

Mulier bona dicendi perita? Women and Rhetoric in *Don Quijote*

MATTHEW A. WYSZYNSKI

CAROLYN LUKENS-OLSON HAS WRITTEN that *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* is Cervantes' attempt to reinvent the chivalric hero, replacing his traditional arms with persuasion (51). Rhetoric is so important to the work that Lukens-Olson pithily concludes that Cervantes very well could have begun the *Persiles* with the tag "Verba virumque cano" (70). Alberto Blecuá provides a similar analysis based on his reading of the *Persiles* and of Cervantes' other works: "Es muy probable que Cervantes creyera que el orador era un *vir bonus dicendi peritus* según la conocida definición" (134). Like the *Persiles*, *Don Quijote* is a work novel full of speeches, and Cervantes' "intimate knowledge of rhetorical precepts, the ease with which he uses the classical figures of thought and language, are apparent in every line" (Mackey 51) of many of the speeches in the novel. The characters' words often cause conflict with other characters, lead to an amusing scene for the reader, or both. One only has to think of the results of Don Quixote's speech when he arrives at Don Diego de Miranda's home: both Don Diego and his son are confused because Don Quixote mixes lofty rhetoric with his outlandish behavior. Don Lorenzo opines: "él [Don Quijote] es un entereverado loco, lleno de lúcidos intervalos" (776) and both father and son "se admiraron... de las entremetidas razones de Don Quijote, ya discretas y ya disparatadas" (781).

It is not surprising to find rhetoric in *Don Quijote*. The *ars bene dicendi* was the heart of the educational system for thousands of years, and was the fundamental subject for students during the Renaissance and Baroque. Boys started their formal education by reading Cicero, the rhetor *par ex-*

cellence, and by listening to the teacher explain the rhetorical structure and the rhetorical figures in a passage. As they progressed, students also began to write compositions according to the rules of rhetoric. Even students without a university education were very familiar with rhetorical patterns of thought and speech. Brian Vickers, an expert in Renaissance rhetoric, observes that even young students “were thoroughly drilled in every stage of the art” (Vickers 258). Those students that did graduate from the university, no matter what their specialty, were men intimately familiar with rhetoric and its many uses because “[c]ivil society formed itself and acted, usually for the better, through rhetoric” (Grendler 233), at least according to the theory of Renaissance humanist educators.

Traditionally, however, women were excluded from this comprehensive rhetorical education. Joan Gibson summarizes the trend saying,

Both sexes pursued a general study of literature encompassing a continuum of grammar, rhetoric and poetics, but the systematic conflation of the persuasive aspects of logic and rhetoric served to separate the more specialized parts of rhetoric from grammar and was usually available only to male students. (11)

In fact, those girls and young women that were offered an education learned in the vernacular and their curriculum “consisted of the more “feminine” arts of singing and sewing (Grendler 99). A consequence of the absence of formal rhetoric in women’s education was that their voice in official circles was silenced: “...speech, authority and persuasion were systematically denied even to educated women by the obsessive demands of a constraining decorum” (Gibson 18). For the few women did somehow move on to more advanced humanistic studies, which would naturally include advanced studies in rhetoric, their education was viewed as “an end in itself, like fine needlepoint or the ability to perform ably on the lute or virginals” (Grafton 56), and not as something that would eventually be put to use by society.

Notwithstanding this sociological generalization, every reader of *Don Quijote* knows that Cervantes does give a voice to many of his female characters, and that they use it effectively to lay out their cause to their

respective audiences and to Cervantes' audience as well. In fact, several of these women are quite forceful in the defense of their actions or in asking for assistance from other characters. They become successful advocates for their own cases. In particular, the rhetorical interventions of Marcela, Dorotea and Ana Félix are worthy of analysis, though Marcela's for different reasons than Dorotea's and Ana Félix's. Ironically, because Marcela employs a more traditional rhetorical mode than the other two women do, she fails, while Dorotea and Ana Félix abandon the Ciceronian model of rhetoric and deliver orations that win over their audiences to their cause.

Marcela's case is the first and perhaps most obvious use of rhetoric by a woman in *Don Quijote*. She has been accused of homicide by the men of her neighborhood: because she did not return Grisóstomo's love for her, he died of desperation. Marcela does not accept this charge and appears at Grisóstomo's funeral to defend herself. Mary Mackey has analyzed Marcela's speech according to the classical norms of rhetoric and finds that it is almost technically perfect, that her style is appropriate and that her oration "does expose the logical development of her thoughts" (60). Hart and Rendall, in a subsequent article, also analyze Marcela's discourse, and though they find it does have some rhetorical flaws, they also hold it in high regard as a solidly constructed piece of rhetoric in the classical tradition. In spite of the critics' concurrence as to the excellent structure of Marcela's discourse, Mackey's conclusions differ significantly from Hart and Rendall's.

Mackey uses formal rhetorical patterns—Marcela's speech at Grisóstomo's funeral and Don Quijote's speech before the goatherds—to make judgments about how Cervantes attempts to differentiate his characters through their speech acts, while at the same time he criticizes the Baroque excesses of *elocutio*. By comparing Marcela's speech with Don Quijote's on the Golden Age, Mackey observes that Marcela is a paragon of true Christian rhetoric because of her careful control of elocution and the precise development of her arguments. On the other hand, according to Mackey Don Quijote's highly ornamented speech given before a group of uneducated shepherds is a substandard oration. Mackey concludes that "...the surest indication of [Don Quijote's] madness is his in-

decorousness" (63), and so, conversely, Marcela's excellent sense of what is decorous indicates her sanity.

Hart and Rendall counter Mackey's argument by pointing out what should be obvious: Marcela's speech does not convince anyone present. Grisóstomo's friend Ambrosio has some vituperative verses against Marcela placed on Grisóstomo's headstone, and in spite of Marcela's spirited defense of her liberty, Don Quixote feels he needs to protect her from the men who might want to follow her off into the wilderness. According to Hart and Rendall, Marcela fails because she gives an inappropriate speech at an inappropriate moment (292). Further, both Marcela and Don Quixote "confuse what is possible in literature with what is possible in life" (298).

Like Hart and Rendall, I am not convinced that Marcela has succeeded in her rhetorical endeavor, even though she has clearly demonstrated her technical expertise in the *ars bene dicendi*. Obviously, she has been well instructed in the art of public speaking and knows how to manage rhetorical arguments expertly. Her failure has little to do with what she says or how she says it. She fails because she is, of course, a woman, and a Renaissance woman was not to speak eloquently. Eloquence is not a virtue for her; rather, it distinguishes her and marks her as an aberration.¹ Marcela's rhetoric, in effect, is another indication of her perverse behavior. She chooses not to conform: she has left town for the wilds, she denies Grisóstomo—or any man—her love, she will not marry and have a family, and she will not remain silent. Each of these components of Marcela's behavior put into relief her status as an outcast.

Though many modern readers find something noble and likable about Marcela's "spunk,"² each of her attitudes would have led her con-

1 There is a limited range of opinion on this topic during the late Renaissance, with some commentators arguing that women have equal capacity for eloquence, but because of their domestic duties it is incumbent upon them not to exercise that faculty. Others view the virtues of man and woman as distinct and often opposite, so while a man ought to be eloquent, a woman should be silent. Influential humanists such as Erasmus, Agrippa and Vives held the latter view (Maclean 55-56).

2 In addition to Mackey's favorable treatment of Marcela, other critics have viewed her favorably as well. Jehensen, as one example consistent with much of the modern criticism of the episode, views the shepherdess' non-traditional behavior as the focus of the episode (30) and that her behavior is laudable (31). Likewise, García opines "Cervantes le otorga a la mujer una con-

temporaries to draw one conclusion: Marcela is unchaste, goatherd-narrator Pedro's comment to the contrary notwithstanding.³ An unmistakable sign of this, from a man's perspective, is precisely her skillful, if ultimately ineffective, use of rhetoric. Though a man was to strive, according to the theorist of the time, to be a *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, there was no such thing as a *mulier bona dicendi perita* in the Renaissance. On the contrary, silence was a virtue for a woman.⁴ A woman who did attempt speaking in public staked her reputation and honor. In one of her studies on women and rhetoric in Renaissance culture, Patricia Bizzell observes that "the woman speaking in public was almost obsessively condemned in Renaissance culture, and that condemnation usually took the form of branding her as unchaste" ("Opportunities" 52). In her study on Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly* Bizzell uses an apt metaphor to explain the relationship to women and rhetoric during the Renaissance:

The adult woman who entered the arena of rhetorical combat unprotected by great political authority risked being treated like the only female player in a touch football game: and what chaste woman would take such a risk? ("Praise" 11)

Given this pervasive attitude, what would any man educated in the Renaissance have thought of the shepherdess? The modern reader, because Marcela is a woman who uses classical rhetoric aptly, may view her as subverting the Baroque legal system for her own benefit (García 59). But in the end, her rhetoric is not persuasive. But not only is her rhetoric

ducta racional mientras que el hombre funciona aquí como el agente de la locura y la pérdida de la razón con lo que se subvierte el sistema de valores creados por el sistema patriarcal..." (54).

3 Pedro says of Marcela, "No se piense...que venga en menoscabo de su honestidad y recato: antes es tanta y tal la vigilancia que mira por su honra, que de cuantos la sirven y solicitan ninguno se ha alabado ni con verdad se podrá alabar que le haya dado alguna pequeña esperanza de alcanzar su deseo" (133). Ambrosio also attests to Marcela's purity: "Y con esto queda en su punto la verdad que la fama pregonada de la bondad de Marcela, la cual, fuera de ser cruel, y un poco arrogante, y un mucho desdenosa, la mesma envidia ni debe ni puede ponerle falta alguna" (152). Both of these observations are given *before* Marcela's speech of self-defense.

4 Ian Maclean points out that silence is one of the virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and therefore was thought to be the ideal for all women (25).

ineffective,⁵ it has had the opposite effect than she intended: she cannot publicly defend herself against the accusations without risking even greater censure by men. Cervantes skillfully deploys formal rhetoric to further characterize Marcela, but not, as Mackey concludes, to provide a worthy model of emulation, nor as Hart and Rendall argue, solely to demonstrate that both Don Quixote and she confuse a literary mode with reality. Marcela's rhetoric, along with her other "eccentric" behaviors, further classify her as a woman apart—for the modern reader in a positive way, but for Cervantes' contemporaries, this is an aberration worthy of censure.⁶

Marcela's rhetoric provides a striking contrast to Dorotea's use of the verbal arts. When the priest, the barber and Cardenio come upon her in the wilds, Dorotea is dressed as a man and is lamenting her fortune. Soon, however, the men discover what they have already known: this beauty is a woman, not a man. Her beauty and the paradox of her costume provoke the curiosity of the men, and they approach her to learn more. Taken unawares, Dorotea must mold her words to fit the situation, and she uses pathos weighted rhetoric. Her discourse might be classified as judicial just as Marcela's is because Dorotea is attempting to prove "*cuan sin culpa*" (322) she is in the present case, though at this point neither the men nor the reader knows why she has ended up in the middle of the mountains alone and dressed as a man; they are entirely ignorant of the case being presented before them.

Dorotea begins her speech in a traditional way, with an attempt at *captatio benevolentiae*. In classical rhetoric, the introductory part of any speech aims at making the listeners "receptive, well-disposed, and atten-

5 Hart and Rendall concede that Marcela's use of logical argumentation is "marked by an almost scholastic rigor and thoroughness and we may fairly grant that she makes effective use of the appeal to reason or *logos*" (291-92), but that her attempt to engage her listeners on the emotional plane are rather limited (292), and at a funeral of the shepherds' friend, perhaps emotion would have been employed more logically.

6 Mackey makes the distinction between Don Quixote's and Marcela's ostensible and actual audiences (62-63)—who they speak to within the narration and the contemporary reader of the narration. In Marcela's case, both of these audiences are the same: educated men of the upper classes. While Marcela's ostensible audience may have been overcome by her beauty so as to overlook the faux pax of her speaking like a man in public, her actual audience would not have missed the underlying significance of her rhetorical style.

tive" (*Rhetorica ad Herennium* 13) to the arguments that will follow, and one way of doing that is to capture the listeners' good will. In order to thank them for their offer of help, Dorotea will tell them the whole unvarnished truth, though she would rather not. On the face of it then—even though in the traditional schema this discourse would be classified as judicial—Dorotea does not necessarily view the priest, the barber and Cardenio as judges. She narrates her story as an expression of gratitude for the offer of help. By her own admission, she does not explicitly seek to influence them because they are powerless in her cause: "no habéis de hallar remedio para remediar [mis desdichas], ni consuelo para entretenérlas" (320).

If this is indeed the case, then Dorotea's speech is taken out of the realm of "traditional" rhetoric and placed into a different context, a rhetoric that modern theorists have termed "invitational rhetoric" (Foss 5). This system of rhetoric is one proposed by feminists as an alternative to classical rhetoric, which in one way or another seeks to use some kind of force to control the actions of another and is therefore inherently "a form of social and intellectual violence" (Ryan 70) often employed by the patriarchy, broadly understood.⁷ Invitational rhetoric, on the other hand, does not seek to exercise power over another, but rather "constitutes an invitation to the audience to enter the rhetor's world and see it as the rhetor does" (Foss 5). That some power may, in fact, be exercised as a result of this invitation, invitational rhetoricians do not deny, but that change is not the primary purpose of the discourse (Foss 6). Sharing and understanding are.

Narrative is in many ways a fundamental aspect of invitational rhetoric: "a story is not told as a means of supporting or achieving some other end but as an end itself—simply offering the perspective the story represents" (Foss 7). In Dorotea's case, it is fair to ask the questions, "Why is Dorotea so frank with these three men? What is her purpose? What, if

7 "Patriarchy, in the context of invitational rhetoric, is the *social system* in which we tend to function, not the radical separation of gendered activities. Men and women alike may not agree with the system, they may not live by the system's constraints, and many women and men, in fact, challenge the 'rules' put forth by the system, but, they still function within such a system" (Bone 442).

anything, does she really want?" The men, through the priest have offered to share her pain: "hallaréis quien os ayude a sentir vuestras desgracias" (320), but more than anything else Dorotea wants them to understand how she came to be alone in the mountains dressed as a man because of the injustice of Don Fernando.

By offering this story, Dorotea is in some small way shifting the cultural paradigm through which the men see her. She does not focus on her "mistake," if it can be termed such, but rather the circumstances and events that precede and follow from it. At one point during her narrative, she lets the men into her mind, describing for them her thought processes:

Yo, a esta sazón, hice un breve discurso conmigo, y me dije a mí mesma, 'Sí, que no seré yo la primera que por vía de matrimonio haya subido de humilde a grande estado... Pues si no hago ni mundo ni uso nuevo, bien es acudir a esta honra. (226)

She is utterly honest with the men (a point corroborated by the multiple voices that tell different parts of this story), and they, in turn, are moved and honest with her, offering her whatever help they can. With her narrative, Dorotea employs *re-sourcement*.

Re-sourcement is "a response made by a rhetor according to a framework, assumptions, or principal other than those suggested in precipitating the message" (Foss 9). This response is generally made in a way that is not threatening to the individuals involved, but involves shifting perspectives. Dorotea does not accept the fate left to her by her putative husband. She could very well have argued following a traditional rhetorical scheme that what she did was not wrong, but right, and that the true fault was Don Fernando's. After all, the Council of Trent vehemently denounced this type of secret marriage precisely because of the possible abuses women could suffer at the hands of a man, but the Church Fathers nevertheless recognized the validity of vows made in secret, as matrimony is a sacrament administered by the spouses and only witnessed by a

cleric.⁸ Instead of this possible direct confrontation with her parents and the society in which she lives, she changes tactics and sets off in search of Fernando. Her actions have opened up new rhetorical possibilities for her, and that is the purpose of re-sourcement (Foss 9). Likewise, by presenting her predicament in a way that is not threatening to her audience, Dorotea opens yet another rhetorical possibility: the chance to speak with Don Fernando.

Though the principal aim of invitational rhetoric is not change, it does not preclude that a discourse can have an effect on its listeners. The primary goal of a speech in this mode, however, is to explain and to help another understand (Foss 6; Ryan 70; Bone 436). If that understanding leads to change, in effect, if the rhetor has convinced her audience, so be it. Here, the Thomistic doctrine of double effect is useful⁹: Dorotea does not believe these men can help her; she only wants to share her story. That is her purpose even though other consequences may follow. But her story does effect a change, in fact a series of events that will lead to her eventual reunion with her husband in Chapter 36.

Dorotea is as formidable a woman as Marcela. Both have made a decision and both have actively undertaken courses of action contrary to the expectations of society. Despite these similarities, Dorotea's use of rhetoric is much more effective than Marcela's. Marcela attempts to persuade the men she speaks to by means of traditional argumentation. She relies too much on ethos (a lost cause, in her case from a man's point of view) and logos, and she fails. Dorotea's exclusive use of narration as a means of establishing pathos leads to not just a rhetorical "victory," but also to a more important end: her reintegration into society through marriage with her Don Fernando. In its entirety her story moves from order, to chaos and then back to order again (García 79). Because her rhetoric is

8 The Council Fathers said that "Although it is not to be doubted that clandestine marriages made with the free consent of the contracting parties are valid and true marriages..." such marriages were prohibited because of the possible abuses inherent in them (*Trent* 183)

9 Succinctly defined "The doctrine (or principle) of double effect is often invoked to explain the permissibility of an action that causes a serious harm, such as the death of a human being, as a side effect of promoting some good end" (McIntyre). Within this rhetorical context, the serious harm is the persuasive power exercised by the rhetor since according to many theorists of invitational rhetoric, persuasion is a sort of violence (Foss 3), but the greater good of sharing her story outweighs the possible negative effect.

viewed as “feminine” by the men and used in function of reestablishing societal order, it is an acceptable form for the women to use.¹⁰ It does not place Dorotea in the position of Marcela, who has attempted to co-opt traditional rhetoric, thereby making a “monster” of herself.

Dorotea is not the only woman to employ a pattern of invitational rhetoric in *Don Quijote*. In Part II Ana Félix’s social situation differs from Dorotea’s, but in many ways the context of their rhetorical interventions are similar. Ana Félix, like Dorotea, is first seen as a man by the men who will be her audience. Like Dorotea, her beauty is astounding and is immediately noticed by all the men. Unlike Dorotea, however, Ana Félix’s speech is both urgent and important because she is been found guilty of homicide and is about to be hung from a yardarm. Even as she starts her discourse, the rope is around her neck.

Her speech is very similar to Dorotea’s in structure: she begins by talking about herself and her family, stressing that they are good Catholics, even though suspicion has been cast on them due to their *morisco* ancestry. She says, “Tuve una madre cristiana y un padre discreto y cristiano ni más ni menos... Ni en la lengua, ni en [las costumbres] jamás, a mi parecer, di señales de ser morisca” (816). The second part of her discourse is the narration proper: she recounts how she and Don Gaspar Gregorio met and fell in love, and how he followed her in her exile. She has returned to Spain in order to get the ransom for Gregorio, whom she left in Algiers disguised as a woman.

Though Ana Félix is about to die, she does not explicitly plead her case. Her rhetoric is not the expected judicial discourse typically employed by a defendant in a criminal cause. Instead, Ana Félix resorts to some of the concepts of invitational persuasion; she invites her listeners to commiserate with her. Like her father Ricote, Ana Félix will not allow the general socio-historical situation in Philip III’s Spain to overshadow her own particular case.¹¹ By presenting her individual case and the par-

10 Foss and Griffin clarified that invitational rhetoric is not the exclusive domain of women, nor is it always a woman’s preferred rhetorical system (Foss 5), though subsequent theorists have misunderstood this to be the case (see Bone 441-43 for a summary of these positions).

11 According to Hitchcock, in the case of Ana Félix’s father, Ricote, “The king is, in effect, endorsing a decree whereby the sins of the majority were being visited upon all the Moriscos” (181)

ticular circumstances surrounding it, Ana Félix employs re-sourcement. She invites her listeners to see her life not as simply part of an anonymous group, but rather as an individual.

Instead of attempting to prove her innocence and purity in this case of *honor* by means of logical proof and argumentation as Marcela does, Ana Félix tells a story in the same way that Dorotea does. That is, the *narratio* in the morisca's discourse is inflated to become the rhetorical vehicle by which she will achieve her ends: an audience who has listened and understood her history. Ana Félix like Dorotea makes great use of pathos—both women are intent on using a story that will provoke an emotional response from their audience.

These women's use of invitational rhetoric is not absolute, however, because they lack one of the fundamentals for true communication according to this theory: "To engage in invitational rhetoric is to exchange ideas from positions of mutual respect and equality" (Bone 437). It is obvious, for instance, that even though Marcela attempts to speak to Grisóstomo's friends as equals and employing a rhetorical method acceptable to them, she is rejected. Dorotea and certainly Ana Félix are in no position of equality. In a society with a rigid code of honor and a strict hierarchy, both of these women are vulnerable—Ana Félix doubly so because of her standing as a woman and as morisca. Dorotea's and Ana's rhetoric is more of a "proto-invitational" rhetoric. It shares some aspects of the invitational rhetoric that would be described by modern rhetorical theorists. Neither Dorotea nor Ana Félix speaks from a position of equality with her audience. But both do rely on story, they do not explicitly construct a judicial speech like Marcela does, and they both use a technique that is either re-sourcement or very similar to it. In traditional terms, Dorotea's and Ana Félix's rhetoric is strongly built on Aristotelian concepts of ethos and pathos, and only minimally on logos.

But as if to compensate for the lack of equality between men and women, Cervantes adds a balancing factor, at least in the eyes of men: Marcela's, Dorotea's and Ana Félix's beauty is almost overwhelming to the men that surround them. Pedro, one of the shepherds who tells the tale of Marcela, says "...nadie la miraba que no bendecía a Dios, que tan hermosa la había criado y los más quedaban enamorados y perdidos por ella"

(86). The narrator describes the Cardenio's reaction at seeing Dorotea: "no es persona humana, sino divina," (318) and the priest and barber concur. When Ana Félix appears on board the Spanish warship in Barcelona dressed as a man, the narrator describes her as "uno de los más bellos y gallardos mozos que pudiera pintar la imaginación humana" (1151), and her beauty "acts as an immediate catalyst, Don Antonio Moreno and the Viceroy showering presents on her and offering her unlimited hospitality" (Hitchcock 184). The beauty of all these women serves as a non-verbal *captatio benevolentiae* since it makes the women's listeners attentive, receptive and even sympathetic to their speech even before they begin to speak.

Another of Cervantes' creations who relies heavily on invitational rhetoric and not traditional argumentation is Ruy Pérez de Viedma, the *capitán cautivo* who tells his story in Chapters 39-41 to everyone gathered in the inn. The Captive's tale is in many ways similar to the women's stories. Like Dorotea and Ana Félix, he is often a victim of his fate: "Rui Pérez, hombre de verdadero temple heroico, no *hace* en su novela casi nada, pues siempre le arrastran los azares adversos y también las voluntades más poderosas de otros seres tal vez menos nobles" (Márquez Villanueva 98). His arrival at the inn reminds of Joseph and Mary searching for shelter the night of the Nativity (DiRenzo 10; Casalduero 176; Gerli 45), and underscores both his status as an outsider and his vulnerability. Of course, he is a man and so is not in the same social position as the Marcela, Dorotea and Ana Félix. Nevertheless, his rhetoric is not in this case determined by his gender but by his status as "outsider." He has lived for year away from Spain, and a good many of those years were spent in captivity. When he returns to Spain, he expects, and rightly so, to be treated with suspicion after having spent so many years as a captive, possibly having become a *renegado*, one who has renounced the Faith in favor of Islam. Orthodoxy is by nature suspicious of outsiders and necessarily wants to exclude them. The fear of corrupting society with a renegade was particularly acute, since he, the renegade, was "la imagen invertida del converso y expresa la otra cara del español, la parte maldita, ya que en él señorea la tentación de darse al enemigo, de traicionar a los suyos invirtiendo el signo de las más apreciadas certidumbres" (Illades 14).

Though the narration Cervantes places in Ruy Pérez's mouth is a fiction, it obviously contains historically accurate elements. It is probable that like the renegade of the tale, Ruy Pérez himself would have had to appear before the ecclesiastical authorities. The Captive, then, must prove himself worthy of reintegration by appearing before the Inquisition and offering testimony of his faithfulness to the Church and to Spain. As a primary step, he first shares his experiences with his audience, in anticipation of the "inquisitorial autobiography"¹² that he may have to produce for the Tribunal of the Inquisition.

As in any autobiography, logical proofs and formal rhetoric are not the best tactic employed to narrate a life. The Captive, like *Dorotea* and *Ana Félix*, uses narration to invite his listeners to understand his situation. The folkloric elements (Chevalier) as well as the literary antecedents and other aspects of this intercalated novel have been studied (Márquez Villanueva 92-146), along with the biographical elements (Mayer). Ruy Pérez, following the same narrative pattern that the women employ, begins his narration with his family background, and then explains why he chose his career. He recounts his military exploits and tells two sonnets that lament and memorialize the battle of La Gola. This is a fortunate inclusion, since the cousin of one of Don Fernando's friends was the author of those poems, a coincidence which perhaps draws all the listeners further into the Captive's tale.

By the end of his narration, the reader recognizes that Don Fernando and the others listening to the Captive's tale are themselves captivated by the narration, and in fact, would like to hear the tale again because of its literary qualities. Don Fernando tells the Captain:

Por cierto, señor capitán, el modo que habéis contado este extraño suceso ha sido tal, que iguala a la novedad y estrañeza del mismo caso: todo es peregrino y raro y lleno de accidentes que maravillan y suspenden a quien los oye; y es de tal manera el gusto que hemos recibido en escuchalle, que aunque nos hallara el día de mañana entre-

¹² "Inquisitorial autobiography" is a term Kagan uses to describe one of the manners by which those accused by the Holy Office employed to defend themselves against accusations brought against them (4).

tenidos en el mesmo cuento, holgáramos que de nuevo se comenzara.
(493)

But the sweetness of the narration does not just provide a pleasant experience to his listeners since the other effect is an offer of assistance:

...don Fernando, Cardenio y todos los demás se le ofrecieron con todo lo a ellos posible para servirle, con palabras y razones tan amorosas y tan verdaderas, que el capitán se tuvo por bien satisfecho de sus voluntades. Especialmente le ofreció don Fernando que si quería volverse con él, que él haría que el marqués su hermano fuese padrino del bautismo de Zoraida, y que él, por su parte, le acomodaría de manera que pudiese entrar en su tierra con el autoridad y cómodo que a su persona debía. (493)

By avoiding the formal patterns of classical rhetoric and instead relying more on narration and producing the *admiratio* demanded by the poetic theory of the time (Riley 88-94), the Captive has won over his audience to his cause, not through traditional persuasion, but by inviting them to listen and to share his history.

Ruy Pérez, in short, is an example of a man, an outsider, who can use the same invitational rhetoric that Dorotea and Ana Félix do to relate to those with power. But in the duchess, Cervantes draws the portrait of a woman who has little need for any rhetoric, classical or invitational. In fact, she shows herself to be ignorant of even some familiarity with the art. After dinner with Don Quixote that the duke and duchess host and the comical beard washing episode invented by their servants, the duchess pleads with Don Quixote to describe his fair lady Dulcinea. This, Don Quixote avers, he is unable to do, for such a task could only be done well by “la retórica ciceroniana y demostina” (895). When the duchess pleads that she has never heard the word “demostina,” Don Quixote explains that it has to do with Demosthenes, similarly, “ciceroniana” refers to Cicero, and these two men were the greatest rhetors of the ancient world. The duchess’ ignorance of the art may be due to two reasons: first, it may reflect both her lack of formal education in rhetoric and her reading hab-

its—like many nobles of the period who had retired from the court to the country, she is perfectly versed in the *novelas de caballerías*.¹³ A second and more important reason why this woman is ignorant of rhetoric is that she has power and is not afraid to wield it. After all, the duchess, along with her husband, invent the fabulous world in which Don Quixote truly believes at last that he is a knight errant; she even has the power to remake reality for Sancho:

...la autoridad de la duquesa es suficiente para que Sancho cuestione lo que él creía por experiencia propia: como miembro de una clase inferior, tiene que creer, o decir creer, o actuar como creyera, lo que afirma esa autoridad superior. (Rivers 40)

When the duchess is faced with a situation in which rhetoric—especially invitational rhetoric—might be useful, she resorts not to words, but to violence, and does so without any fear of repercussions. When Doña Rodríguez tells Don Quixote the secret of the “fuentes” on the Duchess’ legs, the duenna is immediately castigated by her mistress:

Luego la pobre dueña sintió que la asían de la garganta con dos manos...y que otra persona con mucha presteza, sin hablar palabra, le alzaba las faldas, y con una al parecer de chinela le comenzó a dar tantos azotes, que era una compasión. (1022).

The duchess has no use for rhetoric since in this world, she holds absolute power, deferring only to the duke, though at times he seems to be nothing more than her “front man”.

In contrast to the duchess, those most in need of effective rhetoric are those with limited power or no power at all. They must somehow make themselves known as individuals. Marcela is as independent a woman

13 Paz Gago makes this observation about the reading habits of the duchess: “En este sentido, la duquesa y su esposo con fiel reflejo de los hábitos de la nobleza áurea que emplea su tiempo de ociosidad...en tres actividades esenciales, todas ellas ejercitadas en sus residencias campestres, como esta casa de placer de los duques: las trazas—en este caso efímeras—, la lectura y la caza” (176)

in the seventeenth century as she would be in the twenty-first century, and attempts to explain herself and justify her actions by co-opting the domain of men's traditional rhetoric. Though she speaks eloquently according to the rules of the art, she utterly fails in her attempt to persuade her ostensible audience because the speech she gives does not conform to their expectations of how a woman should speak. Dorotea and Ana Félix's rhetoric, on the other hand, is accepted by the men for two reasons: first, they do not follow the traditional rhetorical, male-dominated mode of communication. Their rhetoric conforms more closely to the notion of "invitational rhetoric" proposed by Foss and Griffin. Second, their rhetoric aims at a restoration of the status quo. Dorotea hopes to regain what she has unlawfully and immorally lost, her husband. Ana Félix also expresses a desire for reintegration: she wants to return home and she wants to marry her true love, a Catholic gentleman who has, in turn, sacrificed everything for love. Perhaps to these two reasons—their rhetorical mode and their desire for the status quo—we should add a third: beauty, though of course in Marcela's case, her beauty is not great enough to offset her debilities—manly rhetoric and manly independence.

Women must at least play the part of victim to be heard by men, and being beautiful certainly does not hurt their cause. Cervantes acknowledges the limits of society—and perhaps his own limits—at the same time showing its promise. The limit for women is represented by the few choices available to them: indeed, both in theory and in praxis, according to Ian Maclean, "Marriage is an immovable obstacle to any improvement in the theoretical or real status of women in law, theology, in moral or political philosophy" (85). This limitation is typified by Marcela's, Dorotea's, and Ana Félix's discourses and their relative success. Through these characters, Cervantes portrays both the rhetorical capacity of women and the receptivity of men to various forms of feminine rhetoric.

wyszyns@uakron.edu

UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

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