

LADY PHILOSOPHY AGAINST THE MUSES: A PHILOLOGICAL READING OF BOETHIUS' *DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIAE*

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The conflict between Art and Philosophy, where the philosopher challenged and ultimately claimed the poet's position as the educator of the society, played a predominant role in the field of Greco-Roman literary criticism. Here, the philosopher pointed out two fundamental issues regarding art. On the one hand, Art is far removed from reality. On the other hand, it shrouds the mind from the truth. Such a view found its fullest expression in Plato's dismissal of all imitative art. However, manifestations of this idea in different degrees are to be found in many classical Greek and Latin literary works. In such a context, the present research has explored certain reflections of this conflict in Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* and its role in the wider context of the work. Thus, the study involves a close reading of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* in its original Latin. The views of modern scholars on the subject were also given due consideration for the purpose of comparison and analysis. Upon synthesising the Latin text and modern scholarship on the subject, it could be deemed that from the beginning Art (as represented by the Muses) is seen as a counter-force to philosophy. Thus, once Lady Philosophy comes to console Boethius her first task was to dismiss the Muses who had taken a firm grasp on him. The manner in which Philosophy dismisses them clearly shows that philosophy has no tolerance for art. Here, her reasons for the dismissal of them deserve equal attention. It is apparent that art is seen as a drive that distracts the mind from the reality. It indulges the mind with idle fancies thereby offering momentary pleasure and happiness. However, real remedy for sorrow or *consolatione* is only to be found in philosophy, which induces the mind to comprehend the true nature of things. Thus, it is imperative that the influence art holds on the mind should be removed before it could perceive the remedy prescribed by philosophy. For, art not only deviates the mind from the reality but also strengthens the emotions, which constitutes the lesser part of the human psyche. This is also the position of philosophers such as Plato. Accordingly, in conclusion it could be stated that Boethius' work manifests the salient elements of the ancient clash between art and poetry and offers an interesting perspective on it from the point of view of literary criticism.

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