
Manual Control: 'Regulatory Fictions' and their Discontents.

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ONNA HARAWAY insists, in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*¹ on the power of what she calls 'regulatory fictions' in the formation of Western concepts of gender. In any given historical moment, a host of such regulatory fictions are at work, both reflecting and disseminating the guiding and sanctioned ideologies of the time. The legal, medical, scientific, and religious discourses, as well as the purely literary ones, through which the gendered body has been constituted historically and discursively, should be included under the rubric of regulatory fictions. The power of such regulatory fictions in Renaissance Europe must be articulated within the epistemological framework provided by Renaissance theories of reading, and within the dual context of a) the existence of a significantly increased population of readers, and b) the exponential increase in the dissemination of the printed word made possible by the printing press and the emerging book distribution industry.

One of the most important factors in the formation of Renaissance Europe is the establishment of new economic practices, which both necessitated and predicated the existence of an urban middle class, both distinct from the aristocracy and mi-

¹ *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p.135.

metic of it. It is this mirrored/mirroring bourgeois middle class that the narrative discourses of the time target as their own particular generation of readers. Within this context, it is easy to understand the necessity, the proliferation, and the power of the "how to" books of conduct, which added yet another layer to the regulatory fictions already extant, namely the legal, medical, and religious texts, and their prescriptive and proscriptive discourses. That a wealth of regulatory discourses existed for the gentleman, the quintessential man of the Renaissance, is well known, as is the variety of rubrics under which the life of the gentlemen and their possible avocations are theorized, encoded, and recorded. Indeed, the manuals written for the gentleman offer quite an array of possibilities, unveiling both a desire to codify and regulate, and a belief in the emulatory powers of the exemplars.² The treatises on the conduct of men can be divided into three main categories: the art of being a gentleman at court, the art of loving -not to be confused with the art of being a husband-, and those concerned with the training that befits the rulers of society and the state, which differentiate between princes and other gentlemen of note. A separate category consists of the books on spirituality, such as Christian manuals, but those belong rightly in the category of religious discourses. It will not be surprising to remark that a number of these manuals were written as well for the instruction, edification, and social control of women. In contrast to the variety of conduct books written for men, and the choices and possibilities they uncover, their feminine counterparts exhibit a notorious sameness with respect to the social space they delimit for women. In the task of instructing women they, in fact, construct and inscribe 'woman,' whether purportedly addressing bourgeois women, aristocratic ladies, or farm wives. While ostensibly directed at women sited in specific and varied vital geographies, these behavior manuals exhibit a strong commonality: they design an architecture of enclosure which defines women in terms of spatial and bodily boundaries. As Peter Stallybrass has argued in a particularly felicitous manner, woman, that is, the proper woman, is characterized in the Renaissance by the "enclosed body, the closed mouth, the locked house."³ What

² For a bibliography on manuals for gentlemen, which includes English, French, Italian, and Spanish treatises, see Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), pp. 424-462.

³ "The Body Enclosed," in Ferguson, M., Quilligan, M. and Vickers, N. eds. *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p.127.

is interesting about these varied constructions is, precisely, their shared commonality, the fact that taken as a constituting body of knowledge, these texts codify 'women', i. e., members of different classes within a given society, as 'woman', i. e., a de facto univocal and supposedly universal term, a "natural" term if you will, that underscores gender and elides class.⁴ This privileging and encoding of gender, while at the same time erasing class as a category of analysis in the construction of 'woman', constitutes woman as a "single category, set over against the category of men. To emphasize class is to differentiate *between* women, dividing them into distinct social groups."⁵ It is easy to see why the majority of the conduct manuals, and most especially those directed at the women of the upper and middle classes, should choose to gloss over the class factor: if they are to serve their very purpose as exemplars, it is imperative that they delve into the commonality of woman, in order to validate the model of behavior that they uphold, a model which must be made to seem plausible, and to constitute a worthy and attainable aspiration for their intended readers. To emphasize class closure would, in fact, potentially discredit their very purpose as exemplars. Conversely, by eluding class as a determinant factor in the life of bourgeois women, the success of the reader in realizing her social aspirations rests precisely on her as an individual, while the authority of the text remains unquestionable. It should be added further, that these recurring inscriptions of women, implicitly and explicitly, encode and naturalize another definitory variable, whereby the univocal 'woman' becomes the, no

⁴ Ruth Kelso, who wrote the most extensive study to date on conduct manuals in Renaissance Europe, affirms that "that many books of a theoretical sort were written for and on the lady the list appended to this volume furnishes ample evidence, but beyond the dedication to ladies, duchesses, or queens the contents, it is scarcely an exaggeration to affirm, apply to the whole sex rather than to any favored section of it. The lady, shall we venture to say, turns out to be merely a wife." Further, she maintains that "neither did the theory of the favored class help to distinguish the lady from the inferior sort of womankind, or of mankind for that matter. The fundamental assumption of the whole ideal of gentility was that some must rule and some be ruled. The first law of woman, as we shall see, was submission and obedience, exemplified in the beginning and for all time by our Mother Eve. Theory does not divide women into two groups, the rulers and the ruled, and prescribe to each a different set of laws on the basis of that relationship. Practice did just that, but not theory. Theory said that all women must be ruled." *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*, pp.1-3.

⁵ Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories," p. 133.

less univocal, and, again, supposedly universal, 'wife,'⁶ thus confirming the assertion that "what makes a woman is a specific relation of appropriation by a man."⁷ It is precisely these encoded seemingly unseen and unnoticed naturalizations which make them effective as tools of control: if all women are woman, and a woman is a wife, then, it follows, "naturally" that all women are necessarily subject to male authority, be it that of the father, the husband, or the more exalted legal and political paternalism of the state and the church.

To return to the conduct manuals of wom(a)n's social propriety, it should be pointed out that they are inscribed within the Renaissance writing tradition and notion of exemplarity. Exemplarity, in the Renaissance, is a two-way street. If, on the one hand, it aims to guide toward a future behavior, on the other it anchors itself and its authority and prescriptive weight in the past: past texts, past model lives, and past writers. Thus it is based on the implicit acknowledgement of the historicity of the tradition, "which is recognized in its imitability."⁸ As Timothy Hampton has cogently pointed out, if in a slightly different context,

"The question of exemplarity thus implies the understanding of the self in terms of narrative. This central function of narrative is, moreover, linked to the function of the exemplar in the promotion of the processes of socialization, or what Foucault has called 'arts of existence.' And these processes involve not merely a series of precepts to be followed or avoided but also the subject's very relationship to his body. Exemplar-

⁶ Perhaps the two most influential conduct manuals in Spain were Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* (Salamanca, 1583), and Juan Luis Vives' *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana*, translated into Spanish in 1528. See also Gaspar de Astete, *Tratado del gobierno de la familia y estado de las viudas y doncellas* (Burgos, 1603); Juan Espinosa, *Diálogo en laude de las mujeres*, (1580). For extensive documentation on this topic, see Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*; also, Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

⁷ Haraway (1991), p. 138, points this out as she explicates Wittig's, and the editors' of *Questions féministes* position in 1980: "Wittig argued that all women belong to a class constituted by the hierarchical social relation of sexual difference that gives men ideological, political and economic power over women." Underlining in the original.

⁸ David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 4.

ity aims at exhorting the reader to move from words to deeds, from language to action.⁹

The power of these texts upon their intended readers is evident. Their worth as socializing tools should not be underestimated, particularly in view of their value as 'promissory notes' to the emerging middle class women/wives.¹⁰ Which underlines that implicit in Renaissance humanist hermeneutics is "an already well-established belief in the reader's active role in the production of meaning."¹¹ This shift in the conceptualization of reading as an activity, which confirms the emergence of the private and 'idle' reader, clearly implies "that meaning is not, in Aristotle's terms, a *product*. Rather, it is inseparable from the historically situated *activity* of reading."¹² In Spain, and in other Counter Reformation countries, the emergence of reading as a private activity and its subversive potential was not lost on the Church, which forbade all individual readings of the Bible in the vernacular, precisely because it recognized its possible liberatory effects.¹³ As Terence Cave has remarked, "reading thus becomes a kind of rewriting, because what is read is itself perceptibly a reading in something like the modern sense -that is to say, a provisional exercise."¹⁴

To return to the construction of the normative woman¹⁵ as an inexorably predetermined wife: it signals the underlying ideol-

⁹ *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), p.29.

¹⁰ Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* is dedicated to the aristocratic Doña María Varela Osorio, but abounds in chapters obviously intended for more common readers: "Buscó lana y lino, y obró con el saber de sus manos;" "Ciñose de fortaleza y fortificó su brazo. Tomó gusto en el granjear; su candela no se apagó de noche. Puso sus manos en la tortera, y sus dedos tomaron el huso." The same can be said of Juan Luis Vives' *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana*, purportedly intended for the princess of the English court.

¹¹ Victoria Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism in the Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), p.192.

¹² Victoria Kahn, *Rhetoric*, p. 192. Underlining in the original.

¹³ See Walter L. Reed, *An Exemplary History of the Novel: the Quixotic versus the Picaresque* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p.27, and pp.71-92 on readers and reading.

¹⁴ "The Mimesis of Reading in the Renaissance," in *Mimesis from Mirror to Method, Augustine to Descartes*, John D. Lyons and Stephen G. Nichols, Jr., eds. (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1982), p. 156.

¹⁵ I use 'woman' repeatedly to underscore the universalizing tendency in Renaissance writing, and not because I subscribe to it.

ogy of much Renaissance writing, as it points to women's place in men's ideologies, and unveils its socializing and controlling intention within the political ideology that has been defined as "compulsory heterosexuality,"¹⁶ precisely because it underscores the centrality of the social institution of marriage to the functioning of the state. It is this ideology which is located at the core of the social and discursive construction of woman as "the object of another's desire,"¹⁷ a notion that could be read as the implicit guiding principle of most of the Renaissance literary genres which engage women, be they love poetry, conduct manuals, educational or fictional narratives.

To explore this conjunction of male desire and hegemonic discursive power I would like to turn now to the episode of Marcela and Grisóstomo situated in chapters XII-XV of the first part of *Don Quixote*.¹⁸ Grisóstomo, the only son of a rich man, fell in love with Marcela, a beautiful rich orphan who was brought up

¹⁶ See Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs* 5(4), (1980): 631-60, and Monique Wittig, "One is not born a Woman," *Feminist Issues* 2, (1981): 47-54.

¹⁷ Haraway, 1991, referring to Catharine MacKinnon's theoretical legal work, p.141.

¹⁸ The episode of Marcela and Grisóstomo has been the object of much critical attention. The following represent a variety of readings: John J. Allen, "Style and Genre in *Don Quijote: The Pastoral*," *Cervantes* 6, no 1 (Spring, 1986): 51-56; Francisco de Ayala, *Ensayos* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1972), pp. 605 and ff.; Juan Bautista Avallé-Arce, "Grisóstomo y Marcela (La verdad problemática)," *Deslindes cervantinos* (Madrid: Edhigar, 1961); Joaquín Casaldueño, "Cervantes rechaza la pastoril y no acepta la picaresca," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 61 (1984): 283-85; Javier Herrero, "Arcadia's Inferno: Cervantes' Attack on Pastoral," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 55 (1978): 289-99; Elvira Macht de Vera, "Indagación en los personajes de Cervantes: Marcela o la libertad," *Explicación de textos literarios* 13-15 (1984-85): 3-17; Michael D. McGaha, "The Sources and Meaning of the Grisóstomo-Marcela Episode in the 1605 *Quijote*," *Anales cervantinos* 16 (1977): 33-69; Helena Percas de Ponseti, *Cervantes y su concepto del arte: Estudio crítico de algunos aspectos y episodios del Quijote*, 2 vols., (Madrid: Gredos, 1975); Harry Sieber, "Society and the Pastoral Vision in the Marcela-Grisóstomo Episode of *Don Quijote*," *Estudios literarios de hispanistas norteamericanos dedicados a Helmut Hatzfeldt con motivo de su ochenta aniversario*, Josep M. Solà-Solé, Alessandro Crisafulli, and Bruno Damiani eds., (Barcelona: Hispam, 1974), pp. 185-96; Ann E. Wiltrout, "Las mujeres del Quijote," *Anales cervantinos* 12 (1973): 1-6. For feminist readings of the episode, see: Yvonne Jehenson, "The Pastoral Episode in Cervantes' *D. Quijote: Marcela Once Again*," *Cervantes* X(2), (Fall 1990): 15-35, and Adrienne Munich, "Notorious Signs, Feminist Criticism and Literary Tradition," *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*, Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn, eds. (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), pp.238-259.

by her uncle, a wise priest. Marcela, considering herself too young to assume the heavy responsibility of marriage, spent her days with her women friends, dressed as a shepherdess, in the freedom of the countryside. Her guardian uncle approved of and abetted this way of life. Marcela repeatedly rejected Grisóstomo's advances, and never gave him any reason to hope that one day she would love him. Grisóstomo who, with his friends, had started roaming the countryside dressed as a shepherd and spent his days singing his love songs, commits suicide, driven by his amorous despair. D. Quixote, as well as sundry others, are gathered for Grisóstomo's burial, whose memorial service is being conducted by Ambrosio, the dead man's best friend. Ambrosio reads a desperate love song composed by Grisóstomo, in which he accuses Marcela of cruelty, ingratitude, faithlessness, and of being the direct cause of his death. At this point, Marcela appears and defends her reputation and her right to (not) love, in an impassionate address which constitutes an unexpected and generic anticlimax.

This is an episode where the validity and legitimacy of constructing woman exclusively as the object of man's desire are put to the test, and, conversely, where the destabilization of gender roles directly results in the subversion of literary genre. But before I examine Marcela, let me consider Dulcinea, D. Quixote's beloved. Dulcinea is, in fact, the perfect exemplar of the object of desire, and of the ideology behind it, since she exists only in the knight's dreams, is wholly constituted by his desire, and her sole textual role is to function as a necessary accessory to him, as part of his knightly "trousseau" as it were, which the text emphasizes through its careful enumeration of the constituting process.¹⁹ The textual creation of Dulcinea unveils the very mechanisms at work in the discursive construction of the normative woman within a specific literary discourse; thus, Dulcinea is, in fact, the normative beloved within a genre, however ironical her textual conception may be. The willful construction of Dulcinea neatly bypasses the "real" Aldonza Lorenzo, to fashion her into the pure object of desire, the "should be" supplanting Aldonza totally, thus exposing her value as a literary instrument

¹⁹ Don Quixote's production of his knightly self begins with the cleaning of his ancestors' rusty arms, follows with the re-naming of his horse, then proceeds to choosing a name for himself, and only then progresses to the selection and naming of his beloved, thus revealing Dulcinea's subordinate and accessory textual existence. See Martín de Riquer's edition, *D. Quijote de la Mancha*, pp.38-41.

whose function it is to reflect the power of a specific genre's discourse, and of the social conventions which validate it. It is, of course, this very construction of Dulcinea as imaginary object of the knight's desire that makes possible Sancho's appropriation of her, in *Don Quixote, II*, and her subsequent enchantment.

I have chosen to read back to Dulcinea's birth, and to the discursive tradition which engenders her, because it is my contention that Grisóstomo is another Quixote, albeit a failed one, whose death entails the symbolic death of the literary genre which fueled his 'madness,' a conjoining of deaths that the text figures in the body of Grisóstomo lying in state, surrounded by his, analogically just as dead, literary output of love songs. This coupling of body and discourse as one and the same, which mirrors the conventional construction of woman in that, for her, her body/beauty supersedes her own discourse and desires, is, in the case of Grisóstomo, an index of his own 'madness,' the confirmation of his status as a failed Quixote. For in his choice of voice/genre, Grisóstomo chose a necessarily monologic genre, one which demands for its functioning that the silent and silenced beloved exist exclusively as object, and construction, of his desire.²⁰ The "canción desesperada" is its paradigm, and the paradigm of his textual life; the song itself prefigures the necessity of his own suicide.

Grisóstomo's death prefigures D. Quixote's demise in *Don Quixote II*, and the abjuring of the previously selected genre by the dying character. Thus, it would seem that in *Don Quixote, I & II*, men's deaths are linked to the disavowal and irrelevance of specific discursive productions and practices. The linking of body and discourse which the texts signal stands in opposition to the textual status of women, whose bodies signify fully to the disregard or quasi exclusion of their own discourses. This excess of meaning invested in women's bodies contained within the literary generic canon is one which Cervantes' production belabors to undo.

²⁰ On the practice of pastoral poetry by women's poets in the Renaissance, and their use of the genre's conventions, see Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros. Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540-1620* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 118-154. Jones convincingly argues that "in the poems of Stampa and Wroth the abuses inveighed against are committed by men. The pastoral vocabulary legitimates the women's complaints and their desire to break free of the limits imposed on them by their social circumstances," p. 123.

In a way, it could be said that this episode constitutes an early instance of "writing beyond the ending,"²¹ in that it attempts an "examination and delegitimation of cultural conventions about male and female, romance and quest, hero and heroine, public and private, but especially conventions of romance as a trope for the sex-gender system."²² This, of course, is the crux of the episode: it is the *post mortem*, pun intended, of a specific literary genre, which dictates a convention of love based in the loved woman's discursive absence, and conversely, where her discursive absence is dissimulated by the full presence of the lover's discourse. It is the authority of the male lover's discourse as it constructs the beloved through his own desires, and the naturalization of this discourse about woman in the social text that is at stake here.

Convention demands the ending with the death of the lover/voice, Grisóstomo, whose eulogy, pronounced by his faithful friend, would confirm the literary and social texts' indictment of the faithless and unloving woman. Contrary to genre expectations, Grisóstomo's death is but the beginning of Marcela's text, the voice of the living woman usurping the attention of the (male) audience, and attempting to erase the injunctions of the "Canción desesperada." It is as if the text were staging a play of mutually exclusive discourses, signified by the alternate absence/presence, silence/voice of its two protagonists. Even in his death Grisóstomo's presence is symbolised by his present friends, his interlocutors and heirs, those who understand, transmit, and are complicit with his love discourse. Marcela, on the other hand, appears and leaves alone, an emblem of the textualization of woman as the object of man's desire.

As DuPlessis has noted:

"One of the great moments of ideological negotiation in any work occurs in the choice of a resolution . . . Narrative outcome is one place where transindividual assumptions and values are most clearly visible, and where the word 'convention' is found resonating between its literary and social meanings.

²¹ I refer to Rachel Blau DuPlessis' term, which is the title of her book as well, published by Indiana University Press: (Bloomington, 1985).

²² DuPlessis, p. ix. DuPlessis characterizes writing beyond the ending as the narrative strategies of twentieth century women writers created to criticize and delegitimize traditional romance plots based in the heterosexual sex-gender system.

Any artistic resolution . . . can, with greater or lesser success, attempt an ideological solution to the fundamental contradictions that animate the work. Any resolution can have traces of the conflictive materials that have been processed within it. It is where subtexts and repressed discourses can throw up one last flare of meaning; it is where the author may sidestep and displace attention from the materials that a work has made available."²³

Marcela's intervention constitutes a double shock to the generic expectations about the canonic resolution of the narrative. First, the fact that she intervenes at all, that she creates a textual space for herself where none is sanctioned by either genre or social conventions, and second, by the mode of her intervention, which usurps a philosophical/doctrinal discourse that falls squarely outside women's well demarcated discursive boundaries. Her intervention addresses directly the theories of love of the time, and, indirectly, the codes of propriety for women, both of which shared the same ideological presumptions. By pointing to man's desire as the measure of woman's beauty and life options, she undercuts woman's obligation to love in return.²⁴ By underscoring repeatedly that woman's body functions in society as the only intelligible discourse allocated to her, or, in any case, as the only one which Grisóstomo has understood in her own instance, she makes clear that his death is the direct result of his

²³ DuPlessis, p.3.

²⁴ "Yo conozco, con el natural entendimiento que Dios me ha dado, que todo lo hermoso es amable; mas no alcanzo que, por razón de ser amado, esté obligado lo que es amado por hermoso a amar a quien le ama. Y más, que podría acontecer que el amador de lo hermoso fuese feo, y siendo lo feo digno de ser aborrecido, cae muy mal el decir: 'Quiérote por hermosa; hásmе de amar aunque sea feo.' Pero, puesto caso que corran igualmente las hermosuras, no por eso han de correr iguales los deseos." Miguel de Cervantes, *D. Quijote de la Mancha*, I, Martín de Riquer, ed. (Barcelona: Editorial Juventud, 1968), p. 130.

"I know, with the natural understanding that God has given me, that all that is beautiful is worthy of love; but I do not think that, because it is loved, that which is loved for being beautiful should love its lover. Further, it could happen that the lover of the beautiful were ugly; since all that is ugly should be detested, it would be wrong to say: 'I love you because you are beautiful, you must love me even though I am ugly.' But, even in the case of two beautiful people, there is no reason for their desires to be the same." Underlining and translation are my own.

own impertinent desire.²⁵ What Marcela dismantles with her impassioned address is the grammar of love of the pastoral mode, and the gender system that underlies its conventions.

Marcela's words directly engage the regulatory fictions of her time concerned with women's canons of propriety. First and foremost, the mere act of speaking publicly in front of a male audience constitutes a trespass, because "the connection between speaking and wantonness was common to legal discourse and conduct books."²⁶ Fray Luis' *La perfecta casada* abounds in recriminations of women's "excessive" speech, founded in the "law of nature" and in women's lack of aptitude for "difficult affairs."²⁷ Juan Luis Vives equates remaining within the threhold of the family abode with chastity,²⁸ and repeatedly warns

²⁵ "A los que he enamorado con la vista he desengañado con las palabras. Y si los deseos se sustentan con esperanzas, no habiendo yo dado alguna a Grisóstomo ni a otro alguno, en fin, de ninguno dellos, bien se puede decir que antes le mató su porfía que mi crueldad." *D. Quijote*, I, p.131. "Those who fell in love with my looks I have rejected with my words. And if hopes sustain desires, since I have given none to Grisóstomo nor to anybody else, it can well be said that his stubbornness killed him and not my cruelty." Translation and underlining are my own.

²⁶ Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories," p. 126.

²⁷ Chapter XVI of *La perfecta casada* is dedicated to this topic. Fray Luis' indictment of women's speech is based on the authority of nature: "Porque, así como la naturaleza, como dijimos y diremos, hizo a las mujeres para que encerradas guardasen la casa, así las obligó a que cerrasen la boca; y como las desobligó de los negocios y contrataciones de fuera, así las liberó de lo que se consigue a la contratación, que son las muchas pláticas y palabras. Porque el hablar nace del entender, y las palabras no son sino como imágenes o señales de lo que el ánimo concibe en sí mismo; por donde como a la mujer buena y honesta la naturaleza no la hizo para el estudio de las ciencias ni para los negocios de dificultades, sino para un solo oficio simple y doméstico, así les limitó el entender, y por consiguiente les tasó las palabras y las razones," p. 124.

"As I have said and will repeat, nature made women to guard the home, locked in it, and obliged them to shut their mouths; and as nature dispensed them from outside business and contracts, it freed them from what is inherent to such business, which is much talk and many words. Talk is born of understanding, and words are but images or signs of what the mind conceives in itself; therefore, since nature did not make the good and honest woman for the study of science nor for difficult affairs, but for a single, simple, and domestic occupation, thus it [nature] limited women's intelligence, and consequently their words and reasonings as well." My own translation and underlining.

²⁸ *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana*, pp. 79-85.

maidens of the dangers to their honesty awaiting them outside the paternal home. Lest it be thought that these injunctions are to be found exclusively in Spanish conduct books, let me hasten to mention that they constitute a European norm, and appear with monotonous regularity in Italian, English, and French conduct manuals as well.²⁹

But Marcela's "inappropriate" behavior claims more than just the right to speak for herself: her speech mirrors, as at the same time it distorts, the frequent equation drawn between women's space, women's words, and women's sexual propriety as she reiterates the legitimacy of her desire to come and go among the trees of the countryside, and attempts to present her case as one of "natural" right.

What can be said of Marcela's usurpation of "masculine" speech, as surely her expository discourse must be called? It is clear that it answers to a strategy designed to separate herself from the literary code invested upon her both by her audience and by the generic tradition. Her answer to Ambrosio, Grisóstomo's friend and head mourner, who addresses her as "cruel basilisk of these mountains" (129-130), emphasizes her desire to speak *as* herself and *for* herself,³⁰ that is to say, to claim for herself a subject position other than the predictable and paradigmatic one as object of Grisóstomo's love allocated her by Ambrosio's, the audience's and, we might add, the reader's generic expectations. Yet she does appropriate a highly conventional, and gendered, stylistic medium to subvert generic expectations, a discourse endowed with all the trappings of authority, since it accords with the learned, and therefore masculine, expository prose of the times. Her discourse is structured with the most rigorous logic; her arguments are founded in "the

²⁹ Stallybrass cites Barbaro: "It is proper . . . that not only arms but indeed also the speech of women never be made public; for the speech of a noble woman can be no less dangerous than the nakedness of her limbs," and Alciati's *Emblematum liber*: "Women should remain at home and be wary of speech," "Patriarchal Territories," p. 127. For a bibliography of conduct books which encompasses the several European nations, see Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*, pp. 326-424.

³⁰ Marcela responds to Ambrosio: "No vengo, . . . sino a volver por mí misma, y a dar a entender cuan fuera de razón van todos aquellos que de sus penas y de la muerte de Grisóstomo me culpan," p. 130. "I come to return by myself, and to make it understood how without reason are all of those who accuse me of causing their suffering and the death of Grisóstomo." My own translation.

law of nature," that law so often invoked by the regulatory fictions to decree women's triple enclosure and which Marcela turns around to reformulate the import of women's beauty, men's love of women, and its corollary -women's obligation to love in return-, and to reveal the hidden asymmetry obtaining between women's and men's desires as, at the same time, she attempts to legitimize her own. That she usurps that most masculine and traditional medium signals her desire to convince her audience, as it underscores her own conviction; finally, needless to say, she avails herself of the only persuasive discourse available.³¹ That we should not, and cannot elide the consideration of gender, as we read the Marcela/Grisóstomo episode is made abundantly clear by its conclusion: Marcela's seeming usurpation of expository prose ends up becoming a temporary "borrowing" and nothing more, as the verses on Grisóstomo's epitaph confirm in their re-inscription of the pastoral code of love. Persuasion, and the plausibility of one's discourse, would seem to depend, in this instance, on *what* is said, and *how* is it said, less than it does on *who* says it. The concluding irony, of course, is the audience's reencoding of Marcela as the object of men's love and of Quixote's chivalric pursuit.³²

But there are other ways in which the Marcela/Grisóstomo episode is central to the reading of *Don Quixote*, and to the appreciation of Cervantes' engagement in an "active dialogue with the generic models of his time and culture," as Claudio Guillén has pointed out.³³ If Grisóstomo's death, and Marcela's discourse, signify the death of the pastoral mode, they also signify, precisely because of the manner in which the resolution is modified, that in order to destabilize genres, let alone redirect generic expectations, it is sufficient, and imperative, to change the gender system which subtends them. It is those gender arrangements, authorized by tradition and privileged by the social regulatory discourses, that stand at the base of textual verisimilitude.³⁴

³¹ The question of women's discourses, and women's silences, is an important one in Cervantes production; see Wilson's *Allegories of Love*, pp. 109-29.

³² On the ending of the Marcela/Grisóstomo episode see Jehenson, "The Pastoral Episode," pp. 27-31.

³³ Claudio Guillén, *Literature as System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 128.

³⁴ See Gérard Genette, *Figures II* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969), "Vraisemblance et Motivation," pp. 71-99, and Nancy K. Miller, *Subject to*

This is subtly underlined in *Don Quixote* when the men present at Grisóstomo's burial attempt to reconcile Marcela's words, which carry the weight of her acknowledged virtue, with Ambrosio's narrative of Grisóstomo's woes, and the injunctions against Marcela voiced in the "Canción desesperada." That they are unable to resolve such contradictions points to their ideological reliance in the subtexts provided by social and literary conventions of the times, and to their inability to deconstruct them by either questioning or reformulating their construction of woman, which Marcela emblemizes.³⁵ Part of the problem resides in the fact that "her female body as counter-text to her words does not speak her language. The tale presents woman's words estranged from woman's body, allowing interpretation to distinguish between discourses, between woman as object and woman as subject, between male desire and female consciousness."³⁶ The episode dramatizes the conflation of woman's body with her social discourse, and the diminished readings that ensue from this conflation, because it erases woman's power to map her own discursive field, and negates her agency outside and beyond the boundaries created by the sanctioned regulatory fictions of her time.³⁷

The singularity of Marcela's intervention is carefully crafted and underlined. She appears singly, and remains an exception within the context of the textual convention. Her life as an orphan, educated by her uncle, a priest, is of importance here, for it places her outside the familiar/social context. In contrast, Grisóstomo is richly contextualized, he 'belongs' both in the social and the literary sense. His linkage to other men is manifest.

Change. Reading Feminist Writing (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), "Emphasis Added: Plots and Plausibilities in Women's Fictions," pp.25-46, and especially pp.25-26.

³⁵ That the male audience present at Grisóstomo's funeral is unable to reconcile the two conflicting versions, should not come as a surprise to us. After all, our (male) legal and political representatives, at the end of the twentieth century, are still engaged in figuring out what constitutes sexual harassment, and, in weighing the evidence of any given case, they still posit an imaginary symmetry of power between men's and women's words.

³⁶ Munich, "Notorious Signs," p.247.

³⁷ This conflation of woman's body with her social discourse is, of course, at the base of much of to-day's legal and social regulatory fictions which govern both sexual harassment and rape cases.

With few exceptions, this seems to be a constant of cervantine writing, and I would like to suggest that linkage between men serves as a metaphor for the textual and social conventions, which legitimize men's textual and social spaces. On the other hand, women's singular inscriptions in the social and textual spaces, derived from canonical boundaries, are always subject to renegotiation in Cervantes' practice.³⁸ In this light, most of *Don Quixote, I*, and, indeed, most of Cervantes' production, is about this renegotiation of women's roles, spaces, and discourses, and results in a continuous invention of women's texts. While the men belabor the textual tradition, the women subvert it, through the recurrent shift in textual spaces provoked by their (re)inscriptions. It is this problematization of the gender system, and of gender relations, which is at the center of Cervantes' literary output, and which underlies the generic subversion that, according to Juan Goytisolo, makes of *D. Quixote*, "an extraordinary gallery of mirrors."³⁹ Louis Combet defines Cervantes' production as "essentiellement une Erotique,"⁴⁰ and points to the importance of the erotic as a category of analysis as he states that "seul Cervantes a su intégrer cette vision valorisante de la femme dans un univers fictionnel exceptionnellement vaste et cohérent,"⁴¹ (only Cervantes integrated this valorising vision of women in an extremely vast and coherent fictional universe) thus underlining that role changes are the crux of Cervantes' craft.

The instability of gender relationships evident in the episode of Marcela and Grisóstomo does not represent an isolated occurrence in Cervantes' literary production. Rather, it is but one of many instances of Cervantes' re-writing of the conventions of

³⁸ For a discussion of the concept of negotiation, and its import to literary and cultural studies see Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros. Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540-1620* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 2-3, Christine Gledhill, "Pleasurable Negotiations," *Female Spectators. Looking at Films and Television*, Deidre Pribram, ed. (London: Verso, 1988), and Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," *Culture, Media, Language*, Stuart Hall et al., eds. (London: Hutchinson, 1980); both cited by Jones.

³⁹ "Lectura cervantina de *Tres tristes tigres*," *Disidencias* (Barcelona: Six Barral, 1977), p.203.

⁴⁰ *Cervantes ou les Incertitudes du désir. Une Approche psychostructurale de l'oeuvre de Cervantes* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1980), p.21.

⁴¹ Combet, p.63.

the genres of his time, and suggests that gender should be considered as a decisive category of analysis in any re-reading of Cervantes.⁴²

To conclude, let me go back to Marcela's intervention, and to its import both to genre theory and to the conduct books of feminine propriety. I would like to suggest that Marcela's irruption into the text, and the subsequent subversion of the episode's expected generic ending could be read as a radical proposal and an/other possible project for inscribing women's lives, one that reaches far beyond the mere reformulation of canonic genres, since it thrusts itself in direct opposition to the prescriptive social discourses of feminine conduct. Marcela formulates her own desires in front of a male public and in a public space. The "closed mouth" opens to utter a discourse that reveals the hitherto silenced asymmetry which obtains between men's and women's desires. Stone by stone, she undoes the male ideological edifice which constrains woman to be but the measure of man's desire. She de/privileges marriage as the predetermined *telos* of woman's life, asserts her pleasure in consorting with her women friends, thereby suggesting the possibility of other social and sexual spaces for women, and affirms her right to roam through the countryside in freedom. By acting as if she had a right to public speech, she dismisses the suggestion of guilt in Grisóstomo's death, and stakes out her right/will to walk, undisturbed, in the public space of the fields. Thus, she reinscribes woman in a manner which reverses the mandated triple enclosure of the normative woman/wife. That the story ends with the audience's erasure of her words, and with Marcela walking out into the forest on her own and away from the narrative space of the text only underlines, once again, the confines into which genre and gender conspire to constrain.

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⁴² For an extremely illuminating and perceptive reading of the *Persiles* using gender as a category of analysis, see Diana de Armas Wilson, *Allegories of Love. Cervantes' Persiles and Sigismunda* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1991). For a reading of *El celoso extremeño* which considers both gender and genre instability, see Emilia Navarro, "To Read the Bride: Silence and Ehsion in Cervantes' *The Jealous Extremaduran*," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* (Spring 1989): 326-337.

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