



Literature as a Tool of Epistemology: Medieval Perspectives for Post-Modernity Or, the Post-Modern World Long Anticipated by the Pre-Modern: Boethius's *De consolation philosophiae*, *Apollonius of Tyre*, Marie de France, and Ulrich Bonerius

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Abstract

Post-modernity is characterized by a dangerous condition since the twenty-first century, with basic freedoms at stake, with racism on the rise, with political turmoil and profound dissatisfaction suffered by the individual being increasingly common phenomena. Moreover, our world has entered the Anthropocene, which puts human existence here on this earth at risk. One of the reasons why post-modernism reflects a sense of chaos, loss of identity, and absence of ethical, moral, and spiritual principles and guidance appears to be the regular efforts to jettison everything from the past and to rely only on what the internet provides us with. To combat this wrong notion, we only need to keep the metaphor of the tree in mind which exists only because the roots and the canopy cooperate in full symbiosis. This study examines several fundamental texts from the Middle Ages that have proven to be relevant for all people and for all times. Those literary, didactic, and philosophical works continue to speak to us today and might be more important for the present generation than ever before, adding significant messages about human life even under present conditions. *Apollonius of Tyre* illustrates the disastrous but also healing impact of misfortune on individuals. The fables by Marie de France and Ulrich Bonerius address universal concerns of ethical, moral, and political nature. Most important, however, the late antique philosopher Boethius offered the most trenchant messages about the true nature of happiness far beyond the dimension of fortune/contingency, and so his teachings continue to address the fundamentals of human existence. As old all those voices certainly are, they prove to be highly topical particularly in the post-modern world.

Keywords: Post-modernity, Medieval Philosophy, Medieval Literature, Medieval Religion, Happiness, Fortune, *Apollonius of Tyre*, Marie De France, Ulrich Bonerius (Boner), Boethiu.