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Evoking Astraea: the Speeches of Marcela and Dorotea in *Don Quijote I*

Carolyn Nadeau

The interpolated tales of *Don Quijote*, Part One, have been the source of extensive criticism.¹ Raymond Immerwahr discusses the relationship between tale and text. He argues that the interpolated tales, particularly, *El curioso impertinente*, form a "symmetry of antithesis" with respect to each other and the text as a whole (135). Edward Dudley introduces the importance of the tales in shaping *Don Quijote*'s character. He observes that, "the stories must be understood as essential to the novel's narrative structure, not merely as interesting accretions. *Don Quijote*, as hero of the novel, must become the particular protagonist he does because of the tales, not in spite of them" (357). Ruth El Saffar takes a Jungian approach and notes that these tales are, "voices from the unconscious that serve to compensate for an imbalance in consciousness on the part of the main character" (Beyond 145). However, the relationship of the female characters to the interpolated tales has not been studied in depth. With the exception of Dulcinea, who does not actually appear in Part One but is only referred to, all the "upstanding" female characters, those not associated with prostitution or other mischievous acts, enter the text through an interpolated tale narrated by a male voice. Zoraida, the woman from Algiers, and Clara, a neighbor of the captive's family, are introduced to the other characters in person. However, their life stories, like that of Marcela, Luscinda, Dorotea, Camila and Leandra are first presented intradiegetically, in the interpolated tales. While some of these females surface and become an integral part of the extradiegetic narrative level, as is the case with Dorotea, they never fully separate from the tale. In this way, the female characters are marginalized; they are always tied to the sometimes vaguely defined border between the first and second narrative level, that is, the main narrative and the interpolated tale.

From Greek comedy to contemporary literary theory, the role of women in literature and society has captured the attention of many European thinkers and writers. In the Iberian peninsula, the feminist argument begins to develop in the Middle Ages and becomes a commonplace during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.² Some writers attack woman for being materialistic, lustful, sinful and the direct cause of man's downfall. Others praise their grace and spiritually. Miguel de Cervantes in *Don Quijote I*, offers an eclectic view of women. One need only think of the leading female character, Dulcinea, who is simultaneously a spiritual guidance for the errant knight, *Don Quijote*, and a "cortés ana" in the mind of his squire Sancho. The variety and richness of female characters in Cervantes' text has been the source of many stimulating articles. Javier Herrero summarizes the major criticism in "Dulcinea and Her Critics." Ruth El Saffar relates the female characters in the tales to *Don Quijote*'s unconscious self (Beyond, 60-79). Pierre L. Ullman observes the similarities of surrogate representation for Marcela and Leandra and notes the thematic antitheses between the two tales. Diana de Armas Wilson analyzes Camila's pertinent role in exposing the cultural norms of wife-testing (278). Frederick de Armas investigates the

invisibility of the female characters and observes that Don Quijote's interruption of *El curioso impertinente* represents his refusal to acknowledge the female voice (13). A comparative analysis of the roles of Marcela and Dorotea, their changing narrative positions within the text, association with the goddess Astraea, and effect on and reactions to Don Quijote, is the subject of this essay.

Marcela's characterization in the first interpolated tale and at Grisóstomo's funeral is presented from a number of points of view. Marcela is first described as an "endiablada moza" (161).³ Later, Pedro, the narrator of Marcela's tale, recounts her life story. Like Don Quijote, Marcela rejects the conventional world. In spite of her beauty, she refuses to marry and instead becomes a shepherdess who scorns all amorous advancements.⁴ Pedro tells of her tragic effect on men and finishes his story wondering who will eventually control her: "libre y desenfadadamente triunfa la hermosa Marcela, y todos los que la conocemos estamos esperando en que ha de parar su altivez y quien ha de ser el dichoso que ha de venir a domefiar condición tan terrible y gozar de hermosura tan estremada" (167). When Don Quijote arrives at the funeral, Vivaldo reads Grisóstomo's song which describes Marcela's cruel action. His friend, Ambrosio, adds to the complex vision of the shepherdess by defending Marcela from Grisóstomo's attacks: "fuera de ser cruel, y un poco arrogante, y un mucho desdefiosa, la misma envidia ni debe ni puede ponerle falta alguna" (184-185). These views of her character are restricted to a male perspective. Marcela's own thoughts and actions are revealed only as she surfaces to the first narrative level and delivers her speech on the mountain overlooking the funeral.

By first, I am referring to what Genette defines as the extradiegetic narrative level. He labels the narrative levels, extradiegetic, intradiegetic or diegetic, and metadiegetic, and differentiates them by arguing that, "any event a narrative recounts is at a diegetic level immediately higher than the level at which the narrating act producing this narrative is placed" (228).⁵ In the case of Marcela, her narrative comes to life through Pedro's interpolated tale. His words are part of the first, extradiegetic level that frame her secondary, diegetic existence. Later, Marcela integrates into this first level when she defends herself at Grisóstomo's funeral. Marcela, then, rises from a figure within an intradiegetic level to the speaker of her own extradiegetic defense. She shifts between what Genette terms the "sacred frontier between two worlds" (236); she is both the story and the story teller.

Dorotea's narrative existence differs from Marcela's in that the former transgresses all three narrative levels. She is introduced in Cardenio's tale as the "labradora" Fernando loves and later takes advantage of. Here, like Marcela, she is introduced on an intradiegetic level. Later, when she meets the priest, barber and Cardenio, and tells her own story, she simultaneously shifts to an extradiegetic narrator recounting her own story and a metadiegetic narrator, relating events within the tale she tells. Dorotea's complex narrative position complements her role within the Quijote as she is the most complex and thoroughly characterized female in the novel. Her background is similar to Marcela's in that she, too, comes from a wealthy farming family and she, too, rejects, at least in part, social norms. In hopes of regaining her honor, Dorotea dresses as a man to search for her promised husband who had deceived her. She recounts her family history and the events leading up to her encounter with the priest, barber and Cardenio. Dorotea changes from narrator of her own intradiegetic tale to a leading character of the first narrative level as

she simultaneously changes her disguise from a man to the princess Miconicoma. These two costumes function in a similar way as the perspectivism does in Marcela's story in that they add complexity to the female character yet simultaneously limit her characterization to a male perspective. As stated above, various male villagers describe their perspective on Marcela. Here, Dorotea's costumes are also a function of male characters. First, her servant, the farmer she works for and the three men she meets in the Sierra Morena, see her dressed as a man. Second, Don Quijote and Sancho see her as a princess in need of protection. Moreover, this disguise as the Princess Micomicona was originally the priest's idea: "Dorotea, having been told the basic outline of her role and given a fictitious name and origin by the Curate, is launched onto the scene with Don Quixote" (El Saffar, Distance 66). Again, she is a function of another male character.

In both interpolated tales, the feminine characterization is shrouded by a masculine perspective. 6 In the case of Marcela, it is an oral perspective—they describe her. And in the case of Dorotea, it is a visual perspective—they see her. Dorotea's true female character, that of Dorotea, not a man or a princess, surfaces at her critical moments of truth. First, in the sierra, she reveals her true identity, ill-fated circumstances and Luscinda's honest commitment to Cardenio. Later, at the inn when she recognizes Fernando, Dorotea delivers a powerful speech, this time, to convince Fernando to love her.

Don Quijote Part One is filled with famous speeches. Starting with the prologue, a friend instructs the narrator how to adorn the text to make it more presentable. Later, Don Quijote delivers his famous discourses on the Golden Age and on arms and letters. And finally, the narrators of the interpolated tales and even characters within these stories deliver monologues. The first interpolated tale leads Don Quijote and Sancho to the funeral service of Grisóstomo, the disillusioned shepherd. After a series of slanderous remarks about the woman he died for, Marcela appears to the shepherds and others from the rocks overlooking the funeral. She interrupts Grisóstomo's service to ask for justice and defend the virtue of women. The use of rhetorical devices in Marcela's speech has been carefully studied by Mary MacKey.⁷ She shows how Marcela's speech is grounded in facts, uses rhetorical questions to keep in touch with her audience, defends herself with a wide variety of arguments and proves that her conduct is in harmony with an ideal justice (52-55).⁸

Heaven plays an important role in Marcela's defense. She begins her defense with heaven's role in her creation. Later, she states that heaven has decided her fate, "El cielo aun hasta ahora no ha querido que yo arne par destino" (187). Finally, she closes her defense stating that she will only leave the mountain and forest to better contemplate the beauty of heaven: "a contemplar la hermosura del cielo, pasos con que camina el alma a su morada primera" (188). Celestial imagery is a strong defense for an argument justifying women's virtue for there was no higher authority than the Heavens for granting justice.

While Marcela's speech soundly defends why a woman does not have to reciprocate a man's love, Dorotea's speech justifies the opposite. She argues why a man, in this case, Fernando, must love a woman, herself. Her speech, like Marcela's, is grounded in Ciceronian precepts and contains similar figures of thought and diction.

Kneeling at Fernando's feet, she begins with an extensive introduction, describing the events that led to her present state. She then proposes the main argument of her speech, "Tu quisiste que yo fuese tuya, y quisiste de manera que, aunque ahora quieras que no lo sea, no sera posible que tu dejes de ser mfo" (450). Dorotea continues with a series of defenses and refutations of her narrative including, a comparison of the two women,

Dorotea and Luscinda, Fernando is involved with, a description of his past actions, their potential future together, the honor of her family, and the refutation of staining his noble lineage. At the close of her defense she restates who she is: "En fin, señor, lo que ultimamente te digo es que, quieras o no quieras, yo soy tu esposa ..." (451). She finishes her speech calling upon witnesses to the occasion of Fernando promising matrimony to Dorotea: the paper he signed, heaven, to whom he swore, and his own consciousness.

Her speech, like Marcela's, emotionally moves the audience. The others at the inn share Dorotea's tears ("la acompañaron en ellas [las lágrimas]" (451) while the friends gathered at Grisóstomo's funeral were amazed with Marcela's speech and beauty ("dejando admirados, tanto de su discreción como de su hermosura, a todos los que allí estaban" (188).

Although the argument of the speeches directly oppose one another, they share, as mentioned above, rhetorical devices and an emotional effect on their respective audience. Also, both women bring justice to themselves by presenting the truth. In the case of Marcela, she clears her name from the slanders that have arisen after shepherds have fallen in love with her. Dorotea justly regains the honor she lost after Fernando had taken advantage of her by convincing him to rejoin her as husband. Together, these speeches frame the concept of justice that encompasses women's desires. Marcela defends her freedom from amorous pretenders while Dorotea argues for her right to a complete and honest reintegration into society through her marriage to Fernando. Because of their association with justice and truth, both figures can be compared to the goddess Astraea.

Astraea is the goddess of justice, truth and chastity who, along with Saturn, lived among the mortals during the Golden Age. When the Ages declined, she started to withdraw from human companionship. She moved to the country in the Silver Age and to the mountains in the Bronze. She was the last of the gods to leave the mortals, when she converted into the constellation Virgo. The myth of Astraea was a source of inspiration for many Golden Age writers.⁹ Erna Berndt Kelley summarizes the mythological interpretations for Marcela and adds to them by arguing that Marcela has inherited many of Astraea's attributes.¹⁰ Dorotea's association with the goddess Astraea has not yet been noted by critics. Both Marcela and Dorotea are associated with Astraea because of their longing to recuperate justice. Other elements in the text, the events that precede the speeches, their relationship to Don Quijote and their effect on the respective audience, outline the parallels between these two important female figures and define the ideals of justice and truth that point to the relationship between Marcela, Dorotea and the goddess, Astraea.

Ruth El Saffar states that, "A full interpretation of each of Cervantes' interpolated tales requires attending to the elements surrounding it" (Beyond 34). While Marcela and Dorotea's speeches are outside the tales, this same exploration holds true. Before Marcela speaks on an extradiegetic narrative level, not within the interpolated tale, Don Quijote gives his discourse on the Golden Age and his quest to return to that age. His speech, in a sense, prepares the reader for Marcela's in that Don Quijote recalls the harmonious days when Astraea's justice flourished.

Likewise, Cardenio's sonnet about Astraea prepares the reader for the surfacing of Dorotea to the primary narrative level. Here, Cardenio sings of returning justice to the world, "nos sefialas la justa paz" (330). He continues his poem by asking her (la amistad) to cast off deceptions and not let dishonest masquerades bring primordial chaos to the world.

... 0 no permitas
que el engaño se vista tu librea,
con que destruye a la intención sincera;
que si tus apariencias no le quitas,
presto ha de verse el mundo en la pelea
de la disorde confusión primera. (330)

Naked truth and the threat of primordial chaos are commonplaces often associated with Astraea. In Bernini's sculpture, Truth Unveiled, the naked figure sheds her robes and in Peter Paul Ruben's painting Triumph of the Eucharist, Truth and Time rise above the tormented, confused world. II In the sonnet, Cardenio alludes to the deception of clothing, and warns of the tragic fate that awaits if *fa amistad* does not shed her false robes, that is, her false identifies. Cardenio's poem foreshadows Dorotea's emergence from her disguises as a man and later a princess to restore harmony within her amorous world. His speech, then, functions as a narrative device that, like Don Quijote's discourse, foreshadows the coming of the Astraea figure.

Marcela, like Don Quijote, yearns for an age of justice where she can live freely. Consequently, her home is the country and the mountain, the places Astraea lived before leaving this world. Marcela, like Astraea, understands justice and lives it herself. However, she is unable to pass her knowledge on to the rest of the world. Don Quijote, after Marcela's speech, searches for her, but he, too, is unsuccessful: "... se entraron por el mismo bosque donde vieron que se habfa entrado la pastora Marcela ... buscandola por todas partes sin poder hallarla ..." (190).¹²

Although Don Quijote gives up his search for a just world at the end of the novel, it is not before he offers justice to Dorotea.¹³ Through his vision of killing the giant, Pandafilando, a chivalric symbol of pride and lust, the reader is prepared for a real killing of the two deadly sins.¹⁴ This adventure is yet another preparatory event for Dorotea's speech. Here, Don Quijote slays Pandafilando who, as Hahn observes, is an allegorization of Fernando (137), whose pride and lust Dorotea slays with her speech. Where Don Quijote's Golden Age speech and Cardenio's sonnet are a symbolic announcement of the mythological goddess represented in the text, the adventure with the wineskins is the advent of Dorotea's restoration of harmony. Don Quijote's dreams of returning justice to the world parallel Dorotea's speech which regains justice for Fernando and herself and for Cardenio and Luscinda. Dorotea delivers Astraea's *veritas* and thus, conquers Fernando's deceptions. After her speech ends, Fernando tells her that she had won: "Venciste, hermosa Dorotea, venciste: porque no es posible tener animo para negar tantas verdades juntas" (452). Later, the narrator also acknowledges the power of Dorotea's truths: "el valeroso pecho de Don Fernando ... se ablando y se dejo vencer de la verdad ..." (454). Dorotea's successful conquest parallels Don Quijote's against the giant. Fernando acknowledges the truth of her speech and the two couples, Fernando and Dorotea and Cardenio and Luscinda, are harmoniously reunited.

From the reader's perspective, Don Quijote's actions, his speech and his adventure, anticipate the mythological resonances in both Marcela's and Dorotea's speeches. He also represents both the failure and success of achieving justice in the world. Don Quijote failed to reach the justice of Marcela's world; he follows her but cannot find her. Yet, by slaying Pandafilando, he succeeds in making justice accessible to Dorotea's world.

In conclusion, then, Marcela and Dorotea's importance is reflected on narrative, symbolic and structural levels. First, they represent the limitations of the female characters within the narrative structure. Although they surface to the main narrative level, they remain tied to the secondary, interpolated level. Marcela only briefly appears outside of the tale and while Dorotea is a central figure for almost half of the novel, her main focus is to return to her life as it was introduced in the tale. In a sense, she surfaces from the tale only to reintegrate herself into it.

Secondly, the two women symbolize the mythological goddess Astraea, Marcela, by rejecting human love, represents a chaste Astraea. Her justice, like her vision of love, remains inaccessible to her audience. However, Dorotea, the just Astraea, is successful in restoring harmony. She embraces the established marriage institution and thus, promotes personal and social stability.¹⁵

Lastly, both characters affect the actions of Don Quijote, thus, influencing the structure of the novel. His constant search for justice is defined by the limits of Marcela and Dorotea's worlds. Don Quijote follows but cannot enter the former, thereby failing in his attempt to restore justice. However, his adventure with the wineskins, that is, with the giant Pandafilando, leads the way for restoring justice in Dorotea's world. His quest for harmony and order continue throughout the novel but he never exceeds the limits of failure and success that Marcela and Dorotea establish in their encounters with the wandering knight, Don Quijote.

Notes

1. Edward Dudley summarizes the critics who argue for the importance of the interpolated tales (356, ft. 1).
2. During the Golden Age the debate extends to all literary genres including chivalric, sentimental and pastoral novels. For a thorough analysis of the feminist debate in Spain see Jacob Ornstein's article. Joseph B. Spieker also gives a brief summary of anti-feminist writing. Sandra Foa offers an excellent study of Marfa de Zayas' exemplary novel, *Desengaños amorosos*, an unconventional defense of women.
3. All quotations are from Part One of the Murillo edition of *Don Quijote*.
4. Ruth El Saffar observes that Marcela's upbringing inversely parallels Alonso Quijano's lifestyle. "She [Marcela] is, in fact, Don Quixote's inverse, being the niece of a celibate uncle, while he, as celibate uncle, has an unmarried niece living in his house" (Beyond 61).
5. Charles Oriel also uses Genette's narrative levels for his work on Cardenio's tale. Ruth El Saffar's *Distance and Control in Don Quijote* and James Parr's *Don Quijote: An Anatomy of Subversive Discourse*, also treat the theme of narrative discourse in *Don Quijote*.
6. Frederick de Armas, draws a similar conclusion in reference to the female power of invisibility, particularly that of Dulcinea and Camila. He observes that, "It is a supernormal power thrust upon them by men who will not see them for what they are" ("Interpolations" 21-22).
7. In her article MacKey compares Marcela's speech with Don Quijote's discourse on

the Golden Age. She contrasts the rhetorical styles of both and how they determine the overall effect of each speech. MacKey also points out some of the figures of thought in Marcela's speech including prolepsis (anticipation of objections), simulatio (simulation of passion), irony and emphasis (60).

8. Marcela's speech can be divided into five parts which correspond to the Ciceronian division of *illvellido*, an integral part of any rhetorical discourse. In the first and second sections, which correspond to the exordium and the narrative, Marcela briefly introduces why she has come, "para persuadir una verdad a los discretos" (185) and then explains what she will disprove, "Hizome el cielo, segun vosotros decfs, hermosa, y de tal manera, que, sin ser poderosos a otra cosa, ... decfs, y aun quereis, que este yo obligada a amaros" (185-186). The third and fourth sections of her speech correspond to Cicero's partition, confirmation and refutation. Marcela brings up and refutes several questions about a woman's lack of choice for whom she loves. She argues that bodily desires are inferior to spiritual ones. She then addresses the specific death of Grisóstomo and explains that his own impatience and desire killed him. She again questions why a woman should lose her honor and defends her own innocence: "No engañio a este, ni solicito aquel; ni burlo con uno, ni me entretengo con el otro" (188). Finally, in the fifth section, which corresponds to the Ciceronian peroration, she concludes that her love is directed to contemplating heaven and returning her soul to its original abode. Marcela has gone beyond human, physical love to a higher, spiritual one.

9. Frederick de Armas discusses the development of the *Astraea* myth from the Greek classics to the Spanish Golden Age in chapter one of *The Return of Astraea* (1-21). He treats her development in Golden Age literature in chapter two (22-58).

10. She cites Antonio de Guevara's third book of the *Libro oureo de Marcos Aurelio* as a subtext for the creation of the *MarcelaiAstraea* character (366-367).

11. These examples are reproduced in Friz Saxl's article in which he examines the role of the artistic interpretations of *Veritas Filia Temporis* on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries European hegemonies. He traces the icon of Truth from the political underpinnings of Aretino's woodcuts to Bernini's glorification of the Catholic church. Frederic de Armas states that *Astraea* is often associated with apocalyptic imagery (*The Return of Astraea* 2).

12. Ruth El Saffar observes that the incident with *Rocinante* and the mares and later, with *Don Quijote* and *Maritornes* are examples of *Don Quijote*'s unconscious desire for *Marcela* (*Beyond* 63).

13. Joaquín Casaldueño mentions the relationship between *Dorotea* and *Don Quijote* in their quest: "se simboliza en *Don Quijote* el esfuerzo moral necesario para pasar del plano de la lascivia al social del matrimonio" (39).

14. Juergen Hahn summarizes the development of giants' representation in Western literature. He includes *Don Quijote*'s reference to giants association with pride in Part II, 8, "Hemos de matar en los gigantes a la soberbia" (137-138).

15. Marcia Welles, in analyzing the main theme in *Marfa de Zayas*, *Novela corlesana*, states that when the conflict in her tales is resolved harmoniously, "the final harmony is represented by the institution of the Christian marriage . . . which by uniting the individual with the community maintains the status quo and insures social stability" (307). *Dorotea*'s speech makes this harmonious resolution possible.

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