultados obtenidos tras la selección de pasajes extraídos de los corpus de análisis y referencia, en conjunto con el análisis que se realiza de estos a partir de los tres temas principales a trabajar divididos en las subsecciones: 4.1.1 *Representación del esposo*, 4.1.2 *Representación del personaje de Griselda como persona autónoma*, y 4.1.3 *Representación del personaje de Griselda como madre*. Finalmente, se incluye una cuarta subsección titulada: 4.1.4. *Narradores y contexto de producción/recepción*, que sirve de contrargumento frente a los tres análisis presentados previamente. Para ayudar visualmente a la identificación y diferenciación de cada tema, en cada análisis se utilizan diversos énfasis y colores.

4. 1. 1. Representación del esposo

- a) **Introducción del esposo**
- b) **Valoración del actuar del esposo**

Decamerón (2017)

“Narración décima”

Tabla 1		
Contexto: Descripción inicial del personaje de Gualtieri.	Contexto: Reacciones de los personajes frente a la confesión final de Gualtieri.	
Pasaje 1: “Hace mucho tiempo, en la casa de los marqueses de Saluzzo fue primogénito un mancebo llamado Gualtieri. El cual, no teniendo mujer ni hijos, no empleaba su tiempo más que en la caza y la cetrería y no pensaba en tomar mujer ni tener hijos, lo que me hace reputarlo por muy discreto ”. (999)	Pasaje 2: “Y, esto dicho, la abrazó y con ella, que lloraba de alegría , se acercaron adonde su hija permanecía. estupefacta de oír tales cosas, y abrazáronla tiernamente y a su hermano también , y con esto todos los que otra cosa creían se desengañaron”. (1009)	Pasaje 3: “ Las mujeres, muy contentas , se levantaron de la mesa, (...) y todos andaban muy contentos de tales cosas, y el solaz y el regocijo se multiplicaron a Gualtieri , aunque rigurosas e intolerables juzgaren las experiencias hechas con su mujer, pero por más discreta aún tuvieron a Griselda. (1009)

*Énfasis añadido.

Para poder establecer la representación que se realiza del personaje del esposo, se tomaron en consideración dos aspectos o subtemas: (a) la introducción del esposo y (b) la valoración del actuar del esposo, los cuales se detallan a continuación:

Por un lado, en el *Decamerón*, a partir del primer subtema de la *introducción del esposo* (representado por el color naranja), en la tabla 1, en el pasaje 1 se presenta la descripción del personaje de Gualtieri, que es entregada de forma objetiva mencionando que no tenía esposa ni hijos, cuáles eran sus pasatiempos, entre otras cosas; sin embargo, al final del pasaje el narrador (Dioneo) hace un comentario en el que dice que lo “reputaba muy discreto”, lo cual puede interpretarse como una manera de encomiar el estilo de vida adoptado por este personaje.

En cuanto a la *representación del esposo a partir de la valoración de su actuar* (representado por el color verde), como se puede apreciar en la tabla 1, cerca del final de la historia cuando Gualtieri da por finalizadas las pruebas y le confiesa la verdad a Griselda, se observa en el pasaje 2 que ella “lloraba de alegría” y que se abraza con sus hijos “tiernamente”. En el pasaje 3, tenemos que todos los presentes en el hogar del marqués se pusieron muy contentos y, también, se menciona que “el solaz y el regocijo se multiplicaron a Gualtieri”, y si bien en el fragmento también se menciona que juzgaron como rigurosos e intolerables los actos cometidos por el esposo para con su esposa, esto se objeta al final de la oración al añadir que consideraban más discreta a Griselda por haber superado y aguantado todas estas pruebas. En otras palabras, se da un mayor énfasis a la paciencia de Griselda, que a la crueldad de Gualtieri, pasando esta a un segundo plano. Siendo así que, en general, a partir de los dos temas abordados, la perspectiva presente en esta historia denota una apreciación *positiva* tanto en términos de cómo se presenta al esposo, como también frente a su actuar con Griselda.

Esta dinámica se observa también en otras reescrituras de la historia de Griselda, ya que como se anticipó en secciones anteriores, en este trabajo se utilizan las reescrituras de Petrarca y Chaucer. En la siguiente tabla se muestran los respectivos

pasajes de cada reescritura donde se presentan los subtemas utilizados para definir la representación del personaje del esposo:

Tabla 2		
Reescritura	a) Introducción del esposo	b) Valoración del actuar del esposo
<i>Sen. XVII, 3. To the same person, a wife's remarkable obedience and faithfulness</i> – Francesco Petrarca	“He was in the prime of youth and beauty, and no less noble in manners than in blood; in short, a fine gentleman in all respects , except that, being content with his lot, he was most unconcerned about the future” (657).	“Hearing this, she nearly fainted with joy ; (...) All around resounded the happy clapping and everyone's congratulatory words ; and that day was celebrated with much joy and weeping , and was more festive than the wedding day had been”. (667)
<i>The Clerk's Prologue and Tale</i> – Geoffrey Chaucer	“Once upon a time, a marquis was the landlord, (...). Moreover, with regard to his ancestry, he was born the noblest person in Lombardy, a handsome and well-built person, young, most honourable and of refined manners, very tactful in the way he governed his estate , except for one or two things in which he fell short; and the name of this young lord was Walter”. (317)	“ “Thank you, lord, may God reward you,” she said, ‘for having saved my dear children for me. Now I do not care if I die on this very spot. Since I have a place in your affections and your favour, death is of no consequence, (...) But God in His mercy, and your loving father, have solicitously cared for you...” (pp. 379, 381).

*Énfasis añadido.

Como se puede observar en la tabla 2, en la reescritura de Petrarca se nos presenta positivamente al personaje del esposo como “a fine gentleman in all respects”. Sumado a esto, en cuanto a la reacción final de los personajes al enterarse del engaño del esposo, tenemos que también es positiva, ya que se dice que Griselda casi se desmaya de alegría y que todos los presentes aplaudían y los felicitaban por su reunión como familia.

Siguiendo esta misma línea, en la reescritura de Chaucer, el personaje del esposo es descrito más ampliamente y se entrega una lista de todas sus cualidades y

atributos de una forma bastante positiva, al ser llamado por ejemplo “a handsome and well-built person” y “most honourable”, entre otros tantos halagos. Además, en esta versión de la historia, la reacción frente al actuar del esposo también es presentada de modo sumamente positivo, ya que Griselda no solo le agradece a Walter el supuestamente haber salvado a sus hijos, sino que añade que Dios debería recompensarlo, además de estar tan alegre por enterarse de que sigue teniendo el favor y el afecto de este, que hasta podría morir en ese preciso instante y esta moriría feliz.

***The Feasts of Camelot: with the Tales that Were Told There* (1877)**

“VI. Eliot the Harper’s Lay of Gwenelda of Wales” (C.VI) y “VII. Sir Percival’s Tale of Bruno the Pitiless” (C.VII).

Tabla 3			
Contexto: (C.VI) Descripción inicial del personaje de Bruno.	Contexto: (C.VI) Reacción de Gwenelda frente a la confesión de Bruno.	Contexto: (C.VI) Comentario del rey Arturo terminada la canción del Herald y escuchar sobre las pruebas que Bruno le puso a Gwenelda.	Contexto: (C.VII) Aquí se relata la reacción del rey Uther frente al actuar de Bruno.
Pasaje 1: “None ever in Uther’s royal court, / None ever in hall or bower, / <i>Made gracious womanhood his sport, / Like Bruno of the Tower</i> ”. (61)	Pasaje 2: “True wifehood hath a soul;—’t is gone! You knew it;—you forgot. <i>The love I gave you once is flown:— Alas! you loved me not!</i> ” (62)	Pasaje 3: “A woeful issue of a cruel test, truly,” said King Arthur. “I call to mind now that Sir Bruno was ever afterwards called <i>‘The Pitiless.’ All true hearts were turned against him;</i> ” (65)	Pasaje 4: “Hence! and, ere you go, break in twain your forfeit sword; you are unworthy to bear it. Go; and go unchallenged: <i>no knight of Uther’s court shall stain his brand by crossing it with yours!</i> ” (68)

*Énfasis añadido.

Por otro lado, en *Feasts of Camelot*, Hervey presenta una nueva propuesta. En la tabla 3, en el pasaje 1, la introducción del personaje del esposo (**subtema a**) adquiere inmediatamente un carácter negativo al decirse que este jugaba con las mujeres por diversión. Asimismo, se observa que la autora, al incorporar la historia de Griselda en

el mundo de la leyenda del rey Arturo, opta por representar a su esposo mediante un personaje perteneciente a la corte del rey Uther (padre de Arturo), como menciona Renée Ward en su artículo “Victorian Medievalisms: Rehabilitating Arthur in E. L. Hervey’s *The Feasts of Camelot*”:

(...) Bruno, the latter of whom appears frequently in Malory’s *Morte Darthur*. A renowned enemy of Arthur’s court, Bruno the Pitiless (Breunys Saunz Pyté) is identified by epithets that highlight his reprehensible nature, especially his mistreatment of women—whom he widows, abuses, and murders and his fellow knights—whom he likewise frequently deceives and kills. Launcelot, for instance, calls him “false knyght” and “destroyer of ladyes and damesels” (9.36.3), while the narrator refers to him as “the most myschevuste knyght lyvyng” (10.1.11). (Ward, 2022, p. 158)

De esta manera, el haber elegido específicamente a Bruno para ser el esposo de Griselda en esta reescritura resulta sumamente estratégico, ya que inmediatamente le otorga una reputación negativa. Sumado a esto, para el **subtema (b)**, en el pasaje 2, tenemos que Griselda, tras la confesión de Bruno, se muestra enormemente ofendida y lastimada, asegurando que el amor que ella sentía por él se esfumó y negando que él la haya amado realmente. En el pasaje 3, cuando el rey Arturo termina de escuchar la historia, recuerda que después de aquel suceso a Bruno se le dio el apodo de “The Pitiless”, debido a su crueldad con su esposa, además de mencionar que todos se pusieron en su contra. Por último, en el pasaje 4, se dice que el rey Uther, tras escuchar la confesión de Bruno y enterarse de sus actos, se muestra muy molesto y resuelve expulsarlo de su corte y le quita su título de caballero. Siendo así, que a diferencia de la historia original de Boccaccio y otras reescrituras como las de Petrarca y Chaucer, Hervey introduce un giro importante en la trama al configurar la imagen que se presenta del esposo a partir de la introducción inicial y de una apreciación marcadamente negativa por parte de los demás personajes frente a su actuar.

Finalmente, tras analizar los cambios realizados por Hervey en su reescritura, se puede evidenciar que estos pueden vincularse con la estrategia de traducción feminista del secuestro, al apropiarse de la historia e incluir cambios que van más allá

de la versión original (Castro, 2008, p. 295). Esto se ve reflejado cuando la autora toma un elemento sexista, como en este caso se da a través de la representación del esposo, al invertir la apreciación positiva que se presenta de él y sus actos, en los que la injusticia y crueldad con las que trata a su esposa parecieran estar autorizadas dentro del matrimonio, y retratarla en cambio de modo negativo al condenar y repudiar su actuar.

Todas las modificaciones, fundamentadas en lo que se considera un enfoque feminista e implementadas por la autora de *Feasts of Camelot*, responden a la relación hipertextual de su obra con la de Boccaccio, como se mencionó brevemente en la segunda sección de este trabajo. Hervey emplea más de uno de los procedimientos transposicionales presentados por Genette (1989), aquí revisamos los más importantes. Primero, podemos ver que existe una *transformación abierta y deliberadamente temática* debido a que su reescritura presenta una modificación intencional de la trama original del *Decamerón*, lo que correspondería a la ideología feminista de la autora. Segundo, también se evidencia un procedimiento de *transfocalización* que consiste en: “Modificar el «punto de vista» narrativo o, como decimos en francés, la focalización del relato” (Genette, p. 366), ya que tanto el *Decamerón* como las otras dos rescrituras (Petrarca y Chaucer) no poseen ninguna focalización en sus narraciones, es decir tienen narradores omniscientes. En cambio, la reescritura de Hervey presenta una focalización interna fija con el personaje de Eliot en el capítulo VI (es decir, toda la historia es narrada desde el punto de vista de este único personaje) y una focalización interna variable en el capítulo VII, donde vemos la historia desde el punto de vista de Bruno y el de Griselda. Sin embargo, el de Bruno se expone en un espacio que abarca menos de una página, mientras que el resto del cuento es contado a partir de la focalización de Griselda, siendo este el punto de vista dominante. El uso de la focalización en el personaje de Griselda, como veremos también en el resto de los ejemplos, le da un espacio de agencia a su personaje en el que ya no solo responde al actuar de su esposo, sino que ahora es ella la que tiene su historia y realiza sus propias acciones.

4. 1. 2. Representación del personaje de Griselda como persona autónoma

Los temas presentados en esta sección tienen que ver con la idea de autonomía entendida como: “Condición de quien, para ciertas cosas, no depende de nadie” (RAE, 2023) y, el cómo esta se presenta a través de la agencia del personaje de Griselda. El concepto de agencia es utilizado a partir de la siguiente definición otorgada por el psicólogo Albert Bandura en “Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective” (2001):

To be an agent is to intentionally make things happen by one’s actions. Agency embodies the endowments, belief systems, self-regulatory capabilities and distributed structures and functions through which personal influence exercised, rather than residing as a discrete entity in a particular place. The core features of agency enable people to play a part in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal with changing times. (p. 2)

Ya establecidos los conceptos que rigen el tema a tratar, a continuación, se presentan los subtemas:

- a) Disposición frente a su entrega total
- b) Toma de decisiones

Decamerón (2017)

“Narración décima”

Tabla 4			
Contexto: Lo que responde Griselda cuando Gualtieri le dice que los vasallos no aceptan a su hija.	Contexto: Cuando Gualtieri ve a Griselda al buscar esposa.	Contexto: Lo que le dice Gualtieri a Griselda cuando la quiere probar por tercera vez y lo que ella responde.	Contexto: Regreso de Griselda a casa de su padre cuando termina su matrimonio con Gualtieri.
Pasaje 1: “—Señor, haz de mí lo que creas idóneo para tu honor y consuelo, que yo estaré contenta con todo, porque bien sé	Pasaje 2: “(…); y pareciéndole muy bella juzgó que con ella podría llevar una vida satisfecha. Y así, sin más búsquedas efectuar,	Pasaje 3: “—Mujer, por concesión del Papa puedo tomar otra mujer y dejarte a ti; (...), me propongo que dejes de ser mi	Pasaje 4: “Y la mujer, destocada, descalza y en camisa, encomendóse a Dios, y se fue de la casa de Gualtieri a la de su

que soy menos que los demás y que no merecería el honor que tu cortesía me hizo”. (1003)	<i>propúsose casarse con ella, y haciendo llamar a su padre, que era pobrísimo, convino que la tomaría por esposa”.</i> (999-1000)	<i>mujer y a casa de Giannuco te vuelvas con la dote que me trajiste: y yo haré venir otra mujer que me convenga. (...) — Señor, siempre conocí que mi baja condición no convenía a vuestra nobleza, (...). Si os place acabarlo, debe satisfacerme y me satisface que acabe”.</i> (1005)	padre, (...). <i>Y ella comenzó a hacer los servicios menudos de la casa paterna, como antes, sosteniendo con fuerte ánimo los fieros asaltos de la Fortuna”.</i> (1006)
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*Énfasis añadido.

En este segundo análisis se revisa la representación del personaje de Griselda como persona autónoma a través de su agencia. Para esto, se consideran los siguientes subtemas: (a) la disposición de Griselda frente a su entrega total a su esposo, y (b) la toma de decisiones.

Para comenzar, en el *Decamerón* bajo el subtema de la *disposición frente a su entrega total* (representado por el color naranja) en la tabla 4, pasaje 1, se entrega un ejemplo del cómo responde Griselda a las demandas de su esposo, en este caso la entrega y posterior sacrificio de su hija, en los que se puede apreciar que ella no opone resistencia y que “él puede hacer lo que quiera porque todo le placera a ella”, en otras palabras, él es quien posee todo el control de lo que sucede y Griselda solo está de acuerdo con él.

Pasando al tema de la *toma de decisiones* (representado por el color verde), en la tabla 4, pasajes 2, 3 y 4, se evidencia que es Gualtieri, el esposo, quien siempre decide qué sucederá en la vida de Griselda, sin que ella tenga mayor incidencia al respecto. En estos pasajes se reflejan, respectivamente, cómo él decide en primera instancia el matrimonio entre ambos al “proponerse que quería casarse con ella” y llegar a un acuerdo con el padre. Griselda, por su parte, llega solo al final para jurar obediencia a su futuro esposo, ya que el acuerdo nupcial ya había sido fijado por

Gualtieri y el padre de Griselda. De la misma forma, en la segunda instancia tenemos que él es quien decide acabar con el matrimonio y que Griselda deberá volver a vivir con su padre, a lo que ella solo responde que, si eso es lo que le place, ella simplemente lo acatará. Para la tercera instancia, tras ser rechazada por Gualtieri, Griselda vuelve a su vida anterior para abocarse por los “servicios menudos de la casa paterna”. En otras palabras, se ve que Griselda al comienzo de la historia se dedicaba a servir a su padre, luego al casarse pasó a servirle a su marido, y ahora de vuelta en el hogar, retoma sus responsabilidades al servicio de su padre. De esto se desprende la idea de que Griselda nunca es quien decide qué hacer con su vida, sino que solo se ajusta a las actividades que le asignan quienes la “poseen” en el momento, presentando una ausencia total de agencia y por tanto de una representación de ella misma como una persona autónoma.

Pensando ahora en las reescrituras realizadas por Petrarca y Chaucer de la historia de Griselda, estas siguen una línea similar respecto a estos subtemas, como se puede apreciar en la siguiente tabla (5):

Tabla 5		
Reescritura	a) Disposición frente a su entrega total	b) Toma de decisiones
<i>Sen. XVII, 3. To the same person, a wife's remarkable obedience and faithfulness</i> – Francesco Petrarca	“And in this house, where you made me mistress, I call God to witness I have always remained a maid at heart. (...) <i>As for the rest, I am, prepared to return to my father's home with a good and peaceful heart</i>, and to spend my old age and to die where I spent my childhood, always a happy and honorable widow for having been the wife of such a man. (...); <i>and since this is your pleasure, I depart not against my will from here where I lived most gladly</i>”. (665)	- “(...) with the result that <i>he determined at the same time to have a wife</i>, which he had never before wanted—and <i>to have her alone, and no one else</i>”. (659) - ““My people force me and the Pope authorizes me to take another wife, and a wife is now on her way and will arrive shortly. <i>Therefore, be brave, give way to another, and take back your dowry and return calmly to your former home</i>; to man no lot is everlasting”. (664-665)
<i>The Clerk's Prologue and Tale</i> – Geoffrey Chaucer	““And in this house where you made me a lady — I take God on high to be my witness, may He in His	- “(...) he considered her goodness to be perfect, <i>and decided that he wished to</i>

	wisdom give comfort to my soul — <i>I never considered myself to be a lady or the mistress of the household, but as a humble servant to your magnificence, and I always shall while my life lasts, more than to any earthly being</i> ". (363)	<i>marry only her</i> , if he was to marry at all". (327) - "(...), because, <i>since it pleases you, my lord</i> ," she said, 'who were formerly all the contentment of my heart, <i>that I should depart, I shall leave whenever you wish</i> ". (365)
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*Énfasis añadido.

En las instancias presentadas de la reescritura de Petrarca, en cuanto al **subtema (a)**, se ve que Griselda no se cuestiona de ninguna forma su entrega ciega a su marido, por lo que cuando le ordena volver a casa de su padre ella afirma que acatará lo que él decida de buen agrado, replicando así el mismo patrón de total complacencia del *Decamerón*. Respecto al **subtema (b)**, también se presenta el mismo caso anterior en el que el esposo es quien toma las decisiones respecto al destino de la vida de la protagonista, ya que en las instancias presentes en la tabla se ven las mismas evidencias de que es Gualtieri quien decide primero el matrimonio entre ambos, como también el término de este, para que Griselda vuelva a su vida anterior en casa de su padre.

En la reescritura de Chaucer, los pasajes presentados en la tabla, al igual que en el caso anterior, vienen a repetir la misma línea del *Decamerón* donde para el **subtema (a)** el pasaje seleccionado muestra cómo Griselda demuestra su entrega total al decir que siempre se consideró una mera sirvienta en la casa de Gualtieri y que siempre será así. En cuanto al **subtema (b)**, se encuentran presentes las mismas instancias anteriores, donde el personaje del esposo es quien decide el matrimonio y también el cómo Griselda deja en manos de este su destino al seguir todo lo dispuesto Gualtieri.

***The Feasts of Camelot: with the Tales that Were Told There* (1877)**

"VI. Eliot the Harper's Lay of Gwenelda of Wales" (C.VI) y "VII. Sir Percival's Tale of Bruno the Pitiless" (C.VII).

Tabla 6			
Contexto: (C.VI) Bruno llama a	Contexto: (C.VI) Reacción de	Contexto: (C.VII) Gwenelda se lamenta	Contexto: (C.VI) Resolución de

Gwenelda para contar la historia sus pruebas.	Gwenelda cuando Bruno le dice que ya no sufra y vuelva con él al terminar las pruebas.	mientras se marcha del castillo y deja a Bruno.	Gwenelda tras reprochar las pruebas de Bruno.
Pasaje 1: ‘Though deaf to yonder herald’s call, / Methinks she’ll hear another: / Stand forth! Speak ye, my children all, / And summon quick your mother.” (...) <i>She heard each voice whose life she gave, / Drowning the herald’s call; / And, like a spirit from a grave, / She stood amidst them all</i> ’. (62)	Pasaje 2: “But with a look— <i>half fear, half pride, / She slipped from his embrace; / Nor dared upon his bosom hide</i> / The blush upon her face. (...) <i>I dare not stand before His face / The bond-slave to your will</i> ”. (64)	Pasaje 3: “(...) <i>bitterly reproaching herself with having set up in her heart such a poor clay-idol as Bruno of the Tower,</i> who could for his sport and pastime so wring her mother-heart, (...)” (67)	Pasaje 4: ““ <i>Good father, take me back again / To the old home,</i> ” she cried’. (64)
Contexto: (C.VII) Gwenelda siente pena por Bruno al saber el castigo que recibió y comienza a recordar su pasado y decide ir en busca de él.			
Pasaje 5: “She remembered only <i>how he had wooed and won her, in her orphan home,</i> when she had but newly left the convent where she was brought up; and her old love pleaded for him till she could find no rest for her great sorrow. <i>Up and down, by wood and fell, by sward and by river, she sought him;</i> but no one knew whither he had gone”. (69)			

*Énfasis añadido.

En contraste, la reescritura de Hervey se distingue inmediatamente al presentar cambios radicales. Partiendo por el **subtema (a)** ya que Griselda ahora pasa a cuestionar y hasta lamentar su entrega total a su esposo. En la tabla 6, pasaje 1, se da que Griselda ya no reacciona de forma inmediata ni satisfactoria al llamado de Gualtieri, puesto que cuando la llama Bruno se dice “Though deaf to yonder herald’s call”, pero que al escuchar en su lugar las voces de sus hijos, esta reacciona poniéndose de pie inmediatamente “like a spirit from a grave”. En el pasaje 2, también se entrevé su descontento cuando se dice que se separa del abrazo de Bruno con vergüenza y en especial al mencionar “the bond-slave to your will”, dando a entender su descontento por siempre haber obedecido sin reparo a todo lo que él disponía. En el pasaje 3 también queda en evidencia el cuestionamiento y arrepentimiento de Griselda por su entrega total a Bruno cuando dice que se reprochaba el haber entregado su corazón a “such poor clay-idol”. Quedando en evidencia que ahora su personaje empieza a cuestionar su entrega absoluta para con su marido. Con relación al **subtema (b)** de la toma de decisiones, también Hervey introduce cambios significativos en la trama, como se puede ver en el pasaje 4 en el que, tras escuchar la confesión de Bruno, es ella quien decide marcharse y le pide a su padre que la lleve de vuelta a su casa. Aquí es Griselda quien decide que quiere dejar a Bruno. De forma similar ocurre en el pasaje 5, donde se dice que la unión entre Bruno y Griselda no fue una decisión unilateral del esposo, sino que la autora nos dice, a través de los recuerdos de Griselda, que estos se conocieron y Bruno la conquistó hasta ganarse su amor, para que después ambos decidieran casarse. Además, la reescritura de Hervey añade que ella después de irse, por su cuenta decide ir en busca de su esposo.

Es a partir de ejemplos como estos que podemos vincular la reescritura de Hervey con la estrategia de traducción feminista del secuestro, ya que la autora bajo estos temas presenta nuevamente una apropiación de la historia original. La nueva versión de Hervey configura el cuento de manera tal que se proyecta una ideología con enfoque feminista al redimir la representación extremadamente sumisa de Griselda, otorgándole agencia y autonomía a su personaje, lo que le permite cuestionarse su actuar de obedecer ciegamente a su marido y además le da el poder de tomar sus propias decisiones respecto al rumbo de su vida.

Finalmente, al igual que en el primer ejemplo, los cambios que configuran y expanden la trama de la historia, van ligados a los procedimientos transposicionales de Genette de la *transformación abierta y deliberadamente temática*, y de la *transfocalización* que otorga el punto de vista dominante a la protagonista.

4. 1. 3. Representación del personaje de Griselda como madre

- a) Muestra de arrepentimiento
- b) Justificación de su actuar
- c) Prioridad y preocupación por los hijos

Decamerón (2017)

“Narración décima”

Tabla 7			
Contexto: Después de que Gualtieri se lleva al segundo hijo, los vasallos lo tildaban de cruel y se compadecían de Griselda.	Contexto: Comportamiento de Griselda al volver a vivir con su padre luego de que Gualtieri la echara de su hogar.	Contexto: Lo que hizo Griselda cuando el criado fue a buscar a su hija para llevarla con el marqués.	Contexto: Cuando Griselda, sin reproche, entrega a su hijo al igual que lo hizo con su hija.
Pasaje 1: “Y ella, cuando otras mujeres se condolían de la suerte de sus hijos, contestaba que <i>ello no le atañía a ella más que al que los había engendrado</i> ”. (1004)	Pasaje 2: “Y ella comenzó a hacer los servicios menudos de la casa paterna, <i>como antes, sosteniendo con fuerte ánimo los fieros asaltos de la Fortuna</i> ”. (1006)	Pasaje 3: “No dijo más. La mujer, al oír tales palabras, viendo el rostro del servidor y recordando las palabras que se le dijeron, <i>comprendió que se había dado orden de matar a la niña. La sacó. pues, prestamente de la cuna y la besó y bendíjola y, aunque sintiera en el corazón gran congoja, sin cambiar de semblante tendió la niña al criado (...)</i> ”. (1003)	Pasaje 4: “No puso la mujer otro rostro, ni dijo otras palabras que en la anterior ocasión, lo que mucho asombraba a Gualtieri, <i>harto convencido de que ninguna otra mujer hubiese procedido igual. Y a no ser porque la veía tiernísima con los hijos mientras le placía a él, habría creído que no se preocupaba de ellos, si bien comprendía que obraba así como discreta</i> ”. (1004)

Contexto: Lo que responde Griselda luego de que Gualtieri le dijera que a sus vasallos no les agradaba.	Contexto: Diálogo de Griselda con el criado cuando este va para llevarse a la niña.	Contexto: Respuesta de Griselda cuando Gualtieri le dice que la dejará para tomar otra esposa de mejor rango.	
Pasaje 5: “—Señor, haz de mí lo que creas idóneo <i>para tu honor y consuelo</i> , que yo estaré contenta con todo, porque bien sé que soy menos que los demás y que no merecería el honor que tu cortesía me hizo”. (1003)	Pasaje 6: “—Cumple lo que tu señor te haya mandado. pero no dejes a la niña de manera que las bestias y aves de presa la devoren. <i>salvo si él te lo ordenara</i> ”. (1003)	Pasaje 7: “La mujer, lo escuchó con paciente ánimo y nada más respondió: — <i>Señor, piensa en contentarte y satisfacer tu placer. y no pienses en mí para nada, que solo me agradan las cosas que te agradan a ti</i> ”. (1004)	

*Énfasis añadido.

Para el tercer análisis se revisa la representación del personaje de Griselda como madre a partir de: (a) la muestra de arrepentimiento, (b) la justificación de su actuar, y (c) la prioridad y preocupación que presenta por sus hijos.

En el *Decamerón*, el subtema de *muestra de arrepentimiento* (representado por el color naranja) de la tabla 7, pasajes 1 y 2, evidencia que Griselda no expresa ni demuestra ningún tipo de arrepentimiento tras haber entregado a sus hijos. En el pasaje 1 se menciona que todos la compadecían pero que ella afirmaba que lo que pasara con sus hijos no era algo que le atañía. En el pasaje 2, al regresar a casa de su padre, Griselda mantuvo un “fuerte ánimo frente a los asaltos de la Fortuna”. Se podría esperar que una vez que se encontrara en la intimidad de su hogar y no frente a Gualtieri, se permitiera un espacio para lamentarse por lo sucedido, pero en lugar de esto, en la historia se narra que aún entonces mantenía el mismo ánimo. Además, no se menciona ningún tipo de arrepentimiento.

Respecto al subtema *justificación de su actuar* (representado por el color verde) de la tabla 7, pasaje 3, se presenta la escena donde Griselda debe entregar a su hija al

criado y se dice que entendía que la estaba entregando a su muerte y que sentía una “gran congoja en su corazón”, pero que aun así “la sacó prestamente de la cuna”. El pasaje 4 corresponde al momento en que Griselda entrega a su segundo hijo para que lo maten, nuevamente sin mayor reproche, de modo tal que hasta Gualtieri estaba asombrado, ya que “estaba convencido de que ninguna otra mujer hubiese procedido de la misma forma”, y no solo eso, sino que además se añade que, si no fuera porque la había visto actuar tiernamente con los hijos, hasta él habría creído que no se preocupaba de ellos. Estos dos pasajes no hacen más que reforzar lo sorprendente del actuar de Griselda, ya que no se da una mayor justificación del porqué está tan dispuesta a perder a sus hijos, solo se menciona que actúa por complacer y obedecer a su esposo.

En el subtema de *prioridad y preocupación por los hijos* (representado por el color azul) que se desarrolla en los tres últimos pasajes de la tabla 7, se presentan instancias en las que Griselda muestra que su esposo es su prioridad, incluso por sobre el bienestar de sus hijos. En el pasaje 5, cuando Gualtieri comienza con sus pruebas y le dice a Griselda que sus vasallos no la aprueban, le responde que haga con ella lo que sea “idóneo para su honor y consuelo”, priorizando los intereses de su esposo por sobre sí misma. Luego, en el pasaje 6, cuando Griselda está entregando a su hija al criado para que la lleve a su muerte, esta le pide que cuide de no dejar el cuerpo de la niña expuesto para “ser devorado por bestias y aves de presa”, pero luego puntualiza que no lo haga si es que “él se lo ordenó”, es decir, que para ella es más importante el acatar siempre las órdenes del marqués, incluso cuando se trata de la vida y cuidado de sus hijos en una situación tan extrema como esa. Finalmente, en el pasaje 7, Gualtieri le informa que la dejará para tomar otra esposa y Griselda le responde que “piense en contentarse y satisfacer su placer, y que no piense en ella, ya que le place lo mismo que a él”. Por lo que incluso después de haberla hecho pasar por todas esas duras pruebas en las que mata a sus hijos para después echarla de su hogar y tomar otra esposa, la mujer aun así sigue priorizando los intereses de su esposo.

Al revisar las reescrituras realizadas por Petrarca y Chaucer, se puede establecer que nuevamente hay una repetición de los patrones del *Decamerón*, como se presenta en la siguiente tabla:

Tabla 8			
Reescritura	a) Muestra de arrepentimiento	b) Justificación de su actuar	c) Prioridad y preocupación por los hijos
<i>Sen. XVII, 3. To the same person, a wife's remarkable obedience and faithfulness – Francesco Petrarca</i>	- “(...) Gualtieri never noticed any sign of a change of heart, no less liveliness and diligence, <i>her usual obedience, the same love, no sadness, no mention of her daughter—her name was never heard from her mother's mouth deliberately or incidentally</i>”. (662) - “She remained with her father a few days with such marvelous calm and kindness that <i>no sign appeared of a sad spirit, and no vestige of a more prosperous situation, (...)</i>”. (666)	“Although <i>she clearly understood from all this that her sweet daughter would be killed, she did not shed a tear, nor utter a sight—a terribly hard thing even for a nurse, let alone a mother.</i> But with unwrinkled brow she picked up the little girl, (...) and handed her over to the henchman, (...)” (662)	- ““You are our lord, and this little daughter and I are yours. <i>Do as you please, therefore, with what belongs to you; for nothing can please you that would displease me; there is nothing whatever that I either hanker to have or fear to lose, except you</i>”. (661) - “I beg only one thing: take care that no wild beasts or birds mangle this little body, <i>unless, however, you have been otherwise ordered.</i>” (662) - “(...) had he not known that she loved her children very much, he could almost have suspected that this firmness in a woman <i>proceeded from a certain savagery of heart; but, though very fond of all her people, she did not love anyone more than her husband</i>”. (663)

<i>The Clerk's Prologue and Tale</i> – Geoffrey Chaucer	- “He watched to see whether by word or look her love for him had altered, hut he could never discover any change. <i>She was constant in affection and in her manner, more and more as she grew older, more true in love, were that possible, and more devoted</i>”. (357) - “Thus, this flower of wifely patience lived for a while with her father; <i>she did not assume the appearance of having been wronged</i>, to judge from her words or facial expression, <i>either in the presence or the absence of people</i>”. (369)	- “Alas, she believed that he would have instantly killed the daughter whom she loved so much. <i>Nevertheless, she neither wept nor sighed, accepting what the marquis desired</i>”. (347) - “<i>It does not in any way distress me, even though my daughter and my son be killed — that is to say, if on your orders</i>. I have had nothing from my two children but first distress and then grief and suffering”. (353)	- “She said, ‘Lord, everything lies in what pleases you. <i>My child and I, in sincere obedience, are entirely yours, and you may save or destroy what belongs to you. Do as you wish</i>’. (343) - “The marquis was even more amazed at her patience, and, had he not perceived hitherto how absolutely she loved her children, <i>he would have believed that for some cunning reason, and from malice or cruelty of heart, she put up with this with such composure</i>”. (355)
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*Énfasis añadido.

Como se puede apreciar en la tabla 8, la reescritura de Petrarca respecto al subtema (a) refleja que Griselda en ningún momento demuestra un arrepentimiento por su actuar, tanto frente al marqués, como cuando se encontraba de vuelta con su padre; jamás menciona a su hija ni tiene un semblante triste por su pérdida. Pasando al subtema (b), se presenta la misma instancia en la que Griselda debe entregar a su hija, acción que realiza sin mayores problemas, sabiendo el destino que le deparaba a la niña. Además, se menciona que es una situación terrible hasta para una nodriza y peor para una madre. Respecto al subtema (c), en las tres instancias que se muestran en la tabla, el personaje de Griselda responde de la misma forma que en la historia original, siempre priorizando y acatando lo que le parece mejor al esposo, incluso por sobre sí misma o sus hijos. A su vez, se menciona que hasta al mismo esposo le costaba

creer la facilidad con que Griselda aceptaba entregar a los niños a la muerte solo para complacerlo.

Lo mismo ocurre en la reescritura de Chaucer, primero a partir de la ausencia de arrepentimiento por parte de Griselda, ya que en la primera instancia que se muestra en la tabla 8, se dice que el esposo también la estuvo observando después de todo lo ocurrido y que jamás notó algún decaimiento, sino que se mostraba más afectuosa, enamorada y devota. En la segunda cita presentada para este subtema, se repite la idea de que Griselda, ya de vuelta en casa de su padre, seguía manteniendo el mismo carácter apacible de antes; se especifica, además, que esto era así tanto en la presencia como en la ausencia de alguien, es decir, que ni siquiera a escondidas, para sí misma, se mostraba triste o arrepentida. En cuanto al **subtema (b)**, al igual que en los casos anteriores, la historia se repite: Griselda, sin mayor justificación, se muestra dispuesta a que sus hijos sean sacrificados solo porque su esposo se lo ordenó. Por último, para el **subtema (c)**, se presentan las mismas condiciones, Griselda afirma que la prioridad siempre es el esposo y que tanto ella como sus hijos se ponen en absoluta disposición para lo que el marqués estime conveniente. Nuevamente, como se manifiesta en la segunda cita, esto algo que sorprende al esposo, ya que pareciera que a Griselda no le importan sus hijos.

***The Feasts of Camelot: with the Tales that Were Told There* (1877)**

“VI. Eliot the Harper’s Lay of Gwenelda of Wales” (C.VI) y “VII. Sir Percival’s Tale of Bruno the Pitiless” (C.VII).

Tabla 9			
Contexto: (C.VI) Griselda reflexiona sobre su actuar tras la confesión de Bruno.		Contexto: (C.VII) La abadesa cuestiona el actuar de Griselda.	Contexto: (C.VII) Griselda reflexiona mientras se encuentra en el bosque camino a cumplir su penitencia.
Pasaje 1: “ <i>How deeply I have sinned, I feel; /How much repent, God knows! / “Sinned’</i> gainst the holy rights	Pasaje 2: “And when full soon an angry God / Claims back this barren life, / Grave deep these words	Pasaje 3: “And Uther, not yet appeased, desired the next son, so you were told? And him, too, you delivered up?”	Pasaje 4: “ <i>She welcomed her hard penance</i> , for she thought that by wearing out heavy days and nights in a

of home, / Whose threshold I have trod; / 'Gainst earth, and 'gainst the heaven to / come,— / 'Gainst motherhood and God!' ". (68)	above my sod:— / False mother, and no wife "'. (65)	"Mercy! Mercy! lady abbess," cried Gwenelda; "I shall go mad again with the thought!" ". (71)	work of mercy and healing, she might become more worthy of her rescued treasures " (72)
Contexto: (C.VII) La abadesa cuestiona el actuar de Griselda.	Contexto: (C.VII) Griselda piensa en sus hijos mientras se encuentra en el bosque camino a cumplir su penitencia.	Contexto: (C.VII) Griselda llega a la cabaña y se encuentra con el temido caballero al que debe cuidar.	Contexto: (C.VII) Reacción de Griselda al ver cómo el caballero poseído atacaba a hachazos la tumba de su padre.
Pasaje 5: "Alas! no," replied Gwenelda, "my lord said his life were surely forfeit, and no prayers would King Uther hear." "But you essayed it, none the less?" persisted the abbess. (...) "my lord forbade me: he showed me that I had vowed him obedience, and held me to my bond. Only could he be saved, so he said, by giving up the heir to his lands." (70)	Pasaje 6: "(...) but thinking only of the dear ones (...), who would need her circling arms and miss her again who so newly found. (...) her mother-heart was sore for them, and she wondered more and more when she thought of that madness of love for their lost father which had once made her yield them up to death for his sake ". (72)	Pasaje 7: "But void of all fear for herself (...) Still no fear for her life troubled Gwenelda, for she thought not of herself" . (73)	Pasaje 8: "(...) for a moment Gwenelda had no power to act. But now a new terror lent her force and courage. An overmastering dread seized her lest the knight's next attack should be on the children sleeping above in the old tower-chamber, (...)". (75)

*Énfasis añadido.

En contraposición, tenemos la reescritura de Hervey que se presenta en la tabla 9. Respecto al **subtema (a)**, en los pasajes 1, 2, 3 y 4 el personaje de Griselda presenta un profundo arrepentimiento por su actuar al descuidar tan gravemente a sus hijos. En el primero, destaca el haber pecado al exclamar que "Sinned 'Gainst motherhood and God". En el segundo, Griselda afirma que en la lápida de su tumba debe estar la inscripción "false mother". En el tercero, se incluye el personaje de la abadesa, quien cuestiona el actuar de Griselda tras saber lo sucedido, y esta reacciona en extremo

arrepentida, rogándole que tenga piedad y por favor no le recuerde sus faltas ya que “se volverá loca de solo pensarlo”. En el cuarto pasaje, luego de que Griselda recibe una penitencia por sus pecados, se dice que esta lo recibió de buena manera porque cree que, al pagar por sus faltas, será “más digna de recibir nuevamente a sus hijos”. De este modo, Hervey cambia completamente la respuesta de Griselda frente a lo sucedido y, de forma explícita y categórica, presenta un enorme arrepentimiento de su parte. En el **subtema (b)**, existe otra inclusión importante de Hervey en la trama de la historia, ya que como se puede apreciar en el pasaje 5, cuando la abadesa cuestiona el actuar de Griselda, esta le responde que no fue que simplemente acatara y entregara a sus hijos, sino que se justifica al decir que la orden no venía del marqués, sino del propio rey Uther, quien mataría a Bruno si es que los hijos no eran sacrificados, y que no se dejaría persuadir de su decisión. También se agrega explícitamente que Griselda aun así quería intentar hablar con el rey para evitar perder a sus hijos y, al mismo tiempo, salvar a su esposo, pero que el marqués se lo prohibió e insistió en que sacrificar a sus herederos era la única solución. Por lo tanto, en la reescritura de Hervey queda en evidencia que Griselda tenía una justificación respecto de la razón por la que aceptó entregar a sus hijos para que fueran sacrificados. Finalmente, en lo que respecta al **subtema (c)** que se desarrolla en los pasajes 6, 7 y 8, se expone la enorme preocupación de Griselda como madre por el bienestar de sus hijos, sentimiento que se encuentra por encima de todo, ya que al enfrentarse a un caballero que pareciera querer lastimarla, piensa en los niños en todo momento. Esto se demuestra más explícitamente en los pasajes 6 y 8 cuando dice que solo podía pensar en ellos. En el pasaje 7, incluso, se demuestra que Griselda no sentía miedo por sí misma, sino que se destaca su extrema preocupación por la seguridad de los niños, siendo estos su absoluta prioridad.

Los tres subtemas presentados para definir la representación general que se hace del personaje de Griselda como madre en *Feasts of Camelot* están marcados por las intervenciones que Hervey realiza a la historia general. Estos se ven vinculados con la estrategia de traducción feminista del secuestro por los mismos motivos presentados en los dos análisis anteriores, los que se relacionan con la proyección de una ideología

con enfoque feminista que, en este caso, viene a redimir la representación del personaje de Griselda como madre.

Finalmente, este análisis también se encuentra regido por la línea de los anteriores al enmarcar los cambios e innovaciones de la reescritura dentro de los procedimientos transposicionales de Genette de la *transformación abierta y deliberadamente temática* y de la *transfocalización* que otorga el punto de vista dominante a la protagonista, y que en este último caso, otorga un espacio al personaje de Griselda para mejorar su imagen como madre al arrepentirse de sus acciones, justificarlas y remediarlas al fijar su prioridad en los hijos.

4. 1. 4. Narradores y contexto de producción/recepción

En esta última subsección se realiza una puntualización sobre los comentarios y reflexiones provenientes de los narradores de la historia de Griselda, tanto en la “Décima Narración” de la “Décima Jornada” del *Decamerón* de Boccaccio como en las reescrituras posteriores realizadas por Petrarca y Chaucer, las que se han revisado de forma parcial en las secciones anteriores. Además, se menciona brevemente la influencia que ejerció el contexto de producción y recepción de los cuentos al momento de clasificar, en el marco de esta investigación, la presencia o ausencia de un rasgo protofeminista predominante.

Para lograr diferenciar y destacar el innovador carácter protofeminista de la reescritura realizada por Hervey, a lo largo de los análisis de la representación del personaje del esposo y de la representación de Griselda como persona autónoma y madre, se utilizaron la versión de Boccaccio y las reescrituras de Petrarca y Chaucer para demostrar cómo estas replican y perpetúan los mismos aspectos del *Decamerón*, presentando una imagen negativa de la mujer como esposa y del trato que los hombres pueden tener con las mujeres. Sin embargo, frente a esta afirmación, se puede objetar que las tres historias sí apelan, de alguna forma, a un rechazo frente a estas representaciones negativas. Esto se puede evidenciar, en cierta medida, en los siguientes pasajes:

Tabla 10
Boccaccio — “Décima jornada”: “Décima narración”
Antes de comenzar la narración del cuento
Pasaje 1 [Narrador (Dioneo)]: “(...) voy a contar, respecto a un marqués, no una acción magnífica, sino una insensata bestialidad, aunque tuviera buen fin. Y no aconsejo que nadie la imite, porque lástima grande fue que a aquel hombre bien las cosas le aviniesen”. (1032)
Después de terminada la narración del cuento
Pasaje 2 [Narrador (Dioneo)]: “¿Qué más cabe decir sino que también en las casas pobres llueven del cielo espíritus divinos, como en las reales surgen personas más dignas de guardar puercos que de ejercer señoría sobre los hombres? ¿Quién, no siendo Griselda, habría podido, con el rostro, no ya sereno, sino risueño, sufrir las inauditas y rigurosas pruebas a que Gualtieri la sometió? Aunque a él no le hubiera venido mal dar con una que, cuando de casa la echó en camisa, hubiera sabido menearse tan bien, que de otro consiguiera un buen vestido”. (1044)

En la tabla 10 donde se presentan extractos del cuento del *Decamerón*, el pasaje 1 muestra cuando antes de comenzar a narrar la historia de Griselda, el personaje de Dioneo advierte que esta historia narra una acción de “insensata bestialidad”. Por lo tanto, desde antes de conocer la historia de Griselda, a esta ya se le adjudica un juicio negativo. En el pasaje 2, se muestra el comentario final que hace Dioneo inmediatamente después de haber terminado de contar la historia, en el que menciona tanto lo injusto del buen final que tuvo Gualtieri como que nadie hubiese soportado como Griselda las “inauditas y rigurosas pruebas” a las que el marqués la sometió. Sin embargo, en esta investigación se considera que estos comentarios no son suficientes para poder representar el carácter negativo, en términos generales, que toma la historia de Griselda en cuanto a la representación que se entrega de las mujeres. Esto se debe a que como afirma Wirt Armistead Cate en “The Problem of the Origin of the Griselda Story”, Boccaccio solo se preocupa de que el narrador emita un pequeño comentario del relato que demuestre su desacuerdo con el final de la historia. Sin embargo, durante todo el capítulo se esfuerza por desarrollar una “representación ideal del personaje de Griselda” (Cate 1932, p. 395).

Tabla 11
Petrarca — <i>To the same person, a wife's remarkable obedience and faithfulness</i>
Durante la narración del cuento
Pasaje 1 [Narrador]: “These test of conjugal affection and faithfulness could have sufficed for the most stubborn husband. But there are those who, once they begin, never stop, or rather, they press on and stick to their purpose”. (664)
Después de terminada la narración del cuento
Pasaje 2 [Petrarca]: “I decided to retell this story in another language not so much to encourage the married women of our day to imitate this wife's patience, which to me seems hardly imitable, as to encourage the readers to imitate at least this woman's constancy, so that what she maintained toward her husband they may maintain toward our God. For although “He is no tempter of evil, and tempts no one,” as the Apostle James says [1:13], still He does test and often allows us to be harassed with many heavy blows, not in order to know our spirit, which He knew before we were created, but so that our weakness may be recognized through obvious and familiar signs. I would number among the men overflowing with constancy whoever would suffer without a murmur for his God what this little peasant woman suffered for her mortal husband”. (668)

En cuanto a la reescritura de Petrarca de la tabla 11, pasaje 1, se presenta un ejemplo en el que el narrador de la historia hace un comentario sobre los sucesos que relata, criticando el actuar del esposo al insistir incansablemente en poner a prueba el amor de su esposa. En el pasaje 2, una vez finalizada la historia, Petrarca retoma el habla en primera persona y explica que usa la historia de Griselda en un sentido metafórico, ya que no espera que las mujeres sigan su ejemplo como esposa, sino que este personaje debería servir a todas las personas como un ejemplo de la constancia que se debe tener con Dios. De esta manera, a la historia se le otorga una significación muy diferente a la presentada en una primera instancia.

Tabla 12
Chaucer — “The Clerk's Prologue and Tale”
Durante la narración del cuento
Pasaje 1 [Narrador (Clerk)]: “He had sufficiently tested her previously, and found her to be unwaveringly good. What is the point of his testing her again and again, even if some

people might consider it a clever thing to do? For my part, declare it is unbecoming to test a wife when there is no reason and to make her miserable and frightened”. (341)
Pasaje 2 [Narrador (Clerk)]: “Now, however, I would like to ask women whether these tests were not enough? What could a cruel husband intend further to test her wifely devotion and steadfastness, as he unwaveringly continued in his cruelty?” (355)
Pasaje 3 [Narrador (Clerk)]: “People talk about Job, principally for his humility, as scholarly people well describe him when they want, notably with reference to men. But, to be honest, even though scholars lavish little praise on women, no man can behave as humbly as a woman, or be half as constant as women are, unless things have changed of late”. (369, 371)
Después de terminada la narración del cuento
Pasaje 4 [Narrador (Clerk)]: “And hear what the author said about it. This story is told, not so that wives should imitate the humility of Griselda, because that would be insupportable, even if they wished it, but so that everyone, in whatever station in life, should be as resolute in adversity as was Griselda. To that end Petrarch wrote the story in a rhetorically elevated style. So, since a woman was so patient towards an earthly man, so much the more should we graciously receive whatever God sends to us. (...) But, gentlemen, hear one word before I finish: it would be extremely difficult nowadays to find two or three Griseldas in a whole town because, were they to be put to such tests, their gold is so full of brass alloy that, even though the coin looks good, it would be more likely to snap in two than to bend. (...)— I would like, with cheerful heart, young and green, to recite a poem I think would make you happy. And let’s bring to an end this serious matter”. (383, 385)
Pasaje 5 [Narrador (Clerk)]: “Listen to my song, which goes as follows: <i>Chaucer’s concluding words</i> Griselda is dead, and her patience too, both buried together in Italy; so I proclaim before everyone that no man should be so foolhardy as to test his wife’s patience, thinking he will find a Griselda, because he will certainly fail. O noble wives, full of great common-sense, don’t allow humility to pin down your tongue, nor allow any clerkly scholar to have reason or desire to write such a remarkable story about you as that of the patient and loving Griselda, lest the skinny Chichevache swallow you into her guts. Imitate Echo, who doesn’t keep quiet, but constantly answers back”. (385, 387)

Al revisar la tabla 12, en la reescritura de Chaucer se evidencia una mayor presencia de comentarios y aclaraciones en los que se critica a los personajes. Los pasajes 1, 2 y 3 consisten en comentarios que realiza el narrador de la historia, el Universitario, haciendo pausas en su relato para dar su opinión e interpelar a su audiencia con el fin de criticar y reprochar el comportamiento del esposo y defender al personaje de Griselda. Sumado a esto, los pasajes 4 y 5 corresponden a comentarios finales del Universitario tras haber finalizado el cuento. En el pasaje 4, se encarga de

precisar el sentido con el que Petrarca escribió el relato (ya que al comienzo del capítulo menciona que la historia que contará la escuchó de este mismo) y también precisa que no se espera que las mujeres imiten el comportamiento de Griselda, sino que esta sirva como un ejemplo de fidelidad religiosa. En el pasaje 5, el Universitario pide a los peregrinos que escuchen su canción “Chaucer’s concluding words”, en la que llama a los hombres a no actuar jamás tan torpemente con sus esposas como lo hizo el personaje de la historia, y a las mujeres a no seguir el ejemplo de Griselda y a defenderse de los malos tratos de los hombres.

Tras haber revisado los pasajes en los que se presenta una valoración negativa hacia la historia y teniendo en consideración su distanciamiento respecto de una postura feminista, se puede mencionar principalmente que las interferencias en las narraciones no llegan a poseer un peso mayor en la transmisión del mensaje final, lo que se ve reflejado en los respectivos contextos de recepción de las historias. Para comenzar, en el artículo “The Griselda Tale and the Portrayal of Women in the Decameron” de Shirley S. Allen, la autora menciona que la historia de Griselda narrada por Dioneo en el *Decamerón* debía entenderse como irónica, pero que algunos lectores habían fallado al interpretar el sentido original (Allen 1977, p. 6). Dentro de estos lectores, se considera a Petrarca, quien en la misma carta donde reescribe la historia, menciona que no leyó todo el libro por lo que no contaba con una perspectiva completa del sentido original. En consecuencia, Allen menciona: “Nor did Petrarch’s interpretation stick for despite his denial (echoed by Chaucer) that the tale was intended to teach wifely behavior, Griselda was widely used as an example for wives in sermons and treatises; (...)” (Allen, p. 2). Entonces, incluso pese a la aclaración final que hace Petrarca, la historia se interpretó de forma exclusiva a partir de los hechos narrados, los que llevaron a que la historia de Griselda se utilizara como modelo de comportamiento para las mujeres. En el caso de la reescritura de Chaucer, se evidenció una mayor intervención por parte del narrador. Esto es algo en lo que profundiza John Finlayson en su artículo “Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Chaucer’s “Clerk’s Tale” (2000), en el que menciona que las intervenciones de Chaucer son mucho más directas en comparación con los comentarios indirectos que realiza el narrador en la versión de Petrarca (p. 268).

En resumen, los comentarios e intervenciones presentes en las historias escritas por Boccaccio, Petrarca y Chaucer, que podrían servir como un atisbo de una intención feminista o de reproche frente a la representación y acciones de los personajes, no pueden ser considerados como recursos que logren producir un impacto en la historia, ya que se presentan como pausas en la narraciones o reflexiones finales, siempre casi a modo de paratexto, no van más allá ni configuran la trama central. Volviendo a Allen, en cuanto a la controversia que se presenta al momento de interpretar el cuento de Chaucer, afirma: “(...) Chaucerian scholars, (...), have praised Chaucer’s superior dramatic sense in *using the Griselda story as part of a discussion about marriage* (...)” (Allen, p. 3) (énfasis añadido). En otras palabras, puede entenderse que el cuento de Chaucer se presenta como parte de una discusión sobre el matrimonio, sirviendo para una reflexión posterior. En cambio, en este trabajo, se busca destacar la reescritura que realiza Hervey porque puede considerarse una reflexión puesta en práctica, es decir, la autora se apropia de la historia y la configura y enmienda desde su interior, en lugar de añadir comentarios a las acciones y perspectivas de los personajes que participan en el cuento desde un plano exterior. La relevancia de cambiar los sucesos de la historia de Griselda se ve reforzada en el siguiente extracto:

Boccaccio’s final address to his readers as “simple young women,” who have not sharpened their wits by study, ironically suggests his confidence in their ability to see beneath the surface meaning his real intention in the Decameron. But a more powerful irony, the irony of fortune, prevented Boccaccio’s portrayal of women from reaching a wide audience of female readers. Petrarch’s obtuseness stripped Griselda of the fine clothes in which Boccaccio had dressed her and sent her out in a medieval shift through the countries of Europe, where she did incalculable harm to the cause of female equality. And the Decameron, labeled as a low and comic book, was enjoyed by men clandestinely, lest it endanger the innocent hearts and weak minds of simple young women. (Allen 1977, p. 11).

Como se puede ver, en la recepción del *Decamerón*, el sentido original se pierde y logra el impacto opuesto al que esperaba Boccaccio. En la introducción del libro, el

autor dedica su trabajo a las mujeres aludiendo a la admiración que les tiene, pero, aun así, no consigue llegar a su público objetivo. Sumado a esto, Allen afirma que la popularización y masificación de la reescritura de Petrarca terminaron incluso por perjudicar la lucha por la igualdad de género de las mujeres.

Finalmente, es por estos motivos que en esta investigación se busca visibilizar y destacar la reescritura de Hervey sobre la historia de Griselda, ya que la autora modifica la historia central para crear un cambio de enfoque evidente y transparente. Desde el primer momento condena las representaciones existentes y lleva su trabajo más allá al presentar una reforma y profundización de la historia que sirve de espacio para la redención de sus personajes. Estas modificaciones pueden vincularse con dos de las estrategias feministas de traducción a nivel macro. Por una parte, la estrategia de *retraducción*, que Flotow define como: “The strategy of retranslating works deemed important for the cultural and political history as well as the social development of women has led to interesting alternatives as old texts are read from new perspectives and translated for new audiences” (2019, p. 234). Esto se debe a que, como menciona Ward en “Giving Voice to Griselda: Radical Reimaginings of a Medieval Tale”, al examinar la narrativa del personaje de Griselda que plantea Hervey, se pueden analizar las nuevas perspectivas con las que los y las escritoras y lectoras del siglo XIX recibían, reimaginaban y se apropiaban de su historia (Ward 2017, pp. 90-91). Por otro lado, las modificaciones de la historia se vinculan con la estrategia de traducción feminista denominada *selección estratégica de textos*, definida por Flotow de la siguiente manera: “(...) strategic text selection promotes the translation of specific works that are deemed useful, inspirational, and informative for feminism” (2019, p. 233). Esto se debe a que Hervey selecciona esta historia y decide reescribirla de forma estratégica ya que, con su reescritura, ‘she draws attention to the complex and contradictory reality of married life for Victorian women when Griseldis declares that in the act of marriage she “vowed obedience” (20)’ (Ward 2017, p. 95). En otras palabras, Hervey toma conscientemente esta historia, reconocida por representar a las mujeres en una posición inferior a los hombres, y la configura para lograr la redención del personaje de Griselda, además de presentarla en su propio contexto histórico-

social, donde se siguen perpetuando los roles de género tradicionales, con el fin de mostrar esta nueva perspectiva.

5. Conclusiones

5.1. Respuesta a las preguntas de investigación y el cumplimiento de los objetivos

Al comienzo del trabajo se planteó la siguiente pregunta de investigación: ¿se puede considerar que los capítulos VI y VII del libro de Hervey son una reescritura protofeminista del texto “Décima Narración” de la “Décima Jornada” del *Decamerón*, a partir de la forma en que la autora representa el personaje del esposo y a Griselda como persona autónoma y madre? La pregunta se responde de forma positiva, ya que a partir de los resultados obtenidos se puede establecer el carácter protofeminista de la reescritura de Hervey al vincular los cambios realizados a nivel macro que presenta la narración, con las estrategias de traducción feminista de Flotow de secuestro, retraducción y selección estratégica de textos.

En cuanto a los objetivos de la investigación, este trabajo cumple con su objetivo general, ya que se realizó una evaluación de los textos de llegada correspondientes a los capítulos “Eliot the Harper’s Lay of Gwenelda of Wales” (VI) y “Sir Percival’s Tale of Bruno the Pitiless” (VII) del libro *The Feasts of Camelot: with the Tales that Were Told There* (Hervey, 1863) para así considerarlos como una reescritura con enfoque protofeminista de la historia de Griselda que se desarrolla en el “Décima Narración” de la “Décima Jornada” presente en el *Decamerón*.

A su vez, también se cumplió con los objetivos específicos, ya que se llevó a cabo una selección de fragmentos relevantes de los corpus de análisis y referencia en relación con la caracterización que presentan del personaje del esposo y de Griselda como persona autónoma y como madre. A continuación, se analizaron los cambios realizados por Hervey en su reescritura a partir de los temas elegidos y la forma en que estos configuran la historia en un nivel macro, mediante su relación con los procedimientos transposicionales de Genette. En última instancia, se logró la vinculación de estas modificaciones con las estrategias de traducción feminista precisadas anteriormente.

5.2. Breve síntesis de los resultados obtenidos

De acuerdo con los temas seleccionados para el análisis, la reescritura de la historia de Griselda, realizada por Hervey, se presenta como una propuesta protofeminista, debido a la realización de cambios temáticos y de focalización que se vinculan con estrategias de traducción feminista como el secuestro, la retraducción y la selección estratégica de textos.

La propuesta protofeminista de Hervey se evidencia en tres análisis realizados. Primero, en base a la representación de Gualtieri determinada por los siguientes subtemas: (a) Introducción del esposo y (b) Valoración del actuar del esposo. En los resultados, los textos de Boccaccio, Petrarca y Chaucer introducen a este personaje de forma positiva y desarrollan una buena valoración frente a su actuar, mientras que la reescritura de Hervey presenta un giro importante en la trama al configurar estos aspectos y otorgarles un carácter negativo.

Segundo, a partir de la representación del personaje de Griselda como persona autónoma al poseer una agencia que se ve representada por los subtemas (a) Disposición frente a su entrega total y (b) Toma de decisiones. Tras el análisis de los pasajes se aprecia que en todas las versiones anteriores el personaje de Griselda jamás cuestiona la entrega y fidelidad inmutable que tiene hacia su esposo, y que no es responsable del rumbo que toma su propia vida. En *Feasts of Camelot*, se presenta una innovación importante respecto a la autonomía y agencia de Griselda. En esta versión, el personaje no solo reflexiona sobre su propio comportamiento, sino que también es ella misma quien toma las decisiones que rigen su vida, sin depender de su padre ni de su esposo.

El tercer análisis que evidencia la reescritura protofeminista es la representación del personaje de Griselda como madre, desarrollado en los siguientes subtemas: (a) Muestra de arrepentimiento, (b) Justificación de su actuar, y (c) Prioridad y preocupación por los hijos. Hervey se diferencia de sus predecesores al crear un espacio de redención para el personaje de Griselda como madre. Si originalmente ella se mostraba casi indiferente y negligente con sus hijos, ahora muestra arrepentimiento

y una significativa preocupación por su bienestar y seguridad, además de priorizar a sus hijos por sobre los intereses de su esposo.

Por último, se presentaron comentarios y reflexiones de los narradores de las obras de Boccaccio, Petrarca y Chaucer, y se discutió acerca de la influencia de los contextos de producción y recepción. Al contrastar esto con la reescritura de Hervey, se estableció que los primeros autores no lograron generar un impacto significativo en la concepción de la historia, mientras que la escritora logra instaurar una ideología vinculada con las estrategias de traducción feminista. No obstante, es crucial precisar que este tipo de análisis no debe ser interpretado de manera categórica al momento de determinar si un texto es feminista. Más bien, debe ser comprendido como un espectro en el cual los textos pueden ubicarse y ser comprendidos en función de diversos niveles de presencia o influencia de una postura ideológica. Además, estas interpretaciones estarán influenciadas por el contexto en el cual los textos son recibidos y estudiados.

5.3. Limitaciones del trabajo y proyecciones futuras

Este proyecto presentó limitaciones de distinta índole, entre las que se encuentran la selección subjetiva de los temas y pasajes seleccionados para el análisis, además de la realización del estudio de solo dos capítulos del libro de Eleanora Louisa Hervey.

Respecto a las proyecciones futuras, este trabajo ofrece un primer acercamiento al estudio de la obra *Feasts of Camelot* desde una perspectiva traductológica, por lo que sería interesante realizar un análisis más profundo y exhaustivo de la colección de relatos para poder identificar si los resultados obtenidos en los dos capítulos seleccionados pueden extrapolarse a la obra completa.

Sumado a esto, también se podría realizar un estudio basado en la identificación de nuevos temas, más allá del enfoque de la traducción feminista. De la misma forma, sería sumamente interesante traducir la obra de Hervey del inglés al español, para así poder acercarla a una audiencia mayor y, de esta manera, hacerla más accesible para su estudio en contextos académicos.

Como último punto, es pertinente resaltar la perspectiva interdisciplinaria propuesta y empleada en esta investigación, la cual abarca diversas áreas de estudio, tales como la traductología, la literatura y los estudios de género. Esta misma podría servir como punto de partida para el análisis de diversas obras literarias que puedan ser comprendidas dentro del marco de las reescrituras feministas.

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7. Anexos

Anexo A

Reescritura de Eleanora Louisa Hervey⁴

CHAPTER VI.

ELIOT THE HARPER'S LAY OF GWENELDA OF WALES.

All games that knighthood's soul delight,
Let knighthood's soul approve;
But woe befall the luckless wight
That wagers on his love!

None ever in Uther's royal court,
None ever in hall or bower,
Made gracious womanhood his sport,
Like Bruno of the Tower.

Uther, the King, he gave sign;—
“A test—a test!” he cried:
Brim in the goblets stood the wine,
And down the harpings died.

Save Bruno's voice, no sound awoke
That silent banquet hall;
Between the cruel words he spoke,
You heard the rose-leaves fall.

“Ho!—summon, by the herald's breath,
Her who, for love of me,
Gave up to swift and bloody death
The babes upon her knee!”

Low murmurs;—then a silence deep;
Tongues dumb for wonder's sake:
You gaze like those who walk in sleep,—
You hear the harp-strings break.

“Though deaf to yonder herald's call,
Methinks she'll hear another:
Stand forth! Speak ye, my children all,

⁴ Hervey, E. L. (1877). *The Feasts of Camelot: with the Tales that Were Told There*. R. Washbourne.

And summon quick your mother.”

Apart, a warrior-bard did kneel,
His thrilling harp held high:
His sword was sheathed, but the true steel
Was flashing from his eye.

And one amidst the minstrel throng,—
He was a youth in years,
‘Gan touch a low, unequal song,
Like droppings of the tears.

She heard each voice whose life she gave,
Drowning the herald’s call;
And, like a spirit from a grave,
She stood amidst them all.

“Mark where she stands, with weeping blind,
The woman of my choice!—
A woman of a steady mind,
And of a lowly voice.

“Speak out, Gwenelda! Never Fear
Thy tale of woe to tell:
King Uther he is fain to hear,—
Say, have I judged you well?”

Fair forms around her knees arise,—
Soft looks, of them that died;
But, not to meet her children’s eyes,
Her own are turned aside.

And slowly, with a solemn peal,
Her voice to music rose:—
“How deeply I have sinned, I feel;
How much repent, God knows!

“Sinned ’gainst the holy rights of home,
Whose threshold I have trod;
’Gainst earth, and ’gainst the heaven to
come,—
’Gainst motherhood and God!”

“Peace, peace, good wife!—the trial o’er,
The peril and the pain,
Come to this beating heart once more,
Back to these arms again.”

But with a look—half fear, half pride,
She slipped from his embrace;
Nor dared upon his bosom hide
The blush upon her face.

“Alas! for me!—to those dear arms
Full lovingly I came:
Alas, alas; from those dear arms
That I should shrink with shame!

“God knew my heart, and gave me grace
A holier state to fill:
I dare not stand before His face
The bond-slave to your will.

“True wifhood hath a soul;—’t is gone!
You knew it;—you forgot.
The love I gave you once is flown:—
Alas! you loved me not!”

An old man, bowed with age and pain,
Drew slowly to her side.
Good father, take me back again
To the old home,” she cried.

“And when full soon an angry God
Claims back this barren life,
Grave deep these words above my sod:—
False mother, and no wife.”

“A woeful issue of a cruel test, truly,” said King Arthur. “I call to mind now that Sir Bruno was ever afterwards called ‘The Pitiless.’ All true hearts were turned against him; and there went a report that he departed from this land a sorrowful man, and journeyed into distant countries to do battle against the Saracens in defence of the Holy Sepulchre.”

“That may have been,” said Merlin; “but my uncle Bleise knew something of his after-history, and that of his sorely-tried wife Gwenelda; and, if I mistake not, their lives are written down in the chronicles. Since Eliot’s lay stops short so soon, and as I see the fate of Gwenelda has deeply moved many here, I will take good heed to search

the records, and we shall see, when Christmas Feast of Camelot comes round, how the tale really ended.”

“Pity we should wait so long,” said Queen Guenever. “Is there present no knight or minstrel who can tell us of the after-days of Bruno the Pitiless and Gwenelda of Wales? Sir Percival, you first breathed the air among the mountains of Wales, so I have heard; what tale of Sir Bruno is told on the Border?”

“Gracious lady,” replied Sir Percival, “well I know the tale you speak of; and glad am I to give the close to old Eliot’s touching history. Eliot the harper was indeed ‘a youth in years’ at the time that cruel scene was played before King Uther’s court; but there were younger than he; and it was from one of these —the children of Gwenelda—when grown to manhood, that I heard the tale. The end was this.

CHAPTER VII.

SIR PERCIVAL'S TALE OF BRUNO THE PITILESS.

When Gwenelda of Wales turned to leave the hall of the castle of Uther Pendragon, at Caerleon-on-Usk, homeless, loveless, and withal bitterly reproaching herself with having set up in her heart such a poor clay-idol as Bruno of the Tower, who could for his sport and pastime so wring her mother-heart, fortune played no worse with her than to give her children back to her arms. As she leant on the aged monk, and looked her last on the court of Pendragon, quick light steps sounded behind her, soft fingers caught her robe, tears fell warm on her hand, and climbing loving forms twined about her waist.

Sir Bruno had started up in his lordly might. Perchance he would have called the children back, but that, ruthless as he had been, heedless as a wild savage that robs the forest bear of her cubs, a touch of nature and manhood struck home to his heart. Moreover, at that moment, he caught the amazed and angered glance of the great Uther Pendragon, who had known nothing of the cruel masque he had been playing, till he boasted before all the court of his submissive, lady and called her before them in proof that he had counted truly on her obedience. Something in that glance of King Uther's eye he liked not: he felt sure It boded him no good. When the kingly blood was up no man could meet that glance and not rue it. There was a pause; a silence none dared to break. Then the pent-up scorn in great Uther's breast found words.

"Sir Bruno, Knight of the Tower," he cried, "our court and banquet-board methinks are somewhat too full; your place is wanted. — Hence! and, ere you go, break in twain your forfeit sword; you are unworthy to bear it. Go; and go unchallenged: no knight of Uther's court shall stain his brand by crossing it with yours!"

Well may it be guessed that Sir Bruno of the Tower was seen no more at the court of Pendragon. When Gwenelda heard of the king's scorn, and how her lord was a banished man, and that so the greatest penance was laid on him that he could not know, for his unknighly sin of cruelty to her, then her true woman's heart melted within her for very pity. She remembered only how he had wooed and won her, in her orphan home, when she had but newly left the convent where she was brought up; and

her old love pleaded for him till she could find no rest for her great sorrow. Up and down, by wood and fell, by sward and by river, she sought him; but no one knew whither he had gone. Her thoughts turned to Eliot the Harper. When she had departed from the court, with her young children clinging about her, with none to support her but the aged monk, the boy-minstrel had risen from the banquet-board, and flinging down his harp, had followed, sword in hand, to guard from danger a wronged lady and her helpless children. But now she learned that after he had put her in safety he had wandered away into other lands to try his skill in music-matches with foreign minstrels, and she knew not who else might aid her in her search. At last she bethought her of the good lady abbess of the convent where she had been taught and cared for. To her she went; thinking to herself, "If she may not help me to find my lord, yet ghostly comfort will she give me."

But comfort she got little, ghostly or other. The lady abbess, though she had never known children's love, had a warm heart and a quick judgment, and both alike condemned Gwenelda. When she heard what had happened she questioned her rigidly.

"You have your children to death for the love of Sir Bruno?"

"Alas! yes," was the answer.

"But first, when you were told your lord's life lay in the danger of the king, you threw yourself at great Uther's feet, and pleaded for your lord?"

"Alas! no," replied Gwenelda, "my lord said his life were surely forfeit, and no prayers would King Uther hear."

"But you essayed it, none the less?" persisted the abbess.

"Alas! and again, no" said Gwenelda; "my lord forbade me: he showed me that I had vowed him obedience, and held me to my bond. Only could he be saved, so he said, by giving up the heir to his lands."

"And you gave the boy?"

"Spare me! —I did — I did!"

"And Uther, not yet appeased, desired the next son, so you were told? And him, too, you delivered up?"

"Mercy! Mercy! lady abbess," cried Gwenelda; "I shall go mad again with the thought!"

“Child, cease thy sobbing,” said the abbess; “I do but probe the wound to bring thee heal the sooner. The blame is mine. Thou wert ill taught indeed to render up thy soul to this man when thou didst give thy heart into his careless keeping. Was he a god, that thou shouldst offer up thine Isaac twice over, without a word, at his bidding? Child, thou hast sinned; yet art thou less blameful than I. My penance shall be heavy for my heedless guardianship of the orphan given to my care. And for thee, thou must shrive thyself. A holy man shall confess thee forthwith.”

When next Gwenelda sought the abbess, she was asked what penance had been accorded her.

“Ah,” she answered, “a penance all to light for sin like mine. I am but bidden to go on foot bareheaded, to yonder forest, and there to tend night and day a sick knight who dies a slow death in a lazar-house, being possessed by an evil spirit; and who is forced ever to keep his visor closed to cover his face, so loathly is he to look upon; and who speaks never human word, but only howls piteously like a wild beast.”

“Thou may’st find thy penance harder than thou deemest,” was the grave answer of the abbess; and her words proved true in the end.

Gwenelda took her way to the forest. It blew a fierce gale, and wild to the winds of heaven her fair hair was blown, like rays of the golden sun when he dies in the west. The thorny ways wounded her tender feet; yet on she went, looking neither to right nor to left, but thinking only of the dear ones in the old desolate hall of her dead father, who would need her circling arms and miss her again who so newly found. It was true that the lady abbess had promised they should be well cared for; but her mother-heart was sore for them, and she wondered more and more when she thought of that madness of love for their lost father which had once made her yield them up to death for his sake. She welcomed her hard penance, for she thought that by wearing out heavy days and nights in a work of mercy and healing, she might become more worthy of her rescued treasures.

As she entered the lazar-house, the possessed knight, who lay stretched on the bare ground, turned his barred visor towards her, and a dismal groan burst from his lips. From under the closed helm it rang with an unearthly sound. But void of all fear for herself, Gwenelda set about such offices as are needful for the sick. That done, she

sank humbly on her bended knees and prayed for the lost soul that had wandered from its earthly dwelling.

At midnight, when she deemed the knight slept, so still and powerless he lay, he slowly rose up to his feet, and looking at her long through the bars of his visor and grinding his teeth as sick men do in troubled dreams, he took her by the arm and led her forth from the lazar-house to where the forest was thickest and most sombre.

He was clad in a leather doublet, without other armour than his helm; but from his baldric hung a sword, and a dagger was thrust beneath the belt. Still no fear for her life troubled Gwenelda, for she thought not of herself. Yet the wood was wild and the hour dreary; and, by degrees, dreadful thoughts of unknown horror began to mingle with the calm of her penance-trial. She recalled the words of the abbess, "Perchance thou may'st find thy penance harder thou deemest." But to take her life at once seemed no purpose of the possessed knight; he paused often, and glared at her long with fixed and fiery eyes, as if doubtful what manner of agony to inflict upon her.

Now the wood-path opened, and glimpses of a watery moon, with a ring as of blood around it, showed the path more clearly; and the winds of heaven, released from the hold of the clasping boughs, once more blew freely upon the wandering golden hair and floating robe of the penitent Gwenelda.

But whither now was the evil knight leading her? Before her lay her father's castle, with its many towers rising above the chestnut-trees; that tower, from whose narrow loop-hole window her lord had leaped to save her favourite hound that was being worried to the death; and this with the wider casements, where safe in their warm nest her children were lying—the darlings of her love and sorrow. A strange quiver ran through her frame. She dared not think what new trial might await her.

The possessed knight, still leading her on with no gentle hand, paused before a low door which led down to the vaults below the castle chapel, which by some means he contrived to unfasten, though it was ever kept securely barred. Here descending the dark stone steps, green and slimy with long disuse, he half led, half dragged her after him, till they came to the wide and lofty vault which contained the dead of all her race. A dim lamp that burned at the far end of the vault showed her where the last coffin—her father's—was set. Here a sudden fury came over the possessed knight. Still grasping her with one hand, with the other, as if all at once endued with more than

human strength, her began to hack and hew the coffin with his sword, till the splinters flew far and wide, and rattled on wall, roof, and floor.

Horried at the fearful sacrilege, and powerless beneath this sudden show of malice, for a moment Gwenelda had no power to act. But now a new terror lent her force and courage. An overmastering dread seized her lest the knight's next attack should be on the children sleeping above in the old tower-chamber, which stood next to the chapel, and in the direction of which was a door leading upward from the vault. With a sudden spring, she tore herself from the grasp that held her, flew wildly through the door, firmly barred it on the outside, and, with the speed of life and death gained the turret-chamber.

She gathered the sleeping innocents in her arms, and fled down to the great portal, and out into the night, never staying her steps till she stood, all pale, panting and with bleeding feet, by the bedside of the lady abbess. Terror and flight had left her breathless; but, sinking on her knees, and still clasping beneath either arm a rescued little one, she appealed with craving looks to the good mother.

"It is well," said the abbess; "they shall be cared for."

Gwenelda stayed but to print one thankful kiss on the hand that was stretched out to comfort her, and hurried back to the fearful scene of her penance. As she neared the vault once more, all seemed still as death. She entered cautiously;— but what a sight was there! Her dead father's coffin lay bare, and white and cold lay the dead within it; while the flickering light from the distant lamp seemed to give motion and life to the senseless, fronting the body. A piercing shriek from Gwenelda woke him once more into fury. Again he lifted his sword as if to hack at the lifeless form before him. With another piercing shriek, which made the vault ring, Gwenelda seized his sword-arm and strove to stay the horrible sacrilege which made her very blood freeze. But this served only to turn his fury on herself.

Nerved with unnatural strength, he wound his arm about her. She felt powerless as a child in his grasp. In vain she struggled and writhed in his arms. Maddened and possessed indeed, as it seemed, with the passions of a fiend, there was no escape from his fury. What new horror was he about to inflict? Her senses almost forsook her. She could not think; she could not cry for mercy where mercy there was none. Out of that dreary vault no shriek of hers could reach her sleeping household.

She had struggled against his might till faint and sick, when an old toothless hound she well knew bounded in at the open door of the vault and threw his whole weight on the uplifted arm of the knight. Though the hound made no show of tearing him, the creature's presence gave her new strength. It was Bruno's hound. Oh that her lord could hear her! Filled with the forlorn hope that he might be near, she cried in her agony, "Oh, Bruno, lord and love, help me! Beloved of my soul, —dearer than life, —precious as heaven, —come to my rescue! Kill me, —let me die upon your breast, —but save, oh save me from this monster!"

The knight suddenly loosed his hold and started back. The hound dropped to his feet, and fawned and licked them in dumb devotion. The knight raised his visor, and the stern mad passion in his eyes grew calm. It was Bruno himself.

One glance at his face, and Gwenelda sank down before him on trembling knees. She threw wide her arms, and bared her true breast to the stroke she looked to meet, as she cried, with lips that smile in their deep joy, —

"O my lord, —my love, my love, —strike, —strike, and give me rest! Sweet will death be at thy hand, sweeter than life where thou art not! Strike, my Bruno, —strike!"

But the dagger with which his hand had played dropped from his hold. He took his sword and flung it from him; and he stood and gazed till his soul was satisfied.

It was enough: Gwenelda sprang up and flung her arms about his neck. So ended her sorrow and trial. Sir Bruno took her from Uther's lands, and their children with them. Doubtless she fell to her idol again.

"It was better so," said a knight-pilgrim, who, having laid aside scrip and staff, had found a welcome at the court of Camelot. "It is likely the lady Gwenelda loved more wisely for the fiery trial she had gone through. In my journey towards the far East, I recall having heard of a pilgrim the name of Sir Bruno, who had once been a man of a stern life, but had afterwards become noted for sundry acts of grace, and was the founder of the pious Order of the Carthusians. It may have been the same."

"Me thinks sir pilgrim," said King Arthur, "those journeying Eastward must have furnished you well with adventures. Have you no tale of the lands you passed through in your way towards the holy city of the Sepulchre?"

“One adventure,” replied the pilgrim, “and of a strange kind, I encountered, which impressed me much at the time, and I am not likely to forget it. It happened among the Black Mountains, a wild and dreary region, as I shall show.”

Anexo B

Historia de Griselda de Giovanni Boccaccio⁵

Narración décima

EL MARQUÉS DE SALUZZO, OBLIGADO A CASARSE EN VIRTUD DE LAS DEMANDAS DE SUS VASALLOS, TOMA POR MUJER A LA HIJA DE UN VILLANO, DE LA QUE TIENE DOS HIJOS, LOS CUALES HACE CREER QUE MANDA MATAR. Y LUEGO FINGE ESTAR HARTO DE ELLA Y HABER TOMADO OTRA MUJER, Y HACE VOLVER A SU CASA A SU HIJA, HACIÉNDOLA PASAR POR SU MUJER. EXPULSA A SU ESPOSA EN CAMISA Y, HALLÁNDOLA PACIENTE EN TODO, CON MÁS HONOR QUE NUNCA LA ADMITE EN SU CASA. LA MUESTRA A SUS HIJOS YA CRECIDOS Y COMO A MARQUESA LA HONRA Y HACE HONRAR.

Acabó la larga novela del rey, que a todos pareció haber complacido mucho, y Dioneo, riendo, dijo:

—El buen hombre que aquella noche esperaba bajar la cola erguida del fantasma de marras, no daría dos dineros por todos los elogios que a micer Torello prodigáis.

Y luego, sabiendo que solo le faltaba hablar a él, comenzó:

Apacibles amigas mías. el día de hoy, por lo que me parece, está consagrado a reyes y soldanes y gente por el estilo, por lo cual, para no separarme demasiado de los otros, voy a contar, respecto a un marqués, no una acción magnífica, sino una insensata bestialidad, aunque tuviera buen fin. Y no aconsejo que nadie la imite, porque lástima grande fue que a aquel hombre bien las cosas le aviniesen.

Hace mucho tiempo, en la casa de los marqueses de Saluzzo fue primogénito un mancebo llamado Gualtieri. El cual, no teniendo mujer ni hijos, no empleaba su tiempo más que en la caza y la cetrería y no pensaba en tomar mujer ni tener hijos, lo que me hace reputarlo por muy discreto. Pero esto no les complacía a sus vasallos, y varias veces le rogaron que se casase, para que él no quedase sin heredero ni ellos sin

⁵ Boccaccio, G. (2017). *Decamerón*. Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial España.

señor: y aun se ofrecieron a buscarle esposa tal y descendiente de tales padres, que él podría tener buena esperanza y contentarse mucho.

A lo que Gualtieri finalmente respondió:

—Amigos míos, me forzáis a una cosa que yo estaba decidido a no hacer nunca, considerando cuán serio asunto es encontrar persona que con las costumbres de uno bien encaje, y cuán abundosa copia hay de lo contrario, y cuán dura es la vida del que con mujer no proporcionada a él tiene que vivir. Y decir que por las costumbres de los padres podéis conocer las de las hijas y darme mujer que me plazca, es sandez, porque no sé cómo podéis conocer a los padres ni saber los secretos de las madres, y aun si los supierais, muchas veces las hijas difieren de sus padres. Pero, pues con esa cadena queréis sujetarme, yo la admitiré con gusto. Y para que, si la cosa me sale mal, no pueda quejarme de otro que de mí mismo, yo mismo quiero buscar mujer, advirtiéndooos que, escoja la que escoja, si vosotros como a esposa mía no la honráis, experimentaréis, con grave daño vuestro, cuán pesado me ha sido, por ceñirme a vuestros ruegos, buscar esposa contra mi voluntad.

Los buenos hombres respondieron que estaban acordes con todo ello, siempre que se casase.

Hacía tiempo que le agradaban a Gualtieri las maneras de una mocita pobre que habitaba en una villa cercana a su casa; y pareciéndole muy bella juzgó que con ella podría llevar una vida 1000satisfecha. Y así. sin más búsquedas efectuar, propúsose casarse con ella, y haciendo llamar a su padre, que era pobrísimo, convino que la tomaría por esposa.

Y tras esto Gualtieri hizo congregar a todos sus amigos de la comarca, y les dijo:

—Amigos míos. os ha placido y place que yo me resuelva a tomar mujer, y yo me he decidido a ello más por complaceros que por deseo de casarme. Ya sabéis que me prometisteis contentaros y honrar como esposa mía a cualquiera que yo escogiese, y ha venido el tiempo en que voy a cumplirlos mi promesa, esperando que vosotros a mí me la cumpláis. He encontrado una joven que me agrada, y a la que entiendo tomar por mujer y llevarla a casa dentro de pocos días. Pensad, pues, en preparar una hermosa fiesta de bodas y en recibir a la novia honrosamente, para yo de vuestra promesa quedar contento como vosotros quedaréis de la mía.

Los buenos hombres respondieron que ello les placía y que, fuese ella quien fuese, por señora la tendrían y la honrarían como tal. Y se aprestaron a ordenar fiesta grande y magnífica, y lo propio hizo Gualtieri. Mandó, así, preparar nupcias grandes y bellas e invitó a muchos amigos y parientes y a gran golpe de gentileshombres y otros del contorno, y, además, mandó cortar ropas muy lindas y ricas, a la medida de una mujer que le parecía ser de las proporciones de la jovencita con la que había resuelto casarse. Y también encargó ceñidores, y anillos, y una rica y hermosa corona, y todo lo que la novia necesitaba.

Y llegando el día de las bodas. Gualtieri, pasada la mitad de tercia, montó a caballo, e imitáronlo los que acudieron a honrarlo, y, dispuesto todo lo oportuno, dijo:

—Señores, hora es de ir a buscar a la joven esposa.

Y se puso en camino con toda su compañía, y llegaron a la aldea y, acercándose a la casa del padre de la muchacha, la, vieron volver de buscar agua a la fuente. Iba muy presurosa, porque quería ir con otras mujeres a ver a la esposa de Gualtieri. Gualtieri, al verla, la llamó por su nombre de Griselda, y le preguntó dónde se encontraba su padre. Ella, tímidamente, contestó:

—Señor, en casa.

Desmontó Gualtieri y, mandando a todos que lo esperasen, entró solo en la pobre casita, y halló al padre de la moza, que se llamaba Giannucolo, y le dijo:

—Vengo a casarme con Griselda, pero antes, en tu presencia, quiero que me diga ciertas cosas.

Y le preguntó si siempre, si por mujer la tomaba, estaría presta a complacerlo, sin amohinarse por nada que él hiciera o dijere, y si sería obediente. y otras cosas semejantes. A todas respondió ella que sí. Entonces, Gualtieri, tomándola de la mano, la hizo salir y en presencia de toda su compañía y todos los demás, la hizo desnudarse y, mandando traer las ropas que para ella había encargado, prestamente la hizo vestir y calzar y sobre sus cabellos mal peinados le puso una corona. Y, como todos se maravillasen de esto, dijo:

—Señores, esta es la que me propongo que sea mi mujer, si ella me quiere a mí por marido.

Y volviéndose a ella, que suspensa y tímida estaba, le dijo:

—Griselda, ¿me quieres por marido?

A lo que ella repuso:

—Sí, señor.

Y él dijo:

—Pues yo te quiero a ti por mujer.

Y en presencia de todos la desposó. Y, mandándola montar en un palafrén, la llevó, con muy honrosa compañía, a su casa. Hubo nupcias grandes y espléndidas y tanta fiesta como si se casase con la hija del rey de Francia.

Pareció que la joven, con los vestidos, cambiase de ánimo y de costumbres. Ya dijimos que era, bella de cuerpo y rostro, pero además de bella hízose tan cortés, placentera y graciosa, que no parecía haber sido hija de Giannucolo y pastores de ovejas, sino vástaga de algún noble señor, con lo que maravillaba a cuantos antes la habían conocido. Además, era tan obediente a su marido, que él se tenía por el más satisfecho hombre del mundo, y era también con los súbditos de su esposo tan graciable y benigna, que no había ninguno que no la amase y honrase muy de su grado. con lo que todos oraban por su bien. estado y mejora, diciendo: «Afirmábamos que Gualtieri no había obrado como discreto al tomar a esta por mujer, pero ha sido el más discreto y avisado del mundo, porque solo él pudo conocer la alta virtud de ella, virtud escondida bajo sus pobres ropas y sus maneras villanas». Y en resolución. no solo en su marquesado, sino en todas partes, antes de que pasara mucho tiempo, se razonaba de la valía y buenas obras de Griselda, y se enmendaba lo que se hubiera dicho contra el marido cuando la desposó.

Y a poco de estar con Gualtieri quedó embarazada y parió una niña, de lo que Gualtieri se holgó mucho. Mas algo después entróle a él un nuevo pensamiento en el ánimo, y fue que quiso con larga experiencia y cosas intolerables, probar la paciencia de ella. Al principio la punzó con palabras. diciendo que sus vasallos la miraban muy mal por su baja condición, sobre todo desde que veían que tenía hijos, y que tanto les contrariaba el nacimiento de la niña, que no hacían más que murmurar.

Oyendo esto la mujer, sin que el rostro se le demudare ni su resolución se alterara, habló así:

—Señor, haz de mí lo que creas idóneo para tu honor y consuelo, que yo estaré contenta con todo, porque bien sé que soy menos que los demás y que no merecería el honor que tu cortesía me hizo.

Mucho apreció Gualtieri esta respuesta, al notar que ella no se había elevado a soberbia alguna, por mucho honor que le hiciesen él o los demás.

Y algo después dijo a su mujer, con palabras vagas. que sus súbditos no podían soportar a la hija que con ella había tenido; y le envió un criado que con dolorido rostro le dijo:

—Señora, si no quiero morir he de hacer lo que mi señor me manda. Me ha mandado que coja a vuestra hija y que...

No dijo más. La mujer, al oír tales palabras, viendo el rostro del servidor y recordando las palabras que se le dijeron, comprendió que se había dado orden de matar a la niña. La sacó. pues, prestamente de la cuna y la besó y bendíjola y, aunque sintiera en el corazón gran congoja, sin cambiar de semblante tendió la niña al criado y dijo:

—Cumple lo que tu señor te haya mandado. pero no dejes a la niña de manera que las bestias y aves de presa la devoren. salvo si él te lo ordenara.

El criado cogió a la niña y manifestó a Gualtieri lo que la mujer había dicho. Y él, maravillado de la constancia de su esposa. envió a la niña a Bolonia con una pariente suya, rogándole que, sin decir que era hija de él, diligentemente la educara y criase.

Y ocurrió que la mujer tornó a quedar embarazada y a su tiempo parió un hijo varón. lo que mucho complugo a Gualtieri. Pero, no bastándole lo hecho ya, con mayor rigor hirió a la mujer, porque con turbado semblante. un día le dijo:

—Mujer, desde que pariste este varón me es imposible entenderme con mis vasallos, ya que se quejan muy amargamente de que un nieto de Giannuco haya de ser su señor. Por lo que temo que. si no quiero de mi rango ser expulsado, habré de hacer lo que ya otra vez hice, y al fin abandonarte y tomar otra esposa.

La mujer, lo escuchó con paciente ánimo y nada más respondió:

—Señor, piensa en contentarte y satisfacer tu placer. y no pienses en mí para nada, que solo me agradan las cosas que te agradan a ti.

Y, no pasados muchos días, Gualtieri hizo buscar al muchacho como hizo buscar a la niña y, fingiendo igualmente haberlo mandado matar, lo envió a criar a Bolonia, como a la niña. No puso la mujer otro rostro, ni dijo otras palabras que en la anterior ocasión, lo que mucho asombraba a Gualtieri, harto convencido de que ninguna otra mujer hubiese procedido igual. Y a no ser porque la veía tiernísima con

los hijos mientras le placía a él, habría creído que no se preocupaba de ellos, si bien comprendía que obraba así como discreta. En tanto, sus vasallos, creyendo que él había mandado matar a sus hijos, mucho lo censuraban y reputábanle de hombre cruel, y de su esposa tenían grandísima compasión. Y ella, cuando otras mujeres se condolían de la suerte de sus hijos, contestaba que ello no le atañía a ella más que al que los había engendrado.

Y pasados bastantes años desde el nacimiento de la niña, le pareció oportuno a Gualtieri hacer la última prueba de lo que sería capaz de aguantar su mujer, y a muchos de los suyos dijo que no podía seguir soportando por esposa a Griselda, y que conocía cuán mal y juvenilmente había hecho al desposarla, por lo que iba a recabar del Papa que le autorizase a tomar otra mujer y a repudiar a Griselda, cosa que muchos hombres de pro le reprendieron. A esto, nada respondió él, sino que convenía que fuese así. La mujer, oyendo estas cosas, esperaba volver a casa de su padre y acaso tener que volver a guardar ovejas, y esto y que el que tanto quería fuese de otra mujer, mucho le dolía. Pero, así como había soportado otras injurias de la Fortuna, también con firme semblante se dispuso a soportar estas.

No mucho después, Gualtieri hizo venir de Roma cartas falsificadas, e hizo creer a sus vasallos que el Papa le daba dispensa para dejar a Griselda y casarse otra vez. Y, haciéndola venir, en presencia de muchos, le dijo:

—Mujer, por concesión del Papa puedo tomar otra mujer y dejarte a ti; y como mis antepasados han sido grandes caballeros y señores de este país, donde los tuyos han sido siempre labradores, me propongo que dejes de ser mi mujer y a casa de Giannuco te vuelvas con la dote que me trajiste: y yo haré venir otra mujer que me convenga.

La mujer, al oír estas palabras, consiguió, no sin grandísimo trabajo, retener las lágrimas, contra lo que suelen hacer las mujeres, y dijo:

—Señor, siempre conocí que mi baja condición no convenía a vuestra nobleza, y el haber estado con vos, a vos y a Dios lo agradecí, no como don, sino como préstamo. Si os place acabarlo, debe satisfacerme y me satisface que acabe.

»Tomad el anillo con que me desposasteis. Me mandáis que me lleve la dote que traje, pero para ello no necesitaréis vos pagador, ni yo bolsa ni acémila. porque no he olvidado que desnuda me encontrasteis. Y si juzgáis honesto que este mi cuerpo

que ha llevado hijos vuestros sea visto de todos, me iré desnuda. Pero os mego que, en premio de mi virginidad, que os entregué y no me llevo. me dejéis al menos llevarme, a más de mi dote, una camisa con que cubrirme.

Gualtieri, aunque sentía más ganas de llorar que de otra cosa, con duro rostro dijo:

—Llévate una camisa.

Los que lo rodeaban le rogaron que le diese un vestido, para que no se viese pobre y vergonzosamente salir en camisa a la que durante más de trece años había sido su mujer. Pero las súplicas fueron vanas. Y la mujer, destocada, descalza y en camisa, encomendóse a Dios, y se fue de la casa de Gualtieri a la de su padre. no sin muchas lágrimas y dolor de cuantos la vieron. Giannuco, que nunca había llegado a creer real que su hija fuese esposa de Gualtieri, y que esperaba el caso de un instante a otro, le había guardado las ropas de que se despojó ella la mañana en que Gualtieri la desposó, y se las dio para que se vistiese. Y ella comenzó a hacer los servicios menudos de la casa paterna, como antes, sosteniendo con fuerte ánimo los fieros asaltos de la Fortuna.

Hecho esto, hizo Gualtieri creer a todos que había tomado por esposa a una hija de los condes de Pánago. Y mandó preparar gran apresto para las bodas y ordenó llamar a Griselda y le dijo:

—Voy a traer a la mujer con la que me caso, y quiero, cuando llegue, honrarla. Ya sabes que no hay en casa mujeres que sepan aderezar las estancias ni hacer otras cosas que para tan gran fiesta se requieren, y como tú conoces mejor que nadie las cosas de esta casa, dispón lo que deba hacerse, y manda invitar a las mujeres que te parezca y recibirlas como si la dueña fueses tú. Y, acabadas las bodas, podrás volverte a tu casa.

Todas aquellas palabras se hundían como cuchillos en el corazón de Griselda. que no había podido desprenderse del amor que a Gualtieri tenía, mas, como hizo en tiempos de su buena fortuna, respondió:

—Estoy presta y aparejada, señor.

Y con sus toscas prendas romañolas entró en la casa de la que poco antes había salido en camisa, y empezó a barrer y ordenar las cámaras, y a hacer poner en las salas tapices y colgaduras, y a ordenar la cocina, y a echar una mano a todo como si fuese una criada de la casa. Y pronto lo tuvo todo tan preparado y dispuesto como convenía.

Y después, de parte de Gualtieri, invitó a todas las señoras de la comarca y dióse a atender a la fiesta. Y llegado el día de las bodas, con sus pobres prendas vestida, con graciosos ánimos y ademanes y con contento semblante acogió a todas las damas que acudieron.

Había Gualtieri hecho educar diligentemente a sus hijos en casa de su parienta, que estaba casada con el conde de Pánago. Tenía la niña doce años ya y era la más bella mocita imaginable, y el muchacho contaba seis. Gualtieri había encargado a su pariente de Bolonia que con los mozos viniese a Saluzzo, llevando consigo buena y decorosa compañía, y le encargó que dijese a todos que la muchacha iba para casar, sin a nadie decir quién era. El caballero, haciendo lo que el marqués le rogaba, se puso a los pocos días en camino con la muchacha y su hermano, y él y una muy noble compañía llegaron a la hora del almuerzo a Saluzzo, donde todos los aldeanos y muchos vecinos de los contornos esperaban para ver llegar a la nueva esposa de Gualtieri. La cual fue por las mujeres recibida y llevada a la sala donde estaban las mesas puestas. Y Griselda, tal como estaba, risueñamente salió a su encuentro, diciendo:

—Bien venida seáis, mi señora.

Las mujeres, que mucho y en vano habían rogado a Gualtieri que dejase a Griselda permanecer sola en una cámara, o le prestase algunos de los trajes que habían sido suyos, para que no se presentase así a los forasteros, fueron acomodadas ante una mesa y comenzóselas a servir. Todos los hombres miraban mucho a la muchacha y decían que Gualtieri había hecho buen cambio, pero quien la alababa más, así como a su hermanito, era Griselda.

Gualtieri, pensando haber visto ya cuanto pudiera ver de la paciencia de su esposa, y advirtiendo que cosas tan insólitas no la cambiasen en nada, comprendió que no obraba así por mentecatez, sino por discreción, y parecióle que era hora ya de sacarla de tal amargura como imaginaba que debía encubrir bajo su compuesto semblante. Y, haciéndola venir, en presencia de todos le dijo, sonriendo:

—Qué te parece mi esposa?

—Señor —repuso Griselda—, me parece muy bien, y si es tau discreta como hermosa, no dudo de que seréis con ella el más feliz caballero del mundo. Pero os ruego tanto como puedo que no hagáis sufrir a esta lo que hicisteis a otra que vuestra

fue, pues no creo que ella pudiera soportarlo, por ser más joven y porque, entre delicadezas se ha criado, mientras la otra lo fue entre fatigas.

Viendo Gualtieri que Griselda creía firmemente que la mocita iba a ser su esposa, sin que por eso la mujer dejase de hablar decorosamente, la hizo sentar a su lado y dijo:

—Griselda, ya es tiempo de que recojas el fruto de tu larga paciencia, y también de que aquellos que me han reputado cruel, inicuo y bestial, conozcan que lo hacía mirando a un predeterminado fin y queriendo a ti enseñarte a ser buena esposa, a ellos, a saberte honrar, y a mí a tener perpetua quietud mientras contigo viviese. Lo que, cuando se trató de tomar mujer, tuve gran miedo de que no me ocurriese, y por eso, para bien garantizarme, por cuantos medios pude te ofendí e hice sufrir. Y como nunca he advertido que ni con palabras ni con hechos te hayas apartado de mi deseo, pareciéndome poder encontrar en ti el consuelo que deseaba, pretendo devolverte en una hora lo que en muchas te quité y curarte con suma dulzura las heridas que te abrí. Y así con risueño ánimo toma a esta que tú mi esposa crees, y a su hermano, y sabe que son nuestros hijos. Ellos son los que tú y otros durante mucho tiempo creísteis que yo cruelmente había hecho matar; y en cuanto a mí, tu marido soy, y sobre todas las cosas te amo; y aun creo que no hay otro que pueda, como yo, jactarse de tener mujer parecida.

Y, esto dicho, la abrazó y con ella, que lloraba de alegría, se acercaron adonde su hija permanecía. estupefacta de oír tales cosas, y abrazáronla tiernamente y a su hermano también, y con esto todos los que otra cosa creían se desengañaron. Las mujeres, muy contentas, se levantaron de la mesa, se fueron con Griselda a una habitación donde, bajo mejores auspicios que la primera vez, la desnudaron y la vistieron de espléndidas ropas, y como a señora (aunque ni vestida de andrajos hubiera dejado de parecerlo). la condujeron otra vez a la sala. Hízose a los muchachos maravillosa fiesta, y todos andaban muy contentos de tales cosas, y el solaz y el regocijo se multiplicaron a Gualtieri, aunque rigurosas e intolerables juzgaren las experiencias hechas con su mujer, pero por más discreta aún tuvieron a Griselda. Después de algunos días el conde Pánago tornó a Bolonia, y Gualtieri, sacando a Giannuco de sus tareas, le puso en categoría de suegro, de suerte que muy honrado y

consolado terminó la vejez. Y luego, casando muy bien a su hija, con Griselda, a la que siempre honró cuanto pudo, larga y felizmente Gualtieri vivió.

¿Qué más cabe decir sino que también en las casas pobres llueven del cielo espíritus divinos. como en las reales surgen personas más dignas de guardar puercos que de ejercer señoría sobre los hombres? ¿Quién, no siendo Griselda, habría podido, con el rostro, no ya sereno, sino risueño, sufrir las inauditas y rigurosas pruebas a que Gualtieri la sometió? Aunque a él no le hubiera venido mal dar con una que, cuando de casa la echó en camisa, hubiera sabido menearse tan bien, que de otro consiguiera un buen vestido.

Había terminado la narración de Dioneo, y mucho las mujeres hablaron, cuál comentando una cosa y cuál otra, y tal censurando una cosa y tal la otra loando. Mas el rey, alzando el rostro hacia el cielo y viendo que ya el sol, en la hora vespéral, declinaba, sin levantarse habló así:

—Galanas mujeres. como creo que conoceréis, el buen juicio de los mortales no consiste solo en tener en la memoria las cosas pretéritas o conocer las presentes, sino en, por una y otras, saber por ellas prever el futuro. lo que por hombres graves es considerado señal de sumo criterio. Como sabéis, hará mañana quince días que salimos de Florencia, con el fin de tener algún entretenimiento y sustentar nuestra salud y vida, cesando en las melancolías, dolores y angustias que en nuestra ciudad continuamente se ven desde que empezó el tiempo de la epidemia. En lo que, según mi juicio, obramos acertada y honestamente, porque, si he sabido reparar bien en ello, aunque hayamos narrado cuentos risueños y quizá incitadores a concupiscencia, y aunque sin cesar hayamos comido y bebido bien. y cantado y tocado, lo que incita los ánimos débiles a cosas poco honestas, ningún acto, alguna palabra. ninguna cosa he conocido, por vuestra parte ni la nuestra, que merezca reprensión, y lo que me ha parecido ver y sentir ha sido continua honestidad, continua concordia y continua fraternal familiaridad. Y de ello me congratulo, porque redunda en honor y servicio vuestro y nuestro. Mas para que la muy prolongada costumbre no haga nacer cosas que generen fastidio: y para

que una ausencia demasiado larga no haga murmurar a algunos; y como todos, cada uno en su jornada, han tenido la parte de honor que aún en mí permanece. yo juzgo que, si os pluguiere. sería cosa conveniente tornarnos al lugar de donde partimos. Sin lo cual, y mirándolo bien, nuestra reunión, ya conocida por otros, podría multiplicarse de manera que cesase nuestro secreto. Y por eso, si seguís mi consejo, yo conservaré la corona hasta nuestra partida, que me propongo que sea mañana. Si de otra manera lo decidieseis, ya tengo pensado a quién para el día siguiente debo coronar.

Hubo muchos razonamientos entre las mujeres y los jóvenes, pero al fin consideraron útil y honesto el consejo del rey y resolvieron hacer lo que él había indicado. Por lo cual el rey, haciendo llamar al mayordomo, discutió con él lo que debía hacerse a la siguiente mañana y, licenciando al grupo hasta la hora de la cena, se levantó. Las mujeres y los demás, levantándose también, se entregaron unos a un entretenimiento y otros a otro, como solían. Y, llegada la hora de la cena, con sumo placer a ella se entregaron, y luego comenzaron a cantar, tocar y danzar. Y, como Lauretta dirigiese un baile, ordenó el rey a Fiammetta que dijese una canción. Ella, muy risueñamente, comenzó así:

*Si viniese el amor sin darnos celos
no habrá mujer nacida
que contenta cual yo vivir supiera.*

*Si juventud alegre
debe mujer buscar en bello amante,
o de mérito ornato,
o valor, o proeza,
o urbanidad, talento y habla fina,
o gentileza entera,
yo encuentro todo eso, porque ciertas,
estando enamorada,
todas las veo en la esperanza mía.*

*Pero como reparo
que otras mujeres son cual yo discretas,
de pavor me estremezco
y, lo peor pensando,
temo ver en las otras un deseo
que me traspasa el alma;
y así el que es para mí suma ventura
me hace, desconsolada,*

suspirar y encontrarme en triste vida.

*Si tanta fe tuviese
en mi señor cual tengo en su valía,
no estaría celosa,
mas tantas hay que invitan al amante,
que delincuentes júzgoles a todas.
Y esto me aflige, y moriría presta,
que de cuantas lo miran
sospecho y temo que se me lo lleven.*

*Así, por Dios a todas
las mujeres suplico que no intenten
hacerme en esto ultraje,
porque si hubiere alguna
que con palabras, signos o mohines
mi daño aquí buscare,
tenga por cierto que de yo saberlo,
si no pierdo el sentido,
la haría arrepentir de tal locura.*

Cuando Fiammetta hubo terminado su canto, Dioneo, que estaba a su lado, le dijo, riendo:

—Señora, gran cortesía haríais haciendo conocer eso a todas, a fin de que por ignorancia no os fuese quitada la posesión de lo que apreciáis; y más pudiendo airaros como decís.

Y tras aquel cantar se entonaron otros. Y como era ya cerca de medianoche, todos, cuando al rey le plugo, se fueron a acostar. En cuanto el nuevo día apareció, todos se levantaron y, habiendo ya el mayordomo enviado los equipajes a Florencia, allá, guiados por el discreto rey, los del grupo retornaron. Y los tres jóvenes dejaron a las siete mujeres en Santa María Novella, de donde partieron, y se despidieron de ellas y a sus otros placeres atendieron; y ellas, cuando tiempo les pareció, volvieron a sus casas.

Anexo C

Reescritura de Francesco Petrarca⁶

Sen. XVII, 3.

To the same person, a wife's remarkable obedience and faithfulness.*

I have seen the book [*Decameron*] you produced in our mother tongue long ago, I believe, as a young man; it was delivered to me—from where or how I do not know. If I were to say I have read it, I would be lying, since it is very big, having been written for the common herd and in prose, and I was too busy and time was short; and at that, as you know, I was disturbed by war breaking out on all sides. Though I am far from sympathizing with it, I still cannot avoid being disturbed by the ups and downs of the republic. Well, what of it? I leafed through it, and like a hurried traveler who looks around from side to side without halting, I noticed somewhere that the book itself had been attacked by dogs' teeth, but admirably defended by your walking-stick and your yells. This did not surprise me. For I know the power of your talent, and I know from experience that there is breed of men who are insolent and lazy, who rebuke in others whatever they themselves either do not want, do not know, or are unable to do; only in this are they learned and shrewd, but otherwise speechless. I did enjoy leafing through it; and if anything met my eye that was too frankly lewd, your age at the time of writing excused it—also the style, the idiom, the very levity of the subject matters a great deal for whom you are writing, and variety in morals excuses variety in style. In the midst of much light-hearted fun, I caught several pious and serious things about which I still have no definitive judgment since nowhere did I get totally absorbed. But it happened just about as it does to runners: I looked into the beginning and the end somewhat more curiously than the rest. At the beginning you described perfectly, in my opinion, and magnificently deplored the condition of our country—I mean during that plague-ridden time, mournful and wretched, which our age witnessed worse than all before us. At the end, you placed the closing story, far different from many of the preceding ones. It has so pleased me and engrossed me that, among so many cares, it

⁶ Petrarca, F. (1992). *Sen. XVII, 3. To the same person, a wife's remarkable obedience and faithfulness. Letters of Old Age: Rerum Senilium Libri I-XVIII*, volumen II: Libros X-XVIII (pp. 655-668). The Johns Hopkins University Press.

nearly made me forget myself and want to commit it to memory so that I might repeat it to myself not without pleasure whenever I wished, and to retell it, whenever the occasion arose, to my friends, chatting, as we do. I did so little later; and when I recognized that it was pleasing to the listeners, suddenly, in the midst of talking, I was struck by the idea that maybe such a sweet story would appeal also to those who do not know our language, since it had always pleased me after hearing it many years earlier, and I gathered it had pleased you to the point that you considered it not unworthy of your vernacular style, and of the end of your work, where the art of rhetoric tells us to put whatever is more powerful.

And so, on certain day, when my mind was being torn as usual between various thoughts, angry at them and at myself, so to speak, I said goodbye to all of them for a time, and seizing my pen, set out to write that very story of yours, hoping that you would surely be delighted that I would, of my own accord, be a translator of your works, something I would not readily have undertaken for anyone else. I was drawn by love for you and for the story, but not the point of forgetting that saying of Horace in his *Art of Poetry* [133-34],

You will not try to render word for word,
You trusty dragoman.

I have told your story in my own words, or rather changing or adding a few words at some points in the narrative because I believed that you not only would allow it to be done, but would approve it. Although many have praised and sought the story, I decided to dedicate your work to you, not anyone else. Whether I have deformed it or, perhaps, beautified it by changing its garment, you be the judge, the house, the way—so that you, not I, must render an account of your works. Whoever asks me whether it is true, that is, whether I have written a history or just a tale, I shall reply with the words of Crispus, “Let the responsibility fall on the author” [*Jug.* 17], namely my Giovanni. With this preface, I now begin.

On the western side of Italy there is a very high mountain of the Apennine chain called Monviso, whose summit, piercing the clouds, rises into the pure ether, a mountain famous for its size, but even more as the source of the Po which, flowing

from a tiny spring from its side, moves toward the rising sun, and soon swollen by amazing tributaries over a short downward course, becomes not only one of the greatest streams, but is called “the king of rivers” by Virgil [*G.* 1.482]; with its strong current, it divides Liguria, then separates Emilia, Flaminia, and Venetia, and finally empties with many huge mouths into the Adriatic Sea. That section of land, which I spoke of before, composed of both a lovely plain and interspersed hills and mountains, is equally sunny and charming throughout, and takes its name [Piedmont] from the foot of the mountain that it lies under. And it has a number of outstanding cities and towns; among them, at the foot of Monviso, the land of the Saluzzi teeming with hamlets and castles, is ruled by certain noble Marquises.

One of these, the first and greatest of them, was a certain Gualtieri to whom fell the governance of the family and of all the lands. He was in the prime of youth and beauty, and no less noble in manners than in blood; in short, a fine gentleman in all respects, except that, being content with his lot, he was most unconcerned about the future. A devotee of hunting and fowling, he became so obsessed with it that he neglected nearly everything else; and, what his people bore hardest, he shrank from the very suggestion of marriage. After they had borne this in silence for some time, they finally went to him in a body; one of them, who was more influential or persuasive and on more familiar terms with his lord, said: “Most excellent Marquis, your kindness gives us the nerve to speak with you man to man with respectful confidence any time the situation warrants. And now let my voice convey to your ears the silent wish of all, not because I have anything unique to say on this matter, but because you have proven by many tokens that you are fond of me, among others. Well then, while we like everything about you, for good cause, and always have, so that we consider ourselves happy with such a lord, there is one thing which, if you let yourself be talked into it and lend us a willing ear, will make us plainly the happiest people in the entire neighborhood: namely, that you should give serious thought to marriage, and bend your neck to that lawful yoke not just freely but with determination, and the sooner the better. For the days fly but rapidly; and, although you are in the bloom of youth, old age still pursues this bloom relentlessly, and death itself is very near at any age. No one is granted an exemption from this levy; all alike must die, and just as that is certain, so it is unsettled when it will happen. Therefore receive, we pray, the prayers

of those who would never balk at any command from you. However, leave to us the job of searching for a wife; for we will find for you a woman worthy of you and born of such noble parents that one is bound to expect the best from her. Free all your people from a disturbing anxiety, we beg you, lest perchance something, humanly speaking, happen to you: you depart without a successor, and we are left behind without a God-given lord.”

The pious entreaty moved the gentleman’s heart, and he said, “Friends, you force me to do something that never entered my mind. I enjoyed total freedom, which is rare in marriage. However, I willingly submit to my subjects’ wishes, relying on your forethought and loyalty. But I relieve you of the task for which you volunteer, to seek a wife for me, and I take it upon my own shoulders. For what does the nobility of one confer upon another? Often sons are utterly unlike their parents; whatever good there is in man is from no one else but God. Therefore, I will entrust to Him the destiny of my state and my marriage, hoping for His usual mercy. He will find for me what is expedient for my peace and well-being. And so, since it has so pleased you, I shall take a wife; I promise you this in good faith, and I shall neither disappoint your desire nor delay it. You, on the other hand, promise me one thing and keep it in mind, that whatever wife I myself shall choose, you will attend with the highest honor and veneration, nor will there be any one of you who ever challenges or complains about my choice. It was your doing that I have subjected my spirit, which you know was utterly free, to the yoke of matrimony; let the choice of the yoke itself be mine; whoever my wife will be, let her be your mistress as though she were the daughter of the Roman emperor.”

They promised unanimously and joyfully that nothing would stand in the way of them eagerly undertaking to carry out most magnificently their lord’s proclamation on a set day, whereas it seemed to them scarcely possible ever to see the longed-for wedding day. Thus the meeting came to an end, and he nevertheless assigned the responsibility for the wedding celebration to his domestics, and he proclaimed the day.

Not far from the palace there was a small hamlet inhabited by a few poor people, of whom the poorest of all was named Giannucolo. But since heavenly grace sometimes visits even the huts of poor people, he happened to have an only daughter, Griselda by name, outstanding enough in bodily comeliness, but so splendid in the

beauty of her ways and spirit that there was nothing finer. Being reared on scanty food, always in the most terrible want, unacquainted with any pleasure, she had learned to expect no luxury or easy; but in her maiden heart was hidden a brave and wise spirit. She cheered her father's dotage with inestimable love, and would pasture his few sheep, all the while wearying her fingers on the distaff; and then, returning home, she would prepare vegetables and a dinner in keeping with their fortune, spread his bead on the floor, and, in short, perform in the narrow space all the chores of an obedient, dutiful daughter. Gualtieri, who often passed that way, had always cast his eyes on this maiden, not with a young man's lust, but with an old man's gravity. With his keen insight he had noticed her exceptional virtue, superior in her sex and age, and hidden from the eyes of the multitude by her humble condition, with the result that he determined at the same time to have a wife, which he had never before wanted—and to have her alone, and no one else.

The wedding day was at hand; but where the bride was to come from, no one knew; everyone was wondering. Meanwhile, he himself shopped for golden rings, crowns, and girdles; but he had expensive clothing, shoes, and everything of that sort that was needed, made to order on another girl's measurements, who was just like her in size. The awaited day came; and since no gossip about the bride was heard, everyone's astonishment had grown immensely. Meal time arrived, and the whole palace was teeming with vast preparation. Then Gualtieri, as though setting out to meet the approaching bride, stepped out of the palace escorted by a crowd of noblemen and ladies. Griselda, unaware of all that was being prepared for her, had completed her chores around the house and was carrying water from a distant spring across her father's threshold, so that, having discharged her other obligations, she might hasten with her girlfriends to see her lord's bride. Just then Gualtieri, walking deep in thought, called her by name and asked her where her father was; when she answered respectfully and humbly that her was at home, he said: "Tell him to come to me."

When the poor old man came, he took him a little aside, by the hand, and, in a low voice said, "I know, Giannucolo, that you are fond of me, and I know you are an honest man; and I believe you want whatever is my pleasure. But there is one thing I would especially like to know: whether you would have me, who am your lord, for a son-in-law by giving me your daughter to wife."

The old man, astonished by the unexpected proposal, was paralyzed, and barely gasping a few words, said at last, "There is nothing I ought to want or not want except what is pleasing to you, who are my lord."

"Then," said he, "let us go inside alone so that I can ask her about certain things in your presence."

So while the other waited in astonishment, they entered and found the girl bustling about for her father's sake and stunned by the arrival of so great a visitor. Gualtieri confronted her with these words: "It pleases both your father and me that you be my wife. I believe it would please you too. But I must ask you whether, after this is all done, which will be soon, you are ready and willing never to disagree with my will in anything, just as I agree with you in everything, and whatever I wish to do with you, you will let me with all your heart, without any gesture or word of repugnance."

To this she replied, trembling with astonishment, "I know, my lord, that I am unworthy of so great an honor. But if it is your wish and if it is my lot, I will not only never knowingly do, but not even think anything that is against your wishes; nor will you ever do anything, even if you order me to die, that I would bear grudgingly."

"That is enough," he said. So he then led her out into the open, and showed her off to the people, saying, "This is my wife, this is our lady; honor her, love her, and if you hold me dear, you are to hold her most dear."

Then, lest she bring into her new home any trace of her former condition, he ordered her to be undressed, and to be clothed from head to foot in new garments. This was carried out discreetly and speedily by the ladies in waiting, who vied in cuddling her in their bosom and on their lap. Thus this girl was dressed; her dishevelled hair was combed and braided by their hands, and she was adorned for the occasion with jewels and a crown, and, as it were, suddenly transformed so that the people could hardly recognize her. Gualtieri solemnly betrothed her with a precious ring that he had brought for this purpose, and he had her mounted on a snow-white horse and led to the palace, as the people accompanied them and rejoiced. In this fashion the marriage was celebrated and that most happy day brought to a close.

In a short while so much divine favor had shone upon the poor bride that she seemed to have been brought up and trained not in that shepherd's cottage but in the imperial court. She came to be loved and adored incredibly by all; and even those who

had known her from birth could scarcely be persuaded that she had been Giannucolo's daughter, so great was the beauty of her life and her ways, the gravity and sweetness of her words with which she bound the hearts of all to her with the knot of great love. Soon her fame, with blazoning heraldry, spread her name not only within her native territory, but throughout the neighboring provinces, so that many ladies and gentlemen eagerly thronged to see her. Thus Gualtieri, graced by a humble but signal and thriving marriage, lived in utter peace at home and abroad with the utmost favor of men, and was on all sides considered a very wise man because he had with such discernment grasped the extraordinary virtue hidden under so much poverty. Nor indeed did the clever bride attend only to domestic, womanly duties, but—where the situation required—official duties as well, in her husband's absence arbitrating and settling the country's disputes and the disagreements of the nobles with such grave pronouncements, such maturity and fairness of judgment that everyone declared that the lady had been sent by heaven for the public well-being. And not much time had passed when she became pregnant and at first the people worried with anxious expectation, but then she gave birth to a very beautiful daughter. Although they would have preferred a son, yet with her fertility, which they had prayed for, she made not only her husband but the whole country happy.

Meanwhile Gualtieri, as it happens to people, after the baby had been weaned, was seized by a strange craving—how praiseworthy, let the more learned ones judge—to probe deeper into his dear wife's faithfulness, which he had already proved amply, and to keep testing it again and again. He therefore called her aside into the bedroom and spoke to her with troubled brow: "You know, O Griselda, for I do not believe that in your present fortune you have forgotten your past condition—you know, I say, how you came to this house. To me of course you are dear enough and beloved. But not so to my nobles, especially since you have borne your first child; they are utterly prejudiced against being under a mistress who is a commoner. So I, who hanker for peace with them, must obey not my own judgment but that of others about your daughter, and do what is as repugnant to me as anything could be. But I would never do it without your knowledge. I want you to adjust your thinking to mine and to apply that patience you promised from the beginning of our marriage."

Upon hearing this, unmoved in word or in countenance, she said, "You are our lord, and this little daughter and I are yours. Do as you please, therefore, with what belongs to you; for nothing can please you that would displease me; there is nothing whatever that I either hanker to have or fear to lose, except you. This I have pinned to the bottom of my heart, never to be plucked either by the lapse of time or by death; anything else can happen sooner than my mind change."

He was happy at the reply, but putting on a sad look, he left; and after a short while he sent to his wife one of his henchmen, the one he trusted the most and used to employ on weightier business, instructing him on what he wanted done. Come to her at knight the man said, "O madam, forgive me, and do not blame me for what I am forced to do. You who are so wise know what it is like to be under a master; intelligent as you are, you realize the harsh necessity to obey, even if you have never had to. I have been ordered to take this baby and to...." Here he broke off speaking, and as though expressing by silence the cruelty of his task, he said no more.

The man's reputation was suspect, his looks were suspect, the hour was suspect, and so were his words. Although she clearly understood from all this that her sweet daughter would be killed, she did not shed a tear, nor utter a sigh—a terribly hard thing even for a nurse, let alone a mother. But with unwrinkled brow she picked up the little girl, looked at her for a short while, and as she kissed her fondly, she blessed and marked her with the sign of the holy cross, and handed her over to the henchman, saying, "Go, and carry out what our lord has enjoined upon you. I beg only one thing: take care that no wild beasts or birds mangle this little body, unless, however, you have been otherwise ordered."

When he returned to his lord and told him what had been said and what had been replied, and offered him his daughter, fatherly devotion profoundly stirred his heart; yet, he did not change the original harshness of his plan. He ordered the henchman to wrap her in rags, throw her into a basket, place her on a gentle mule, and to take her to Bologna with all possible diligence to his sister, who was married to the Count of Panago, and hand her over to be reared with motherly tenderness and taught good manners, and besides hidden so carefully that no one could find out whose daughter she was. At once the henchman departed and zealously fulfilled the task assigned to him.

Meanwhile, often observing his wife's countenance and words, Gualtieri never noticed any sign of a change of heart, no less liveliness and diligence, her usual obedience, the same love, no sadness, no mention of her daughter—her name was never heard from her mother's mouth deliberately or incidentally.

Four years had gone by in this state, when there she was pregnant again and gave birth to a very handsome son, to the immense joy of the father and of all his friends. When the child, after two years, was weaned from his nurse, the father returned to his usual whim, and again spoke to his wife. He said, "Long ago you heard that my people can hardly put up with our marriage, especially since they learned of your fertility, but never more bitterly than since you gave birth to a boy. They say, and often this muttering has reached my ears: 'So when Gualtieri goes, Giannucolo's grandson will rule over us, and such a noble country will be subject to such a lord!' Many things of this tenor are tossed about daily among the people, so that I, being eager for peace and, to admit the truth, fearing for myself, am driven to dispose of this infant as I did his sister. I am forewarning you of this so that you will not be upset by a sudden unexpected grief."

To this she replied, "I have said and will repeat: I can neither want nor not want anything except what you want, and in these children is nothing of mine but the birth pangs. You are my lord and theirs, use you right over your property, and do not seek my consent. For the moment I entered your house, as I laid aside my clothes, I laid aside my wishes and feelings, and put on yours; therefore, in anything whatever you want, I want too. Why, if I knew beforehand of your beforehand of your future will, whatever it might be, I would start wanting and hankering before you did. Now, I cannot anticipate what is on your mind, but gladly follow it. Imagine that I feel it is your pleasure that I die; I shall die willingly, and nothing at all, not even death, will be equal to our love."

Admiring the woman's constancy, he departed with troubled countenance, and immediately sent the same henchman once again to her who, after many excuses for obeying out of necessity and many appeals for forgiveness if he had caused or was causing her anything untoward, he demanded the child as though he were about to commit a terrible crime. With always the same bearing, whatever the condition of her mind, she took up her son, whose beauty and disposition were lovable not only to the

mother but to everyone; and marking him with the sign of the cross, and blessing him as she had done with her daughter, and clinging to him with her eyes as long as she dared, she kissed him tenderly, and without revealing any sign whatever of grief, she offered him to the messenger and said, "Take him do what you have been ordered. Noe too I pray for one thing, and that is, if it can be, you protect these tender limbs of this beautiful baby from the pecking of birds and the clawing of beats."

Returning to his lord with this charge, he drove him into more and more consternation, so that, had he not known that she loved her children very much, he could almost have suspected that this firmness in a woman proceeded from a certain savagery of heart; but, though very fond of all her people, she did not love anyone more than her husband. The henchman was ordered to Bologna, and took the boy where he had taken his sister.

These test of conjugal affection and faithfulness could have sufficed for the most stubborn husband. But there are those who, once they begin, never stop, or rather, they press on and stick to their purpose. Thus, with his eyes fixed on his wife, he watched assiduously whether there was any change in her toward him; but he could find nothing at all, except that she daily became more faithful and obedient to him, to the point where the two of them seemed to be just one mind, and that one not shared by both, but only the husband's; for the wife had resolved never to want or not want anything for herself, as had been said.

Gradually, Gualtieri's reputation had begun to grow stained because with inhuman harshness and with regret and shame for a lowly marriage, he had ordered his children killed. For the children were nowhere to be seen and no one had heard where in the world they were; wherefore that man, famous otherwise and dear to his people, had now made himself infamous and hateful to many. His fierce spirit was not bent thereby, but he went ahead in his usual sternness and that cruel lust of his for testing her. And so, after twelve years had passed following his daughter's birth, he sent messengers to Rome to bring back forged apostolic letters, with which he made known to the people that he had received permission from the Roman Pontiff, for the sake of his own peace and that of his nation, to repudiate his first marriage and take another wife. Nor was it of course difficult to persuade those ignorant mountaineers of anything whatsoever. When this news reached Griselda, saddened, I imagine, but

unshaken, she stood firm, as one who had once for all decided about herself and her lot, and awaited what he, to whom she had subjected herself and her all, would decree.

He had already sent to Bologna and asked his brother-in-law to bring his children to him, while the rumor spread everywhere that that girl was being brought to him to be his wife. To carry this out faithfully, the brother-in-law took to the road on the agreed day with a brilliant escort of nobles, bringing the girl, already marriageable, of peerless beauty and richly adorned, along with her brother who was already in his seventh year.

During all this, to test his wife once again with his usual skill, and to crown her grief and shame, Gualtieri led her into the street and said in the presence of many, “I was glad enough to be married to you, looking to your character, not your background. Since I now realize that every great fortune is but a great servitude, I am not allowed to do what any peasant can. My people force me and the Pope authorizes me to take another wife, and a wife is now on her way and will arrive shortly. Therefore, be brave, give way to another, and take back your dowry and return calmly to your former home; to man no lot is everlasting.”

She replied, “My lord, I always knew that my lowliness was incompatible with your grandeur; and I never considered myself worthy of, I will not say marriage to you, but service under you. And in this house, where you made me mistress, I call God to witness I have always remained a maid at heart. Therefore, I thank God and you for this time I have been with you with great honor, far above anything I deserved. As for the rest, I am, prepared to return to my father’s home with a good and peaceful heart, and to spend my old age and to die where I spent my childhood, always a happy and honorable widow for having been the wife of such a man. I willingly yield to the new wife who I wish will come to you happy; and since this is your pleasure, I depart not against my will from here where I lived most gladly. But as for telling me to take my dowry with me, I see what it amounts to, for I have not forgotten how I was once stripped of my own clothes on the threshold of my father’s house, and dressed in yours I came to you; I had no other dowry whatsoever but faithfulness and nakedness; therefore, look, I take off this dress and I return the ring with which you wed me. The other rings and clothing and ornaments, with which I became the envy of all because you gave them to me, are in your bedroom. I left my father’s home naked; I would

return there naked, except that I consider it unbecoming that this womb, in which lay the children you begot, should appear naked to the people. Therefore, if it pleases you, and not otherwise, I pray and entreat that, in payment of the virginity I brought here and cannot take back, you let me keep one of those shifts I like to wear in your company, to cover the belly of your former wife.”

Tears overflowed her husband’s eyes so that he could no longer hold them back. So, turning his face, he barely uttered the trembling words, “And you may have a single shift.” And so he left in tears.

Undressing herself in the front of everyone, she kept only the shift for herself, and covered by it, went forth in the presence of all, bare-headed and barefoot, and so, with many following her and weeping and blaming fortune, she, the only one with dry eyes and august in noble silence, walked back to her paternal home.

The old man had always been doubtful of his daughter’s marriage, had never entertained much hope, and always thought it would happen that, once the husband had had his fill of a humble wife, he, a great man, proud in the manner of the nobles, would throw her out. So he had kept her shaggy smock, shabby with age, hidden in a corner of the house. Therefore, when he heard the hubbub not of his daughter, who came back silently, so much as of her escort, he ran to meet her at the door and covered his half-naked daughter with her old dress. She remained with her father a few days with such marvelous calm and kindness that no sign appeared of a sad spirit, and no vestige of a more prosperous situation, since indeed in the midst of riches had always lived poor in spirit and humble.

By then the Count of Panago was approaching, and the rumor of the new marriage spread everywhere. The day when he would arrive in Saluzzo had been learned, for he had sent ahead one of his men. Therefore, the day before, Gualtieri summoned Griselda, who came most loyally, and said to her, “I wish to receive splendidly the girl who is to arrive here tomorrow for dinner, and the ladies and gentlemen who will be with her, as well as our own who will join in the banquet, so that each will be welcomed and seated according to the full honor due his rank. But I have no women in the palace fit for this job; and do, despite your poor dress, you will assume the hostess’s responsibility for receiving and seating them properly, since you know my ways.”

She replied, "Not only gladly, but eagerly, will I always do this and whatever I feel is your pleasure. Nor will I ever tire of this or slow down, as long as there is any breath left in me," and, as she said it, she grabbed the housemaid's broom and mop, began to sweep the house, set the tables, make the beds, and urge on the other women in the manner of a most faithful maid.

At the third hour of the next day the count arrived. Everyone vied to admire the manners and beauty of the girl and of her little brother. There were those who said that Gualtieri had made a wise and happy change, because this bride was more refined and noble and he was getting such a fine brother-in-law too. In the feverish preparations for the banquet, Griselda was everywhere on hand and attentive to everything. She was not dejected by so great a fall, nor embarrassed by her worn-out clothes; but with a serene look she met the girl at the door, bent her knee like a servant, and with lowered eyes she said reverently and humbly, "Welcome, my lady"; and afterward she received the other guests with a smile and with words of admirable sweetness. Very skillfully she so set the huge palace in order that everyone, and especially the strangers, marveled mightily at her grand manner and at the good sense beneath such dress, while she, above all, could not stop praising both the girl and the little boy, extolling in turn the girl's and the boy's refinement.

At the very timer when everyone was to sit down at table, turning to her, Gualtieri said in the presence of all, in a loud voice as though joking, "What do you think, Griselda, of this bride of mine? Is she fair enough, handsome enough?" She replied, "Quite; no one fairer or handsomer can be found. Either with no one else ever, or with her, you can enjoy a peaceful, happy life; and that it may be so I wish and hope. One thing I sincerely beg of you and warn you: do not harass this one with those stings with which you harassed your other wife. For because she is younger and has been brought up more dedicatedly, she would not have the strength, as I sense, to endure them."

As she said this, he gazed at the alacrity and weighed the constancy of the women he had offended so often and so bitterly, feeling sorry for her undeserved lot, and no longer able to bear it, he said, "Dear Griselda, I know your faithfulness well enough, I have observed it; and I do not believe there is anyone under the heavens who has reaped such great proofs of conjugal love." As he said this, he embraced in his

eager arms his dear wife, who was overcome with joyful astonishment and awakened as though from a bad dream, and said, "You alone are my wife. I have not had another, nor shall I. But the one you take for my bride is your daughter, this boy who was believed to be my brother-in-law is your son; and what you seemed to have lost one at a time, you have now recovered all together. Let those who have believed the opposite know that I am whimsical and experimental, not heartless; that I have tested my wife, not condemned her; that I have hidden my children, not killed them."

Hearing this, she nearly fainted with joy; and mad with maternal love, she rushed into her children's arms with truly joyful tears, and wearied them with her kisses and drenched them with her motherly sobbing. Quickly the ladies, surrounding her joyfully and graciously, took off her lowly clothing and put on her what she used to wear. All around resounded the happy clapping and everyone's congratulatory words; and that day was celebrated with much joy and weeping, and was more festive than the wedding day had been.

For many years thereafter, they lived in boundless peace harmony. Gualtieri moved his poor father-in-law, whom he seemed to have neglected until then lest he should sometime interfere with the planned experiment, into his palace and held him honor. He married off his daughter honorably and splendidly, and left his son the successor to his domain, having been happy both in his marriage and in his offspring.

I decided to retell this story in another language not so much to encourage the married women of our day to imitate this wife's patience, which to me seems hardly imitable, as to encourage the readers to imitate at least this woman's constancy, so that what she maintained toward her husband they may maintain toward our God. For although "He is no tempter of evil, and tempts no one," as the Apostle James says [1:13], still He does test and often allows us to be harassed with many heavy blows, not in order to know our spirit, which He knew before we were created, but so that our weakness may be recognized through obvious and familiar signs. I would number among the men overflowing with constancy whoever would suffer without a murmur for his God what this little peasant woman suffered for her mortal husband.

[1372-73].

Anexo D

Reescritura de Geoffrey Chaucer⁷

THE CLERK'S PROLOGUE

*Here follows the Prologue of the
Clerk of Oxford's Tale*

'Sir Clerk of Oxford,' said our Host, 'you ride as demurely and quietly as a young woman who has just married, and is sitting at the dining-table [of the wedding-feast]; I haven't heard a word from your tongue the whole of today. I imagine you're pondering some tricky question of logic; but, as Solomon says, "There's a proper time for everything."

'Cheer up, for God's sake! This isn't an occasion for deep contemplation. Promise to tell us some amusing story! Because, once someone has joined in a game, he's got to play by the rules. But don't preach to us as friars do in Lent to make us weep for our past misdoings, and don't tell a story that will put us all to sleep.

'Tell us some amusing tale of wonderful happenings. Keep your technical terms, your embellishments, your figures of speech, for some occasion when you write in a grand style, such as people use when they write to kings. For now, speak straightforwardly to us, we beg you, so we can understand what you're talking about.'

This distinguished scholar graciously replied: 'Host,' he said, 'I am subject to your authority; you are in charge of us at this present time, and consequently I shall certainly obey you in all reasonable demands. I shall tell you a story that I learnt at Padua from a scholar of great ability, which is manifest in his words and deeds. He is now dead and nailed in his coffin; I pray that God grant peace to his soul!

'This scholar was called Francis Petrarch, the poet laureate, whose fine rhetoric made illustrious the poetry of the whole of Italy, just as did Lignano in philosophy, and law, and various other areas of study; but Death, who allows us to sojourn here only for a twinkling of an eye, as it were, has killed them both, and we must all die.

⁷ Chaucer, G. (2008). The Clerk's Prologue and Tale. En C. Wilcockson (Ed.), *The Canterbury Tales: A selection* (pp. 311-389). Penguin Books.

‘But to get on with telling you about this eminent man who, as I remarked at the beginning, taught me this story: I should mention that he composes an introduction, in an elevated style, before he writes the main body of the tale, in which he describes Piedmont and the region of Saluzzo, and speaks of the high Apennine hills, which are the border regions of Western Lombardy, and particularly Monte Viso, where the river Po has its first spring and source from a well, constantly growing greater in its eastward course towards Emilia, Ferrara and Venice — [all of] which would be a lengthy matter to describe. And, indeed, to my way of thinking, it seems irrelevant, except that he wants to set the scene; but this is his story for you to listen to.’

THE CLERK ‘S TALE

Here begins the Clerk of Oxford’s Tale

In the western part of Italy, at the foot of the cold Monte Viso, there is a fertile plain, rich in food production, where you can see many a tower and town which were founded in the time of ancestors of long ago; and there is many another delightful sight. This noble region is called Saluzzo.

Once upon a time, a marquis was the landlord, just as his worthy forebears had been; and all his people, whatever their social standing, were obedient and prompt at his command. Thus he lives in happiness, as he had done for a long while, loved and respected, through the blessing of Fortune, both by the aristocracy and by the common people.

Moreover, with regard to his ancestry, he was born the noblest person in Lombardy, a handsome and well-built person, young, most honourable and of refined manners, very

tactful in the way he governed his estate, except for one or two things in which he fell short; and the name of this young lord was Walter.

I criticize him on this score: he gave no thought to the future and what might happen to him, but concentrated solely on the pleasures of here and now, such as his wide-ranging hawking and hunting expeditions. He allowed almost every other consideration to slide, and, worst of all, regardless of the future, he didn't want to marry.

Just that one matter so troubled his people that they went to him in groups one day; and one of them, who was the most highly educated, or perhaps the man whom the lord would most willingly accept to voice the concerns of his subjects, or maybe who was best able to express the matter, spoke to the marquis as you will hear:

'O noble marquis, your sympathetic nature makes us feel safe, and gives us the courage, whenever it becomes necessary, to inform you of our worries. Believe us now, lord, in your noble nature, that we voice from sympathetic hearts, and let not your ears despise what I say.

'Even though have no more concern in this matter than anyone else here, yet insofar as you, my dear lord, have always shown me kindness and consideration, I dare the more confidently beg you for a moment's audience in which to present our request, and you, my dear lord, will then act as it pleases you.

'For indeed, lord, we hold you and all that you do in great approval, and always have done, so much so that we ourselves couldn't devise how to live more happily, apart from one matter: namely, if you would agree to it, that you would choose to be married. Then your people would be in perfect contentment.

'Bow your neck under the happy yoke of that superior state — not one of slavery — called marriage or wedlock; and think, lord, in your wisdom, how our days pass away in various ways. For, whether we sleep or wake, or walk or ride, time constantly flies; it waits for no man.

‘And even though your green youth is still in flower, age always creeps in, silent as a stone, and death threatens. all ages and smites every social rank, for no one escapes. And, just as surely, as every one of us knows, that we have to die, so are we all uncertain of the day when death will fall upon us.

‘Accept then this genuine suggestion from us who have never refused your command, and we shall, lord, if you will agree, soon choose a wife for you, born of the noblest and most elevated of the whole country, so that it should appear that our choice is an honour to God and yourself.

‘Deliver us from this anxiety, and, for the sake of high God in heaven, take a wife! For, should it so happen — which God forbid — that your lineage should cease because you have died, and that an unknown person should succeed to your inheritance, what misery would there be for us who survive. Therefore, we beg you to marry soon.’

Their humble prayer and the sad expressions made the marquis take pity. ‘You want,’ he said, ‘my own dear people, to persuade me to do what I had never before contemplated. I rejoice in my freedom, which is rarely to be found in marriage. Whereas I had liberty, I would have to live in servitude.

‘But, nevertheless, I am aware of your honourable intentions, and I have, and have always had, confidence in your wisdom. Therefore, of my own free, will I agree to marry as soon as possible. But insofar as you have today offered to find a wife for me, I relinquish that offer and beg you to drop that proposal.

‘For, God knows, children are often different from their ancestors. Virtue comes from God, not from the pedigree from which they are conceived and born. I trust in God’s goodness, and therefore I commend my marriage and my goods and my comfort to Him. Let Him do as it pleases Him.

‘Leave me to choose my wife; I take that burden on my own back. But I pray you and command you upon your lives that whomsoever I take to be my wife, you promise to honour her in word and deed, so long as she lives, wherever it may be, as if she were the daughter of an emperor.

‘Moreover, you must promise this: that you will never grumble about or quarrel with my choice. For, since I must give up my freedom at your request, then — so may good ever come to me — I shall marry whomsoever I give my heart to. And if you do not wish to agree in this way, I pray you do not bring up the subject again.’

With sincere intent they promised, and agreed to this whole business — not a single person objected — requesting him of his goodness, before they departed, that he would give them a definite day of his marriage as soon as he could possibly do so; because, in spite of everything, the people constantly harboured the doubt that the marquis might not take a wife.

He named the day he chose on which he would definitely marry, saying that he did so because they begged it. And they all thanked him humbly and obediently, kneeling reverently on their knees. And so, their object realized, they made their way homeward again.

Straight away, he gave commands to his offices to make arrangements for the feast, giving such instructions to the knights and squires of his household as he thought necessary. And they obeyed the orders, each doing his utmost to give due care to the preparation of the feast.

The first part ends

The second part begins

Not far from that illustrious palace where the marquis planned his marriage there was a village in a delightful location, in which the people of that settlement kept their animals and had their dwellings, and through their labours provided themselves with food as the earth gave of its bounty.

Among these poor people there lived a man who was the poorest of them all — but almighty God can sometimes send His grace into a little ox-stall. The people of the village called him Janicula. He had a daughter, most beautiful to see, and this young girl was called Griselda.

But if one is talking about the beauty of goodness, then she was the loveliest under the sun; for she had been brought up in poverty; no lustful thought ran through her heart. She drank more often from the well than from the barrel, and, because she wanted to satisfy the obligations of virtuousness, she was well acquainted with hard work, but not with laziness.

But though this young woman was of tender years, there was enclosed in her virgin breast a mature and steadfast disposition, and she cared for her poor old father with deep respect and love. She looked after a few sheep in the field while she spun wool. She had no wish to take her ease till it was time to sleep.

And when she made her way home, she often used to bring cabbages or other leaf-vegetables which she sliced and boiled for their sustenance, and made up for herself a hard bed, in no way was it soft. She constantly exalted her father's life with all the veneration and care that a child could possibly show in honour of a father.

The marquis very often observed this poor creature Griselda as he went out hunting perhaps. And whenever it so happened that he saw her, he didn't cast his gaze on her in foolish lust, but often, in a serious state of mind, he would consider her demeanour,

admiring in his heart her femininity, and her virtuousness too, which surpassed anyone as young, both in appearance and in deed; for even if the people may have no

discernment with regard to virtuousness, he considered her goodness to be perfect, and decided that he wished to marry only her, if he was to marry at all.

The wedding day arrived, but no one could say which woman might be [the bride], and in consequence of this remarkable fact many a person was amazed and said privately, 'Is our lord still not going to marry? Alas, alas the day! Why does he choose to deceive us and himself?'

However, the marquis has had made for Griselda gems set in gold and lapis lazuli, brooches and rings. And he took a measurement for her dress by measuring another young woman of a similar stature, and other adornment, too, such as is appropriate at a wedding.

Nine o'clock on the day when the wedding was to be held, the whole palace was decked out — the great hall and the bedchambers, every one of them in accordance with its importance. You could observe the outhouses packed with an abundance of such sumptuous food as could be found the length and breadth of Italy.

This regal marquis, accompanied by richly dressed lords and ladies who had been invited to the feast, and by the squires of his retinue, with many a tune from a variety of musical compositions, made his way in this splendour directly to the village I described to you.

Griselda, totally ignorant, God knows, that all this magnificence was planned for her, has gone to fetch water at a well, and she comes back home as fast as she can, because she had clearly heard it reported that the marquis was to get married that very day, and if it were at all possible she greatly desired to see some of that spectacle.

She thought, 'I'll stand at our door with the other young women who are my companions, and see the marquis; and to that end I'll try to complete my housework as quickly as possible, and then I shall be able to see her at leisure if she takes this route to the castle.'

And just as she was about to cross the threshold, the marquis came and summoned her. And she at once put down her waterpot next to the doorway in an ox-stall, and she fell down to her knees and remained kneeling with a serious look until she heard what he desired.

The marquis had something on his mind and spoke very earnestly to the young woman, and said: 'Where is your father, Griselda?' And she answered him respectfully, and with a humble expression, 'Lord, he is right here.' And she entered without further delay, and brought her father to the marquis.

He took the old man by the hand and, when he had led him aside, said, 'Janicula, I am no longer able to conceal my heart's desire. If I have your permission, whatever may befall, I want, before I leave, to take your daughter for my wife for as long as she lives.

I am sure that you love me, and you are born my faithful liegeman, and I am safe in saying that whatever pleases me pleases you, and therefore, specifically, tell me whether with regard to the matter I spoke of just now, you would agree to accept me as your son-in-law.'

So much did this sudden development astound the man that he blushed and stood embarrassed and shaking from head to foot. He could scarcely speak another word, but simply this: 'Lord,' he said, 'I want whatever you want, nor will I do anything contrary to your desire; you are my much loved lord. Undertake this business in whatever way you wish.'

'Nevertheless,' said the marquis quietly, 'I would like you and her and me to have a discussion in your room — you know why? Because I want to ask her if it is her wish to be my wife, and to conduct herself according to my will. And all this will be done in your presence; I don't want to talk about it without your hearing what is said.'

And while they were in the room discussing the agreement, which you will hear about in due course, the people gathered outside the house and were impressed at the scrupulous manner in which she attentively looked after her father. But certainly Griselda might be amazed, because she had never seen such a sight before.

It was no wonder that she was astonished to see such an eminent visitor enter that place, for she was unaccustomed to such guests, and in consequence her face grew pale. But, to pursue this business swiftly, these are the words the marquis spoke to this kind, true, faithful young woman:

‘Griselda,’ he said, ‘you must clearly understand that it would be agreeable to your father and myself that I marry you, and also I imagine it may well be that you would wish the same. But first I ask you these questions,’ he said, ‘since it must be done swiftly. Do you wish to agree, or else to ponder further?’

‘I say this: you are to be cheerfully obedient to all my wishes and accept that I may freely, in whatever way it seems best to me, make you happy or unhappy, and that you never grumble about it, night or day. And furthermore when I say “yes”, you don’t say “no”, either in word or by frowning expression. Promise this, and I here pledge our partnership.’

Marvelling at this statement, and quaking for fear, she said, ‘Lord, I am undeserving and unworthy of the honour you proffer me; nevertheless, whatever you yourself desire, I desire. And I swear here that I shall never wilfully disobey you, in deed or in word, upon pain of death, unhappy as I would be to die.’

‘This is sufficient, my Griselda,’ he said. And he went out of the door with a grave expression, and he spoke to the people as follows: ‘She who stands here is my wife,’ he said. ‘I ask whoever loves me to honour and love her. That is all.’

And so that she should bring none of her old clothes into his house, he commanded that some women should undress her where she was; though these ladies were not

pleased to touch the clothes in which she was dressed. Nevertheless, they dressed this beautiful young woman in new clothes from head to foot.

They combed her hair that hung artlessly unbraided, and with their delicate fingers they set a crown on her head and decorated her with various brooches. Why should I give a long account of her display? Because of her beauty, when she was transformed so richly, the people scarcely recognized her.

The marquis married her with a ring which was provided for the purpose, and then seated her upon a snow-white and gently paced horse, and led her to his palace without further delay, accompanied by the joyful people who guided and greeted her. And in this way they spent the day in entertainment until sunset.

Now to pursue the story briefly: I say that God of His mercy bestowed such benevolence upon this new marchioness that it seemed highly improbable that she had been born and bred without sophistication — in a cottage or in an ox-stall; but rather that she had been reared in the hall of an emperor.

She became so loved and honoured by everyone that the people where she was born, and who knew her year in year out, scarcely believed — but yet could attest to it — that she was the daughter of Janicula, whom I spoke of earlier, because, if you were to make a guess, it seemed that she was a different person.

For, even though she had always been virtuous, she was increased in such perfection of her personal qualities, which were couched in exceptional goodness, and she was so tactful and of such eloquence of speech, so sympathetic and so worthy of respect, so able to gain the affection of the people, that everyone who looked at her face loved her.

Her virtuous reputation was published not only in the town of Saluzzo, but in many other regions, too, where, if someone were to speak highly of her, everyone would

agree. So far did the news of her great goodness spread, that men and women both young and old, went to Saluzzo to look at her.

Consequently, Walter, having married humbly — no, royally, rather — with honour as it transpired, lived pleasantly in God-given contentment at home, and with respect in public. And, because he had recognized that under low social status true worthiness was often hidden, the people considered him a man of rarely seen discernment.

It was not just that, through her natural intelligence, Griselda knew all a wife's domestic skills, but also, when the occasion arose, she was able to promote the general welfare. There was not a case of dispute, ill-feeling or of unhappiness in that whole country that she was unable to resolve and, through her wisdom, guide them all to peace and comfort.

Even if her husband were away, if people of rank, or any others in her land, had fallen out, she would straight away reconcile them. Such wise, mature words she had, and such fair-minded judgement, that it was thought that she had been sent from heaven to save people and to right wrongs.

Not long after Griselda was married she gave birth to a daughter, though she would have preferred to have given birth to a baby boy. So the marquis and the people were happy, because, even if a baby girl come first, she might well — since she was not sterile — have a baby boy.

The second part ends

The third part begins

It so happened, as is not uncommon, that when this baby had been breast-fed for quite a short time, the marquis had such a heartfelt desire to test his wife to ascertain her

constancy that he couldn't remove from his heart this extraordinary wish to put her steadfastness on trial. God knows, there was no reason for him to plan to frighten her. He had sufficiently tested her previously, and found her to be unwaveringly good. What is the point of his testing her again and again, even if some people might consider it a clever thing to do? For my part, declare it is unbecoming to test a wife when there is no reason and to make her miserable and frightened.

To this end the marquis acted as follows: he came alone at night to her bed with a stern face and worried expression, and spoke in these words: 'Griselda,' he said, 'I suppose you haven't forgotten that day that I removed you from your impoverished condition and placed you in a state of high nobility?

'I am telling you, Griselda, that the present elevated state in which I have placed you should not, I believe, make you forgetful — in spite of any worldly wealth, as you yourself must be aware — that I removed you from the humblest poverty. Listen carefully to every word I say to you; there is no one here but the two of us.

'You yourself know very well how, not long ago, you came into this house, and, though you are dear to and beloved by me you are not at all so to my aristocrats. They say that it is very demeaning and grievous to be under the control and in servitude to you, who were born in a little village.

'And, notably since your daughter was born, they have unequivocally expressed this opinion. But I wish that, as in the past, I should live my life peacefully with them. I can't be negligent in this matter: I have to do what is best with regard to your daughter, not what I would wish but what my people wish.

'Nevertheless, God knows, I find this very unpleasant. However, I don't want to take action without your knowledge. But this I request,' he said, 'that you give me your assent in this business. Exhibit now your patience in practice, which you promised and swore to in your village that day our wedding took place.'

When she had heard all this, she remained unmoved both in word, behaviour and appearance, for it seemed she wasn't upset. She said, 'Lord, everything lies in what pleases you. My child and I, in sincere obedience, are entirely yours, and you may save or destroy what belongs to you. Do as you wish.'

'There is, so God save my soul, nothing that pleases you that can displease me. Nor do I desire to have anything, or fear to lose anything, but yourself only. This is the desire of my heart and always will be. Neither the passing of time, nor death, can eradicate it, nor can my affections be switched elsewhere.'

The marquis was happy with her response, but he pretended not to be. The expression on his face was very gloomy when he was to leave the room. Shortly after he had walked about a quarter of a mile, he secretly explained his plan to a servant, and dispatched him to his wife.

This confidant was a sort of officer in attendance, whom he had often found to be reliable in important matters; so, too, can such people often be counted on to perform wicked deeds. The marquis knew well that he loved and feared him, and when this officer knew his lord's wish, he quietly stole into the room.

'Ma dam,' he said, 'you must pardon me if I do something which I am compelled to do. You are so sensible that you know perfectly well that the commands of a lord cannot be slyly disobeyed. They may well be lamented or criticized, but folk must be obedient to their wish, as must I. That's the short and the long of it.'

'I am commanded to take this child.' And he didn't say another word, but without remorse he took the child, and he looked as if he would have killed it before he left. Griselda had to endure all this and agree to it all, and she sat humbly and quietly as a lamb, and permitted this cruel officer to do as he wished.

The man was of ill-famed notoriety; his face aroused one's mistrust, so, too, his speech; the time when he did this was ominous. Alas, she believed that he would have

instantly killed the daughter whom she loved so much. Nevertheless, she neither wept nor sighed, accepting what the marquis desired.

But finally she did speak and meekly begged the officer that, because he was an admirable and courteous man, she might kiss her child before it died. And she laid the little child in her bosom, and with solemn face she blessed the child, and rocked it, and then she kissed it.

And then she said in her gentle voice, 'Farewell, my child! I shall never see you again. But, because I have signed you with the cross of that Father — may he be blessed — who died for us on the wooden cross, I commend your soul to him, little child, for you must die this night because of me.'

I am sure it would have been distressing for a wet-nurse to have witnessed this pitiful event; even the more so might a mother have cried 'Alas'. But, notwithstanding, so unshakeably steadfast was she that she endured all this misfortune, and humbly said to the officer, 'Take back your little baby girl.'

'Go now,' she said, 'and do my lord's bidding. But there is one thing I beg you of your kindness, which is — unless my lord forbade you — at any rate, bury this little body somewhere where animals or birds will not tear it to pieces.' But he made no response to that, but took the child and departed.

The officer returned to his lord, and recounted in minute detail everything that she had said and how she had reacted, and he handed over to him his beloved daughter. The lord had had some misgivings about it, but, in spite of that, he stuck to his purpose as lords do when they are determined.

And he commanded the officer that he should secretly and gently dress the child with care and tenderness, and convey it in a box or in cloth wrapped round her, but that, under threat of being beheaded, no one should discover his plan, whence he had come or where he was going;

but that he should convey the child to his beloved sister in Bologna, who in those days was Countess of Panico, and explain the matter to her, requesting her to see to it that the child would be cared for nobly, and that, come what may, the parentage should be concealed from everyone.

The officer departed and carried out this matter. But let's return now to the marquis, for at this point he exercised himself in attempting to divine, by her expression or by what she had to say, whether he could perceive if she had changed. But he never found that: on the contrary, she was unfailingly steadfast and loving.

She was just as cheerful, just as anxious to serve him, just as loving, too, in every kind of way. Nor did she speak a single word about her daughter. No sign of mischance through some bad stroke of fortune was to be seen in her, nor on any occasion did she speak her daughter's name.

The third part ends

The fourth part begins

Four years passed by in this way before she became pregnant, but, by God's will, she presented Walter with a baby boy, who was very attractive and beautiful to see. And when it was announced to his father, not only he, but also the whole country, was happy about this baby, and they thanked and praised God.

One day, when it was two years old and weaned from the wet-nurse, the marquis had yet another urge to test his wife once again, if he could. Oh, how unnecessary it was to make a trial to test her! But married men know no moderation when they find a patient being.

‘Wife,’ said the marquis, ‘you have heard previously how my people resent our marriage, and, particularly since our son was born, it is now worse than ever. The grumbling is death to my heart and soul, because the bitter complaint comes so biting to my ears that it has almost crushed my spirit.’

‘Now they say this: “When Walter is dead, the blood of Janicula must succeed to the throne and become our lord, for we have no one else.” Such words are indeed spoken by my people. I must certainly take note of such criticism, because I truly fear such a sentiment, even though they don’t speak openly in my hearing.’

‘I wish to live peacefully if possible; consequently, I am fully determined to deal with him secretly, just as I dealt with his sister at night. I am giving you this warning, so you won’t suddenly be beside yourself in displaying grief. I beg you, take it patiently.’

‘I have promised; she said, ‘and I shall always. I will do nothing, nor indeed do I wish for anything, other than what you want. It does not in any way distress me, even though my daughter and my son be killed — that is to say, if on your orders. I have had nothing from my two children but first distress and then grief and suffering.’

‘You are our lord: do just as you wish with your possessions; do not ask for my opinion. For, just as I left all my garments at home when I first came to you, just so did I leave my desires and all independence, and accepted your clothing. Therefore, I beg you, do what pleases you. I shall obey your wishes.’

‘And, indeed, even if I had foreknowledge of your wish, before you told me what you wanted, I would perform it to the letter. But, now that I know your wish and what you want, I consider all your desires to be absolute and total. For, were I to find out that my death would make you happy, I would cheerfully die to please you.’

‘Death cannot compare with your love.’ And when the marquis saw the constancy of his wife, he gazed at the ground, and was amazed at how patiently she endured this treatment. And he left, looking sad, but with profound pleasure in his heart.

This terrifying officer, in just the same way as he had seized her daughter — or even worse is conceivable — seized her son, who was very beautiful. And so unerringly patient was she that he gave no indication of grief; but she kissed and then blessed her son.

Only this did she beg: that if he could, he would [place] her little son in a grave in the earth, so as to protect his tender limbs, which were so delicate to see, from birds and animals. But she received no response from him. He turned away as if he took no notice; but he gently transported the child to Bologna.

The marquis was even more amazed at her patience, and, had he not perceived hitherto how absolutely she loved her children, he would have believed that for some cunning reason, and from malice or cruelty of heart, she put up with this with such composure.

But he well knew that, next to himself, she indeed loved her Children above all else in every way. Now, however, I would like to ask women whether these tests were not enough? What could a cruel husband intend further to test her wifely devotion and steadfastness, as he unwaveringly continued in his cruelty?

But there are people of such psychological constitution that, when they determine on a fixed plan, cannot change their minds, but, as if tethered to a stake, they won't modify their original intention. In just this way the marquis was dead set on testing his wife as originally planned.

He watched to see whether by word or look her love for him had altered, but he could never discover any change. She was constant in affection and in her manner, more and more as she grew older, more true in love, were that possible, and more devoted.

Walter's ill-repute spread far and wide, that he, out of cruelty of heart, had wickedly and secretly done away with his children because he had married a poor woman. Such

muttered complaint was common among the people; Little wonder, because no information came to them, other than that they had been murdered.

Consequently, whereas until this time his people had genuinely loved him, rumour of his shameful behaviour induced them to hate him. The name murderer is hateful. But, even given this, he refused to cease from his cruel plan to test his wife, come what may.

When his daughter was twelve years old, he secretly conveyed his wish to the papal court, by sending a message requesting that they produce charters requisite for his cruel plan — stating that the pope, in order to content the people, authorized him to marry someone else, should he so desire.

I mean, he commanded them to forge the papal document, stating that he had licence from the pope granting him permission to leave his first wife so as to bring to an end the bitterness between his people and himself. So stated the document which they published in full.

It is hardly surprising that the uneducated people believed absolutely that it was genuine. But when this news came to Griselda's ears, I am sure her heart was full of grief. But she, humble creature that she was, and constant as ever, was determined to endure to the full the adversity of fate,

always putting up with the desire and wishes of the man to whom she was dedicated, heart and all, as if this were her true worldly wish. But, as I must tell this story briefly, the marquis has written a particular letter and secretly dispatched it to Bologna, in which he set out his plan.

He specifically requested the Earl of Panico, who was then wedded to his sister, to return home his two children in a grand and public ceremony. But he commanded him unequivocally on one point, namely, should anyone ask questions, he would reveal to nobody whose children they were,

but just say that the young woman was to be married immediately to the Marquis of Saluzzo. And, exactly as requested, so did the earl act, for on the appointed day he departed to Saluzzo with many a lord in sumptuous display to attend this young woman, her young brother riding next to her.

She was bedecked for her wedding with many a shining jewel. Her brother, who was seven years old, was also suitably handsomely dressed. And so in grand majesty and with joyful faces they rode for some days, making their journey to Saluzzo.

The fourth part ends

The fifth part begins

Meanwhile, in keeping with his wicked custom, this marquis, in order to test his wife even further to the extreme proof of her steadfastness, so that he might find out through actual observation whether she was as unwavering as in the past, one day openly and harshly declared his judgement in public:

‘Indeed, Griselda, I was perfectly happy to have you as my wife because of your virtue and your obedience — not for your ancestry or your wealth. But now I realize, to be absolutely honest, that with high rank one has in various ways a considerable obligation of service.

‘I cannot conduct myself in the free manner of a ploughman. My people force me to take another wife, and they are daily protesting. And the pope, too, so as to cool this sense of grievance, is in agreement; I assure you, and in all honesty I have to tell you my new wife is on her way here.

‘Be brave and leave this place now, and take back the dowry you gave me: I graciously return it to you. Go back to your father’s house,’ he said. ‘No one can enjoy good

fortune for ever. I advise you to endure the blows of Fortune or of chance with a calm mind.'

And again she patiently replied: 'My lord,' she said, 'I know, and I always knew, that one cannot make any comparison between your magnificence and my poverty. That cannot be denied. I never considered myself in any way worthy to be your wife, or [even] your chambermaid.

'And in this house where you made me a lady — I take God on high to be my witness, may He in His wisdom give comfort to my soul — I never considered myself to be a lady or the mistress of the household, but as a humble servant to your magnificence, and I always shall while my life lasts, more than to any earthly being.

'That you have so long, out of kindness, maintained me in a state of honour and nobility, of which I was unworthy, I thank you and God, whom I pray to reward you. There is no more to be said. I shall cheerfully make my way back to my father, and live with him for the remainder of my days.

'In that same place that I was brought up as a little child, I shall lead my life till I die, a widow, pure in body, heart and all, because, since I yielded to you my virginity and am indeed your true wife, God forbid that the wife of such a lord should take another man as husband or lover.

'And may God of his grace grant you joy and prosperity with your new wife. For I gladly yield to her my position in which I used to be happy, because, since it pleases you, my lord,' she said, 'who were formerly all the contentment of my heart, that I should depart, I shall leave whenever you wish.

'But whereas you offer to return whatever dowry I initially brought, I am perfectly aware that it was in the form of my poor attire, not a bit beautiful, which would now be difficult to find. Oh, gracious God! How courteous and sympathetic you appeared in your words and expression on that day when our wedding was held!

‘But it is truly said, and it is found to be absolutely correct, because it is indeed proved in my case, old love is not like young love. But certainly, my lord, in spite of any hardships, or even if I were to die for it, I shall never regret in word or deed that I gave my love to you absolutely.

‘My lord, you know that in my father’s house you commanded me to be stripped of my poor clothes, and in your generosity you had me magnificently attired. I certainly brought you nothing but my promise, my nakedness and my virginity. Here I return your clothing and your wedding ring for ever.

‘I am sure the rest of your jewels are ready in your room. I came naked from my father’s house,’ she said, ‘and naked must I return. I shall willingly do whatever pleases you. Nevertheless, I trust it is not your intention that I depart from your palace without my shift.

‘You could not do anything so dishonourable as to allow the womb in which your children lay to be seen naked in front of everyone as I walk home. Don’t let me walk along the path naked as a worm. Remind yourself, my own dear lord, that I was your wife, unworthy as I may have been.

‘Therefore in exchange for my virginity which I brought with me and have no more, bring yourself to give me as my due just such a [peasant] shift as I used to wear, so that I can cover the womb of that woman who used to be your wife. Now I take my leave of you, my own dear lord, lest I should annoy you.’

‘The shift,’ he said, ‘that you have on your back, let it remain there, and take it away with you.’ But he could scarcely speak those words, but turned away out of compassion and pity. She disrobed in front of the people, and, in her shift, bareheaded and barefoot, she made her way to her father’s house.

The people followed her weeping along the path, and, as they went, they constantly deplored Fortune. But she restrained her eyes from crying and kept them dry, nor did she speak a word at that time. Her father, who heard the news, immediately cursed the day and the minute that Nature had endowed him with life.

For this poor old man had indeed always had his doubts about her marriage; and he always thought, right from the start, that, as soon as the lord's lust had been sated, he would consider it an insult to his rank to stoop so low, and would get rid of her as soon as possible.

He swiftly approached his daughter, for he knew of her arrival by the noise of the crowd, and as best as he could he wrapped her in her old coat, weeping with deep sadness. But he could not wrap her in it because the cloth was coarse and older by many a day than when she had married.

Thus, this flower of wifely patience lived for a while with her father; she did not assume the appearance of having been wronged, to judge from her words or facial expression, either in the presence or the absence of people. Nor, to judge from her expression, did she have any recollection of her high rank.

That was not surprising, because, when she had been of high rank, her spirit was always in a state of simple humility: no fastidious appetite, or self-indulgent affectation, no pomp, no show of regality, but full of patient kindness, tactful and humble, always honourable, and constant to her husband.

People talk about Job, principally for his humility, as scholarly people well describe him when they want, notably with reference to men. But, to be honest, even though scholars lavish little praise on women, no man can behave as humbly as a woman, or be half as constant as women are, unless things have changed of late.

[*Part six*]

This Earl of Panico arrived from Bologna, the news of which was received by all the people. And it was also made known to the ears of all the people that a new marchioness had been brought with him, in such pomp and splendour that never before had such regal display been seen in Western Lombardy.

The marquis, who had planned and knew about all this before the earl arrived, sent a message to the innocent and poor Griselda, and she, with humility and cheerfulness, without a trace of pride in her heart, came at his command, and knelt down and greeted him with tact and respect.

‘Griselda,’ he said, ‘it is indeed my wish that this young woman, who will be married to me, should be welcomed tomorrow as royally as possible in my house; so, too, that all, as befits their status, shall have proper deference in where they are seated at the table, and in the care they are shown, in the most pleasing manner that I can arrange.

‘It is a fact that I have no women capable of preparing the rooms fittingly in the way I would like, and in consequence I want the control over all this to be yours. You also know through experience how I would like it done. Even though your dress is poor and unattractive, do your best anyway.’

‘Not only, lord, am I pleased,’ she said, ‘to do your will, but I wish, too, to serve you and please you in accordance with my rank, without flagging. And I shall always do that. Nor, whether in happy or in sad times, shall the spirit of my heart cease to love you best in all true sincerity.’

And having spoken thus she strove to her utmost to prepare the house, and to set the tables, and make the beds, begging the chambermaids for God’s sake to hurry, to sweep and to shake [the bed-linen] quickly. And she, the most diligent of all, has prepared every room, and the marquis’s hall.

Around nine o’clock in the morning, the earl alighted from his horse; he had brought the two noble children with him, and the people ran to see what their dresses looked

like, so sumptuous was it to see. And then they began to say among themselves that Walter was no fool, even if he had elected to change his wife, because it was all for the best.

The reason being that she was more beautiful, everyone reckoned, than was Griselda, and she was younger, and more beautiful offspring would come from them; and, on account of her aristocratic lineage, they would be more charming. And her brother was so handsome that the people were delighted to see them, congratulating the marquis on his conduct.

‘O fickle people! Untrustworthy and always unreliable! Forever lacking in discernment, and as changeable as a weathervane! Always delighting in the latest stirring events, for you wax and wane like the moon! Constantly full of worthless chatter! Your judgement is false, your constancy proves to be poor; anyone who relies on you is a great fool.’

So said serious people in that city when the people gazed at every detail, pleased just by the novelty of having a new marchioness of the town. I speak no more of this, but return to describe Griselda’s constancy and her conscientiousness.

Griselda was fully occupied with every detail of the preparation of the feast. She was not at all embarrassed by her clothing, coarse and also slightly torn as it was. But she went to the door with everyone else to welcome the marchioness, and then she got on with her work.

She received his guests with such joyful looks, and with such tact, each according to his rank, that no one could find fault, yet they were constantly amazed who it could be who was so poorly dressed, yet understood such courtesy and deference, and they warmly commended her sense of social decorum.

Meanwhile, she never ceased warmly to admire the young woman and her brother, wishing them the greatest happiness so pleasantly that no one could more highly

commend her. But finally, when these lords left to take their places at the table, Walter summoned Griselda while she was busy in his dining-hall.

‘Griselda ‘ he said as if he were amused, ‘what do you think of my wife and her beauty?’ ‘Highly, my lord,’ she said, ‘for, to tell the truth, I have never seen anyone more beautiful than she. I pray God give her all happiness, and I hope He will send you fullness of joy for the whole of your lives.

‘I beg one thing of you, and I warn you as well: do not inflict torture on this tender young woman, as you have done to others, because she has been brought up in her childhood more tenderly, and, I imagine, she could not withstand unhappiness in the same way as a creature raised in poverty.’

And when Walter observed her patience, her benign look, free of all ill-feeling, [and recognizing that] he had so often harmed her, and that she was unswervingly steadfast and firm as a wall, constant in her total purity, this cruel marquis set his heart to take pity on her wifely constancy.

‘This is sufficient, my Griselda,’ he said. ‘Be no longer frightened or disappointed. I have tested your devotion and your good will as much as any woman has been tested, both in your high estate and when poorly clothed. Now, my dear wife, I know your constancy.’ And he took her in his arms and kissed her.

She was so amazed that she didn’t know what was happening; she did not hear what he said to her; she acted as if she had violently awoken from sleep, until she suddenly recovered from her amazement. ‘Griselda,’ he said, ‘by God who died for us, you are my wife, I have no other, nor, so God save my soul, have ever had.

‘This is your daughter, whom you took to be my wife; the other [child] is indeed my heir, as I have always planned. You truly carried him in your body. I have secretly kept them in Bologna. Receive them back, for now you cannot say you have lost either of your two children.

‘And I assure people who have spoken critically of me that I have done this, not out of any malice or cruelty, but to test your wifeliness, not to kill my children — God forbid! — but to keep them secretly and quietly until I knew your intentions and all your desire.’

When she heard this, she collapsed in a swoon, emotionally overcome by joy, and, after she had recovered, she called both her children to her and embraced them, weeping pitifully and kissing them tenderly, like a true mother. She bathed both their faces and their hair with her salt tears.

How pitiful it was to see her faint, and to hear her humble voice: ‘Thank you, lord, may God reward you,’ she said, ‘for having saved my dear children for me. Now I do not care if I die on this very spot. Since I have a place in your affections and your favour, death is of no consequence, nor is the time when my spirit parts from me!’

‘Oh, my young children, how innocent, how beloved! Your grieving mother firmly believed that cruel dogs, or some disgusting vermin, had eaten you. But God in His mercy, and your loving father, have solicitously cared for you...’ And with that, she collapsed to the ground.

And in her swoon, she held her children so firmly that only with much dexterity and difficulty could they prise the children from her arms. Oh, many a tear ran down the many sympathetic faces of those standing by her: they found it hard to remain near her.

Walter comforted her and her sorrow was assuaged. She stood up, perplexed from her swoon, and everyone showered her with such joy and respect that she once more recovered her good spirits. Walter demonstrated such devoted comfort to her that it was a delight to see the happiness between the two of them now that they had come back together.

When the ladies saw an opportunity, they took her into a room and stripped her of her coarse clothes, and, in gold brocade that gleamed brightly, and with a crown of many a rich jewel on her head, they led her into the hall, where she was received with all due deference.

So this sad day had a happy ending, for all the men and women did their utmost to pass the day in joy and entertainment until the light of the stars twinkled in the sky; because more luxurious was this feast in everyone's opinion, and more expensive, than had been the celebration of her marriage.

For many years and in great good fortune these two lived in peace and contentment; and he married his daughter prosperously to a lord, one of the worthiest men in the whole of Italy. And he also cared for his old father-in-law in the court in peace and quiet, until his soul slipped away from his body.

After his father's death, his son succeeded to the inheritance in peace and quiet, and he too was fortunate in marriage — though he didn't impose severe tests on his wife. This world is not so resolute as it was in the old days, there's no denying that. And hear what the author said about it.

This story is told, not so that wives should imitate the humility of Griselda, because that would be insupportable, even if they wished it, but so that everyone, in whatever station in life, should be as resolute in adversity as was Griselda. To that end Petrarch wrote the story in a rhetorically elevated style.

So, since a woman was so patient towards an earthly man, so much the more should we graciously receive whatever God sends to us. It is absolutely right that He should put His creation to the test. But He doesn't tempt wrong-doing in those He has redeemed, as St James states, if you read his epistle: no doubt, He tests people all the time,

and allows us, in order that we may practise spiritual exercise, often to be scourged with the stinging whips of various adversities, not to discover the state of our souls, for indeed He knew all our frailty before we were born. His authority is for our own good. So let us live in virtuous submission.

But, gentlemen, hear one word before I finish: it would be extremely difficult nowadays to find two or three Griseldas in a whole town because, were they to be put to such tests, their gold is so full of brass alloy that, even though the coin looks good, it would be more likely to snap in two than to bend.

Therefore, at this point, for the sake of the love of the Wife of Bath — whose life, and all of her faction may God keep in superior mastery, it would be a shame if not — I would like, with cheerful heart, young and green, to recite a poem I think would make you happy. And let's bring to an end this serious matter. Listen to my song, which goes as follows:

Chaucer's concluding words

Griselda is dead, and her patience too, both buried together in Italy; so I proclaim before everyone that no man should be so foolhardy as to test his wife's patience, thinking he will find a Griselda, because he will certainly fail.

O noble wives, full of great common-sense, don't allow humility to pin down your tongue, nor allow any clerkly scholar to have reason or desire to write such a remarkable story about you as that of the patient and loving Griselda, lest the skinny Chichevache swallow you into her guts.

Imitate Echo, who doesn't keep quiet, but constantly answers back. Don't be cowed on account of your innocence, but combatively take the upper hand. Stamp this lesson on your mind for everyone's good, for it could be beneficial.

You viragos, hold the line, because you are strong as a great camel; don't let men harm you. And slender wives, feeble in fight, be as fierce as the faraway Indian tiger; I recommend you constantly wag your tongue like a mill-wheel.

Don't be scared of them, don't defer to them, because even if your husband is armed in chain-mail, the arrows of your angry language will pierce his breast and his neck-armour. I recommend, too, that you ensnare him in sexual jealousy, and you'll make him cower like a quail.

If you are beautiful, whenever people are around, show off your face and your dress. If you're plain, spend prodigally; do everything possible to get friends; always show yourself to be easygoing as a leaf on the lime-tree, and let him worry and weep, and wring his hands, and wail.

Here are the merry words of the Host

The worthy Clerk, when his tale was done, was answered by our Host, who said and avowed, 'By God 's bones, I'd rather that my wife at home could once hear this tale than that I should have a barrel of beer. This is a noble story for the occasion, in harmony with my own wish, if only you could guess what would suit me. But what can't come about must stay as it is!'

Here ends the Clerk of Oxford's Tale