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Female Character Development in Select Works by Lope de Vega, María de Zayas, and Calderón de la Barca

by

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Bachelor of Arts
Charleston Southern University, 2011

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts in

Spanish

College of Arts and Sciences

University of South Carolina

2013

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Acknowledgements

I would like first to express my gratitude to Dr. Mabrey for her constructive criticism and useful suggestions as she graciously accepted my request to direct my thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Charlebois for agreeing to be my reader and for providing direction to this work.

I wish to recognize Dr. Pamela Peek from Charleston Southern University for her support, suggestions, encouragement, and information. This would have been much more difficult without her help.

I would like to extend appreciation to all the people who encouraged me and cheered on each chapter submission, including Dr. Lisette Luton and my fellow thesis writer Whitney Waites.

I need to acknowledge the long-suffering graduate students with whom I share an office, as their patience and excitement were crucial in the completion of this work.

Finally, I wish to thank my family for feigning interest in this topic and for supporting my choice to specialize in foreign literature. Your encouragement has been invaluable.

Abstract

This thesis is an examination of three works of the Spanish Golden Age: *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña* by Lope de Vega, *La traición en la amistad* by María de Zayas, and *La vida es sueño* by Calderón de la Barca. The focus of this work is on the main female protagonists: Casilda, Fenisa, and Rosaura, respectively. Applying feminist and visualization theories, the thesis examines these women in regards to how they conform to and subvert prevailing stereotypes of the time. The characters are analyzed based on personality, as illustrated through the choices they make; their roles in the microcosm of the play in contrast to their traditional societal roles; and their integrity, as seen through the opinions of other characters. Biographical information about the authors that may have influenced their character development is included, such as Lope de Vega's relationships and each author's educational background. This analysis leads to conclusions about the purpose for which each author intended the specified character.

This study shows an emergence of a new model female, one who is more liberated that previous women, but is still confined to societal expectations. The three works address different social classes and different developmental spaces, but a comparison will show that this new model is presented in each. In subverting the commonly portrayed and accepted stereotypes, the characters embrace the masculine side of their personalities. This bisexual duality is what leads us to conclude that these women are innovative for their time.

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Introduction

The Golden Age of Spain is so named because of the prolific production of all mediums of creative entertainment, including art, drama, and poetry; and because of the relative prosperity enjoyed by Spaniards because of the recent transfers of valuable metals from the New World. It is from this period, from 1492 until 1681, that we find the most studied and well-known writers and playwrights of Spanish history, including Miguel de Cervantes and his iconic *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. This literature reflects, as does all literature, the climate in which it was penned. It is an image of the political and social climate, taking on the popular and polemic themes of the day, including religion, identity, and political supremacy. Because of the wealth of information provided in these works, they are most deserving of continued examination. This thesis will deal with three famous plays written during the second half of the Golden Age: *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña* (1614), *La traición en la amistad* (c. 1630), and *La vida es sueño* (1634).

The chosen works are theatrical because of the concise nature of the genre. That is to say, dramatic works provide the same insight as works of prose, but in a more concentrated manner. Because performance is an inherent part of drama, the information must come from the character's mouths, not from inner monologues as we find in novels. This facilitates a more direct study of characterization in general. Also, a higher emphasis is placed on visual representation, which will be a significant part of this study. Finally, theatre at this time had an advantage over other genres: the audience. As the production

and collection of books was limited, dramatic works were able to attract the public in a way books could not. Available to all classes, theatrical works good enough to be performed would have been represented to anyone in society who wished to attend, thus spreading the playwright's ideas, both conformist and subversive, to the general public. We will return to this last fact when we discuss Ruth Robbin's assertion that feminist texts provide an alternative to the accepted lifestyle.

As this thesis centers on the portrayal of females, it is necessary to mention briefly the history of feminist, or rather, pro-female works in Spain. Written over thirty years before the publication of the oldest of our works, *La perfecta casada* appeared, praising women. Melveena McKendrick notes that the author, Fray Luis de León, provided in this work "one of the most noble defenses of woman in sixteenth-century Spain" (*Woman and Society* 10). This representation provided a female who was not caricatured or idealized, as women had historically been portrayed. Though Fray Luis kept the women confined to the home, the acknowledgement of the potential of women signifies the emergence of the importance of examining women's issues and roles in society.

Continuing into the seventeenth century, we find that this issue still found space in the dramatic circles of the time. While examining women brought about a discussion of potential, an element of tradition had to be maintained at the same time. Part of Lope de Vega's presentation to the Academy of Madrid in 1609, about which we will comment momentarily, included acknowledging that the action and theme of a play should be interesting to the masses-- the people whose presence makes possible the performance of dramatic works (Bayliss 5). Works could not be too subversive, or the audience would not appreciate its message. Combined with the issue of church authority during the

development of Golden Age theatre, as we will mention next, we see that it was a logical decision to include elements of expected and accepted tradition in these plays.

It would behoove our study to examine the nature of Golden Age theatre before specifying authors and works. Robert Bayliss discusses the controversy surrounding the development of professional theatre in the seventeenth century. Religion was at the heart of the conflict surrounding the emerging prominence of theatre in Spain. Many church officials regarded professional theatre as a demonstration of disobedience, lust, and any matter of things that a good Christian should avoid in daily life. On the other side were supporters of theatre, including some clerics, who pointed to the positive moral outcomes of many works and the donations made to upstanding institutions from the proceeds of performances. Because of this controversy, the playwrights of the age were extraordinarily aware of the necessity of maintaining an ending that, at least on first glance, appeared to uphold the teachings of the Catholic church.

Melveena McKendrick offers us a lengthy explanation of one of the most important themes in Golden Age theatre: honor. Religious as well as secular, the idea of honor, both losing and regaining it, can be found in almost every play. In "Honor/Vengeance in the Spanish 'Comedia': Mimetic Transference" she points out that theatre must have support in order to continue; she argues that the honor theme provided all the excitement an audience would want, including "tragedy, horror and pathos, jealousy, mistaken identities, sexual intrigue, and innocent bloodshed" (332). A play may discuss and develop a number of social topics, such as class stratification (as does *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña*), but nearly all include honor. The importance of this to us is to know that in this society, honor was directly connected to the woman,

which guaranteed the presence of a female in any given work. It is the extent of this presence that we will attempt to discuss in this thesis.

However, before we begin a discussion of the works under study, we must look at the authors and their formidable personalities. We will begin with Lope de Vega, the author of *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña*. Born in Madrid in 1562, Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio was not from a wealthy family. However, he managed to acquire an education, mostly based in Jesuit teachings, and studied at the University of Alcalá. The most influential and noteworthy parts of his life were based not in his familial background but rather on his many liaisons with women. As Juan María Marín notes, "Su vida estuvo unida a cinco mujeres funadmentalmente, aunque existieron algunas más con las que su relación no fue tan intensa" (Vega 13). Important to this thesis, is his early relationship with Elena Osorio.

For seven years, Lope and Elena, who was already married at the time they began their relationship, carried on a love affair until she abandoned him for a man of greater means. As revenge, Lope penned some verses denouncing Elena and her family. This action resulted in his incarceration and temporary exile from Castilla to Valencia (Vega 14). James Lloyd notes that this was perhaps the "most painful experience of Lope's life" (2). Lope's marriage date (shortly after the beginning of his exile) to Isabel de Urbina seems to imply that Lope was not as dedicated to Elena as he expected her to be to him. However, the influence of such a betrayal resurfaces periodically in his writing, including in *Peribáñez*.

As we have stated previously, Lope de Vega was not born into a family of privilege. This circumstance did not improve as the years went by. He held multiple jobs

to support his family, and ultimately attempted to solve his problem through marriage. Regardless, his philandering and intoxicating lifestyle resulted in chronic economic difficulties. One way he managed to pull in money, and the most important to us, was the production of literary works, specifically dramas. Labeled a “Monstruo de la Naturaleza” [Freak of Nature] by Cervantes, Lope is credited with having written 1800 comedias and 400 one-act autos (Vega 16). Though no one can know for certain the exact number of works he penned, it is no question that his level of production was legendary. We can also infer that such a high volume of works signifies that little time was spent on each play (Lloyd 8). This attests not only to Lope's genius in creativity, but, on the other hand, to his general lack of deep character development when compared with other playwrights of the same time.

Lope's enormous quantity of successful works has led to him being known as the Father of Modern Spanish Theatre. In 1609, before the Academy in Madrid, Lope presented his principles for dramatic production in a speech written in verse form called *El arte nuevo de hacer comedias en nuestro tiempo*. In this long poem, he outlines the schema of a play: it should have only three acts; the characters should be introduced in the first act; the second act should provide a plot twist; the classical unities of time, action, and place should not necessarily be observed; and the ending should not be presented in the oft-used *deus ex machina* form. In addition to these, Lope remarks that different types of verse should be used in varying situations, such as the romance for amorous conversations. Many of the traditional theatrical conventions, such as the three unities and the *deus ex machina* conclusion, can be traced back to Greek theatre and Aristotle's *Poetics*. Most of the conventions provided by Lope were in use by playwrights

before him; what makes Lope unique was that he combined them all into one coherent set of guidelines (Lloyd 7). This is due in part to Lope's rebellious nature as well as his desire to make money, which required pleasing the audience. He took the aspects that seemed to be the most popular and combined them to maximize popularity and, therefore, profit.

This thesis will focus on his play from 1614, *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña*. One of his most famous, this work deals with a theme found multiple times in Lope's body of work: corrupt men of authority. The protagonists are of the lower class and are caught between losing honor and denying the authority of the Comendador, a man from a higher class. Beyond the interesting social commentary being made about the corruption of small-town authority, the prominence of the main female character brings the work critical attention and therefore ideal for this comparison.

Lope de Vega's immense volume of works makes him an easy target for critical study. The fact that he created his own style of play writing only adds to this. Ultimately we see that his influence makes him ideal for comparative studies. This discussion will flow in a chronological manner according to the publication or appearance of his dramatic works. However, it is worth noting that Lope was an admirer of María de Zayas, the next author we will mention (McKendrick 23; Hegstrom 15).

Little is known about María de Zayas y Sotomayor. Like Lope, she was born in Madrid, but unlike him, her family was one of relative wealth. As such, she probably was able to attain a certain level of education above that of many of her contemporaries (Hegstrom 15). Also because of her family's social standing and financial situation, she was able to dedicate herself to literature, producing some very well-received novels and poems. It is unclear whether or not Zayas herself ever married, and even when she died

(Vasileski 12). The focus of commentary about María de Zayas, therefore, has to be focused predominantly on her literary production.

The only play that can be attributed to her is *La traición en la amistad*, which will be covered in a subsequent chapter of this thesis. Her most famous work is a collection of stories known as the *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares*. McKendrick notes that in spite of a strong feminist message, her novels were well-received, leading to long-lasting recognition (23). In establishing her reputation during her lifetime, it is also prudent to note that she cultivated a friendship with Ana Caro, a well-known dramatist (Hegstrom 15). Therefore, we can see that María de Zayas was not isolated in her writing nor in her fame. As such, it is possible that the conclusions we will draw at the end of this work, namely that these works exemplify the emergence of a new modern woman, can be applied to a broader range of authors. That is to say, Zayas was probably not alone in her opinions, which can be understood by her popularity and camaraderie with her peers.

La traición en la amistad is the only play credited to her. This fact draws attention to this work because the reader and critic cannot help but wonder what prompted a change of genre. The participation of a strong community of women throughout the work and the secondary position of the men makes this work stand out as unique amongst its contemporaries. Finally, this play is ideal for this comparative investigation because of the subversive nature of the main protagonist, a character reminiscent of Tirso de Molina's Don Juan from *El burlador de Sevilla*, published in the same year as Zayas's drama.

Finally, we will address the third dramaturge, Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Also born in Madrid, Calderón's family situation was more similar to Lope than to Zayas.

Although his father was an *hidalgo* by birth, he was only a scribe for the king (Barca 11). Well-educated, Calderón was inducted into the Order of Santiago in 1635, the year of Lope de Vega's death, and ultimately became a court-appointed dramatist, providing theatrical works for Philip IV. Many of his plays are secular, but he also produced many religious and religious-themed plays. He does not have the multitude of publications Lope has, but his works are broadly known for a deeper development and exploration of themes and characters.

La vida es sueño will be the Calderonian work analyzed in this thesis. Translated into multiple languages, this play has been used in didactic scenarios practically since its inception. The work explores the theme of free will versus fate while making philosophical observations on the condition of life itself. The main female character from this work, Rosaura, is pivotal in the revelation of the male protagonist, as we will see in Chapter Three. Her dichotomy of character makes her comparable to the other two women who will be studied in this thesis.

We have mentioned briefly the three authors whose works we will use for this thesis, mentioning facts that are pertinent to the development of our analysis. Now we come to the point where we must explain the basis of this investigation, to which we have already alluded but not concretely stated. These three works, though very different in plot as well as authorship, all develop a female character that defies concrete classification under the established guidelines, which we will describe momentarily. In other words, each work contains a protagonist that both conforms and subverts the stereotypes of the time, creating a duality of personality that represents the emergence of a new woman, more independent and liberated than the submissive and repressed model seen prior to

this time in all varieties of literary production. This woman represents another phase in the history of female development and struggle for equality.

In order to examine this new characterization, we must first establish the "old," or former, model to be able to draw a comparison. Also, the following chapters will refer frequently to "established stereotypes," so it falls to us now to define exactly what we mean by this terminology. In her summary of feminist theories, "Will the Real Feminist Theory Please Stand Up?" Ruth Robbins notes that there have historically been basically two types of women represented: the "ideal (virginal, beautiful, passive, dependent, nurturing) or monstrous (whorish, sexually voracious, independent, and dangerous)" (51). We will use this as the default reference for stereotypes. This is the generic basis from which we can become more specific, narrowing our focus to specifically Spain in the seventeenth century.

Focusing more specifically on the stereotypes of women in Golden Age Spain, we return to the recurring theme of honor. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano states that "in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, woman's greatest virtues are chastity and silence" (16). She then goes on to relate this to the honor theme. As guardians of their own honor and that of their husband, women had to remain chaste and pure, virginal, to quote Robbins (51). The ideal woman would be one who would not squander her family's honor. By extension, then, the ideal woman would be chaste and silent. In our discussion of the individual works, we will see that some of these women do not hold their tongue, but instead freely express themselves. In those circumstances, it is to this stereotype and characterization that we refer to as broken or defied.

Another stereotype and generalization we must discuss is education. McKendrick

explains that education was not enormously uncommon for girls, with poor children even able to attend convent schools free of charge. What is important is the subject matter they were taught, specifically “reading, writing, elementary arithmetic, religious knowledge, and needlework” (*Woman and Society* 19). She follows this statement by saying that there is no evidence of a woman ever having attended university. The importance of this is that when we find female characters who express intelligent thoughts in an astute manner or make allusions to classical works of literature, they are not expressing information that they would have learned traditionally. In other words, the playwrights who do this are equating the education of their male characters with that of their female characters, raising the females above their stature.

With regards to representation within dramatic works, we see that several archetypes emerged in these years, including the *mujer esquiva*. As the name suggests, this character was portrayed as independent to the extent that she hates or disdains men. A notable example of this is Marcela from Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, a character who spurns all advances made by men and takes to living a pastoral life so as to avoid them. McKendrick decides to explain this archetype as the revolt against the attitude towards seventeenth-century beliefs about women (*Woman and Society* 142). She paints this character as the ultimate representation of feminism for that time. However, this character type is too extreme to be useful as more than just a plot convention. By making the woman so opposed to love and marriage (societal expectations of the day), the figure rapidly becomes a parody. In the following chapters, we will find a character who fits within this generalization, but we will also see that this proposed new model does not conform entirely to this extreme archetype.

Finally, we must mention the other common characterization of the *mujer varonil*, or the woman who adopts the attitudes and perhaps dress of men in order to achieve her own desires. With roots going back to the strong females portrayed in Greek mythology through its goddesses, and Biblical heroines, this classification is assigned to women who possess the "energy and abilities" given to men (*Woman and Society* 309). We see, however, that the mere name of this classification strips away some of the femininity naturally awarded to a woman. In other words, the implication is that a woman must sacrifice a part of herself by becoming a man (or manly) in order to assert herself in the world. This investigation will show that the modern woman emerging in these texts is able to maintain her female qualities as well as adopting some more "masculine" traits. For this reason, we will be able to say that the characters mentioned will subvert the stereotypes, thus seemingly conforming to this archetype, but not wholly being committed to them as such. For example, Casilda from *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña* is described as beautiful, maintaining her femininity physically, but adopts the role of *amo* in the absence of her husband, taking on more masculine features. This concept will be developed at length in each chapter.

In addition to the concepts mentioned above, this analysis will include Laura Mulvey's visualization theory. Though applied to cinematic portrayals of women, the ideas expressed in her article, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" can be translated to fit an analysis of textual female representation. For example, she discusses the idea that women are described or emphasized in a way that draws attention to their physical attributes. By relegating the woman to being the subject of the look, she is able to be controlled by the male and is consequently kept in a position of inferiority. For this

reason, we can refer to the woman as the victim, and the process of visualization as victimization. Mulvey states that “In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed” (10). This concept will be applied as a way of determining that the new modern female, while allowed her independence, is still kept within acceptable boundaries and constraints.

Another theory we must explain at this point is that of “symbolic bisexuality” as proposed by Hélène Cixous. This is, according to Cixous, “the location within oneself the presence of both sexes, evident and insistent in different ways according to the individual” (qtd in Meyer 360). This is seen as a gift, a way for women to achieve their goals in a male-dominated world without having to sacrifice their femininity. This duality is exhibited by Casilda, Fenisa, and Rosaura through their conformity and subversion of the accepted stereotypes of the time. As Cixous states, each woman embraces this bisexuality in different ways, but only in terms of the stereotypes they break. That is to say, Casilda's bisexuality is evident in her assumption of command of the harvesters in her husband's absence while Rosaura's bisexuality is clear in her adoption of masculine clothing. The following chapters will expand on this claim as evidence of the emergence of the new female model, but it is important to introduce this terminology now. When it appears, it is not in reference to their actual sexual preferences, but rather in their embodiment of both male and female characterization.

Thus far, the state of Golden Age theatre has been explained and a brief biography has been provided for each of the playwrights whose work will be studied in this thesis. We have also established the meaning behind the term “stereotype,” which will appear frequently throughout the analysis. The next three chapters will each explore a particular

work, focusing on a single female character. From *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña,* we will look at Casilda, the devoted housewife whose physical beauty creates a situation of her and her family's potentially compromised honor. María de Zayas's work, *La traición en la amistad*, is unique in its volume of women, but our attention will stay on Fenisa, the source of chaos for the other characters. Finally, *La vida es sueño* will deal with Rosaura, the most prominent female character of the work. These three women will be judged according to how they conform and defy the stereotypes and archetypes of their time. As we progress with this study, a comparison will be made within the chapters as to the way a particular concept is applied to the previous character. For example, when we discuss Fenisa in connection with Laura Mulvey's visualization theory, we will recall how Mulvey applied to Casilda in the previous chapter, drawing conclusions as we go. In the final chapter, we will summarize the evidence presented in the chapters to show that these three works, through such diverse plots and authors, demonstrate the emergence of a new type of woman, known for this thesis as the "modern woman." She manages to stay far enough within societal constraints to not be disregarded, but defies enough convention to prove herself more independent than her predecessors. Though it will take centuries for women to come close to being equal to men, we cannot ignore that this change began before many even recognized it as such.

Chapter 1: Casilda

Lope de Vega is known for having produced an enormous quantity of dramatic works in his life, many created due to his sheer need for money, as we have mentioned previously. Regardless of whatever pressures he faced while writing, his published works have come to represent a renovation of the Spanish *comedia*. Though he sometimes broke his own rules, he nonetheless created an outline for how dramas should be written during his address of *El arte nuevo de hacer comedias* to the Real Academia in 1609. His new rules broke with traditional structures, such as the keeping of the classical unities, and defined new ways to examine and portray archetypal characters. For this reason, it is appropriate to analyze his representation of the female character in terms of how she conforms to and defies gender stereotypes.

Published in 1614, though commonly thought to have been penned before that year, *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña* is one of Lope's famous honor plays. It tells of the love triangle that forms between a corrupt political figure, an honorable peasant, and a beautiful woman. The female character, Casilda, is more dynamic, in comparison to other works of the time, including other plays by Lope himself. Many, though not all, of Lope's plays center on the actions of the male character, with the female serving only to further the plot. For example, in *El castigo sin venganza*, Casandra is not the focus of the action; she is merely there to provide the gender contrast. The plot focuses more on the relationship between the Duke and Federico and the consequences of Federico's actions. Casandra is stereotyped and used mostly as a vehicle of sexual indiscretion. In

Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña, Casilda is given the opportunity to participate in many of the scenes. Because of her prominence in the action of the play, we can examine her in terms of physical description, personal choices, and reputation to lead us to conclusions about her purpose in the overarching theme of the play.

Casilda is described by many characters as exceedingly beautiful. In the very first scene of the very first act, Peribáñez, recently wedded to Casilda, gushes about his good fortune that “me ha dado Dios tan hermosa compañía” (1.29-30). The priest immediately reaffirms: “en el reino de Toledo no hay cara como la suya” (1.33-4). Throughout the work, as Peribáñez's suspicions arise because of the obvious nature of the Comendador's affections, and he discusses the theme of jealousy, he is sure to mention her physical beauty, though he often makes it the cause of all his problems. Early in the first act, we are introduced to another character who wastes no time in proclaiming the beauty of Casilda, the Comendador. He has just fallen from his horse while trying to capture a bull and is being attended to by Casilda in her home. It is pure coincidence that of all the homes in the town, this one is chosen. As Peribáñez and Casilda have just wed, there is a priest on the premises. The Comendador is brought to the home in case his injuries have put him close to death and last rites may be necessary. When he wakes and decides that he is in heaven because the first thing he sees is the angelic Casilda. Back in his home, he continues his praise of her physical beauty when talking with his servant Leonardo. As was previously mentioned, the descriptions of Casilda's beauty continue throughout the drama, by both Peribáñez and Comendador, the latter of which remarks that her beauty exceeds what one would expect from a peasant. This early meeting establishes the class difference between Casilda and the Comendador, who uses this as a sign that he can have

his way concerning Casilda.

It is important to mention the inclusion of the painting of Casilda done later in the drama. While at the festival in Toledo, the Comendador commissions a painter to create a likeness of Casilda without her knowledge. Later, Peribáñez goes to the same painter to have a statue repaired and sees the painting of Casilda. He discreetly asks the painter about it, and it is revealed that he was asked by the Comendador to paint the likeness of the beautiful peasant woman (2.603-746)[1]. This is a clear example of the arousal of Peribáñez's jealousy. He cannot help but wonder about the relationship between his wife and the Comendador, lamenting the consequences of marrying a beautiful woman. From this, we also see that the mere suggestion of illicit behavior is enough to call into question his honor. Even in the twenty-first century it is unusual for someone, male or female, to have a portrait painted without consent. The appearance of this work immediately suggests questionable behavior.

We can look at this characterization in terms of stereotyping and the objectifying of the female. In this context, we are introduced to Casilda not as an individual with personality, but as an object of men's perception. Mulvey, in her theory of visualization, points out that women are often the victims the male's gaze. As she says, "in their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" (10). Casilda has actually become the object of two men's perceptions: the Comendador and the painter himself. As the one who commissioned the work, the former is the predominant controlling force. However, we cannot neglect to mention that the acquiescent painter holds some responsibility as the one who actually

1 We notice again the physical description of Casilda by the painter.

reduced Casilda to a two-dimensional character. Through such persistent verbal descriptions, and more emphatically the use of the actual painting, Lope has relegated Casilda to be a stereotype, a victim of the gaze of many men. In this way, the dramaturge appears to have conformed to societal pressures by producing a typical female character, but when we move to a closer look at Casilda's actions, we see that this is not necessarily the case.

Casilda is equated with her male counterpart several times during the work. First, we will examine how her own actions demonstrate this equality. In the beginning, Peribáñez describes to her his vision of the perfect wife using the alphabet. Casilda responds in turn with an alphabetically coordinated description of what she wants in a husband (1.455-87). This signifies primarily of all that she has opinions about what she wants; she does not resign herself to a future that will be handed to her without any input. Second, it shows that she is just as clever as Peribáñez by creating an equally coordinated list. Traditionally, as Darci Strother emphasizes, dramatic female characters were not given such a strong, clear voice (33). The fact that Lope has allowed a woman to express her opinions so openly makes Casilda stand out as a unique construct amongst other Golden Age characters.

The Comendador engages the help of Inés in an indirect way in order to gain entrance into Peribáñez's house when he is away. We say her employment was indirect because her inclusion actually comes from Leonardo, who sweet talks Inés and convinces her to help him and the Comendador enter the house. In a conversation with Inés, Casilda reveals that she is wise in the ways of the world. Inés has become excited by the idea of marrying Leonardo, but Casilda warns her of the men's deception and emphasizes this

point by saying, “Repara que son sirenas los hombres, que para matarnos cantan” (2.912-4). She is not playing the part of the easily fooled girl, as Inés is. Casilda, though decidedly optimistic throughout the work, is not foolish enough to blindly accept the words and flatteries of men. This discernment runs contrary to the portrayal many of the females portrayed in the time period, such as Laura from Zayas's *La traición en la amistad*, or even Rosaura from *La vida es sueño*, both of whom find themselves victims of the false promises of men.

More important than her evident wit and wisdom is her loyalty to Peribáñez in the face of persuasive distraction. When she is left virtually alone in the house while Peribáñez is away, the disguised Comendador sneaks in with the help of a servant and tries to convince Casilda that the Comendador would make a better spouse than Peribáñez. She immediately sees through the man's weak disguise, first providing reasons why she is not suitable for courtship by the Comendador. [2] Finally, she declares any arguments to be frivolous anyhow because “quiero yo a Peribáñez con su capa la pardilla que al Comendador de Ocaña con la suya guarnecida” (2.545). From this brief encounter, we see that Casilda is not fooled by disguises or distracted by finery. She knows that she could lead a fancier life with the Comendador, but she is loyal to her husband because of love.

Now that we have examined the actions of Casilda herself to determine certain aspects of her character, we can look to the comments of those around her. It is not uncommon in all literature, not just that of Golden Age Spain, to have a character whose personal choices and public opinion are not in agreement. We will find that in this work,

2 Once again, this proves that Casilda is not as easily fooled as other women, such as the Duchess Isabela and Ana from Tirso de Molina's *El burlador de Sevilla*, who are both fooled by disguises.

Casilda's integrity and reputation are very similar. In order to determine the opinions of others regarding Casilda, we will examine their attitudes and reactions towards her, and the revelations made in conversation and song.

When Peribáñez is called away from his home, Casilda fills in for him. When preparing for sleep, two harvesters discuss the events of the following day, stating that "Muesama acude a la puerta. Andará dándonos prisa por no estar aquí su dueño" (2.373-5). When they are awakened officially in the morning, they mumble amongst themselves: "seguidme todos amigos, porque muesama no diga que porque muesamo falta andan las hozes baldías" (2.599-602). They acknowledge the authority that Casilda holds over them, even though she is a woman. Their submission shows that they do not see her as weak enough to challenge. This behavior suggests once again that Casilda is more equal to Peribáñez than unequal.

Her loyalty to Peribáñez is reinforced by a song performed by the harvesters in the evening. The verses tell of a variety of women, each describing someone from the actual story. The first one mentioned is the married woman, "que a su esposo quiere bien" (2.414). This implies that the harvesters know more about the plotting of the Comendador than anyone thinks they do, including the truth of the matter. They know that the corrupt Comendador is sneaking around, but they also know that Casilda is not going to give up her honor to him as easily as he thinks, nor as willingly as Peribáñez suspects.

The idea of the songs revealing information about Casilda and her reputation comes into play once again at the end of Act Two. Peribáñez has become suspicious of the relationship between his wife and the Comendador. A harvester once again provides a song about the situation, but now mentions the players by name:

La mujer de Peribáñez

hermosa es a maravilla;

el Comendador de Ocaña

de amores la requiería.

La mujer es virtuosa

cuanto hermosa y cuanto linda;

mientras Pedro está en Toledo

desta suerte respondía:

<<Más quiero yo a Peribáñez

con su capa la pardilla

que no a vos, Comendador,

con la vuesa guarnecida.>> (2.868-79)

This song, which basically summarizes the plot, quotes some lines that have been previously mentioned regarding Casilda's honor. The fact that they are repeated again here serves to emphasize Casilda's position on her and her family's honor. The verses also include several references to her physical beauty, which has already been discussed, as well as her virtuous nature. Even to the harvesters who have limited interaction with her, she is accepted as honorable.

Finally, Peribáñez reiterates the Casilda's nobility when he presents his case to the King and Queen. After the pressure of the Inquisition to prove one's blood status, Peribáñez is careful to include this information in his defense about both himself and his wife. He presents first his own background, then states that "caséme con la que ves, también limpia, aunque villana; virtuosa, ; si la ha visto la envidia assida a la fama"

(3.955-8). This information shows that even though he had his doubts throughout the previous scenes, he recognizes and believes that Casilda is a honorable as others have proclaimed her to be. She is of pure blood, which automatically implies virtuosity and negates her lower station, and establishes her reputable and free of envy, to which Peribáñez himself has fallen victim.

It is necessary to mention the instances in which Casilda is characterized according to stereotypes, other than her physical beauty. First, after explaining her ideal qualities in a husband, she asks permission to be able to go to the festival in Toledo (1.490-502). This initially does not seem so surprising, but when compared with the aforementioned examples of equality of the two characters, it would appear more appropriate for her to merely announce her plans to go to the festival. The scene plays out more like a small child asking permission from a father than a woman to her equal. He immediately agrees to her request and adds that there he will buy her a pretty dress, which lends to the image of a child being spoiled by a doting father than an equal matrimonial partnership. Her behavior seems to run in conflict with the respect she elicits from her servants, but we find that it conforms to the moral protocol in which the wife is submissive to the husband, a Biblical teaching emphasized in religious discourse even in modern day.

Also, we should note that Casilda is not immune to vain tendencies. She has a discussion with Inés and Constanza about the outfits they will wear to Toledo. This first of all is almost demeaning, as it shows that the primary concern of the women in the caravan is their clothing. Second of all, we note that Casilda tells the other two “de terciopelo sobre encarnada escarlata los pienso llevar, que son galas de mujer casada”

(1.672-5). The fact that she chooses to wear the dress, seeing as it is most likely one of her best pieces, to such a public occasion even though she is already married demonstrates her vanity; she needs to impress no one, and is no longer looking for a potential husband. This is not to say that Casilda should dress in a homely manner, nor that she should not take pride in her appearance. Rather, the impression given from her emphasis on her clothing is that she desires to be of a higher station than the one into which she was born; we know she is a peasant, but she appears to try to pass herself off as a lady of a higher class.

In the same section, we find that Peribáñez is falling victim to pride as well, and presents Casilda with another opportunity to exhibit her vanity. He has seen the well-adorned cart and is worried that his will look inferior. When he decides, at the suggestion of Inés, to ask the Comendador for some tapestries, Casilda not only agrees with this plan, but suggests that he also ask the Comendador for a plumed hat (1.780-5). Peribáñez explains to her that this would be too much, and thus does not carry out her request. However, we must note that once Casilda was introduced to the idea of adornment and finery, she seemed almost unable to discern the level of appropriate behavior. As we just mentioned, Casilda appears to try to pass herself off as more noble than she really is. There is no denying, though, that she and her husband do not pertain to a higher class. To dress elaborately in a plumed hat would appear absurd, a fact Peribáñez is able to recognize.

We have discussed Casilda in terms of her physical beauty, her personal choices, her reputation, and her seemingly uncharacteristic behavior. She has proven to fall in the category of both breaking stereotypes, through her nobility and honorable actions, and

falling victim to them, through her sometimes evident inferior relationship with her husband and demonstrations of vanity. Now we can attempt to determine her role in the microcosm of the play.

We start this section by mentioning that one of the themes of the drama is honor. The Comendador's advances put Casilda's virtue into question. Had she succumbed to the temptation, or had the Comendador succeeded in forcing himself on her, the honor for the whole family would have been lost. It falls to Peribáñez to protect and defend this reputation. Catherine Larson points out that “the female characters serve as the media by means of which male characters establish their bravery and superiority or explore the theme of male honor” (131). Larson goes on to use Casilda as an example of this assertion. If we follow this interpretation, it does not matter how Casilda is characterized, or whether or not she breaks with the patriarchal stereotypes of her society. What matters is only that she is put in a compromising position, allowing Peribáñez, the man, the opportunity to rescue her and save the family honor.

However, due to the fact that Casilda is so often shown to reject the Comendador's advances and the general emphasis put on her virtue and faithfulness, we can assume that Lope did not intend to use her solely as the vehicle for Peribáñez's masculinity. Melveena McKendrick asserts that Golden Age dramatists create a space in which the woman, while purposefully relegated to the side of her husband, is “allowed her female integrity, her dignity and her honour” (330). This seems to be exactly what Lope has done with Casilda. Though Peribáñez mentions that the fate of his honor follows the same path as Casilda's choices, she is ultimately given the harder task of maintaining it. Peribáñez, through little fault of his own, is absent for much of the action, and only comes to fight

on Casilda's behalf at the very end of the work. Until the very moment he arrives, Casilda threatens the Comendador, saying, “Y no os acerquéis a mí, porque a bocados y a cozes os haré” (3.755-7). She will fight to the bitter end to protect herself and her virtue. This forceful protection of virtue and her active role in defending her fate defy normal societal conventions regarding women, making Casilda much more than a mere vehicle for Peribáñez's bravery.

We can also look at the decision bestowed upon them by the royals at the very end of the work. The Queen addresses Casilda after Peribáñez presents his case, saying “A vos, labradora honrada, os mando de mis vestidos cuatro, porque andéis con galas, siendo mujer de soldado” (3.1040-3). Her virtue is acknowledged first, then rewarded with items that Casilda will no doubt prize above anything else, as we have already mentioned her weakness for nice clothing and outward appearance. Gustavo Correa notes as well that “también Casilda recibió la sanción honrosa de ser considerada como ‘mujer de soldado’ por parte de la Reina” (189). The culmination of Casilda's steadfast insistence in her virtue is rewarded in the highest with these commendations from the Queen: making Peribáñez a *soldado* has raised his social position, and consequently hers as well. Now she legitimately pertains to the class she tried to mimic earlier. Also, it is interesting to note that a peasant woman is more virtuous and moves up in society's ranks while the dishonest man born into the higher class falls at the hand of a laborer. She is not forgotten as Peribáñez receives his promotion for his actions, but is shown for one last time to be an equal.

In addition, Casilda also serves to invert the commonly portrayed courtly love paradigm. Traditionally, the lover becomes the slave of the loved. For example, in the

classic *La celestina*, Calisto becomes the slave of Melibea, the object of his love. In this work, the Comendador would become the servant of Casilda. However, as Gustavo Correa points out, Casilda is already the Comendador's slave (197). By becoming subservient to his slave, the Comendador's love (or perhaps, lust) serves to elevate Casilda to a station higher than that of her birth. This is also in accordance with Lope's own ideas about the treatment of women. In his famous *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo*, he firmly asserts that if kings should speak of women, it should be with "el debido decoro a las mujeres." By virtue of being a female, Lope has already assigned decorum to Casilda. By creating a situation in which she can be elevated above her station by the Comendador, he puts her in even higher esteem.

There is some controversy that surrounds Casilda's strong actions against her cousin, Inés. Some remark that such deeds are shameful and should not be condoned. Others, however, have decided that these acts represent a thorough break with the classical stereotype. Susan Fischer cites Peter Evans, who supports the claims that Casilda's support of murder is the product of "Lope's ridicule of the myth of woman as a creature distinctively endowed with intuitive knowledge and merciful tenderness" (170). Clearly, her adamant support of Peribáñez's murderous instinct ("No hay sangre donde hay honor...Muy justo ha sido el castigo") is not a display of typical feminine mercy and goodness (3.810, 812). She is yet again equal with Peribáñez in her ability to determine punishment. However, we must not condemn Casilda for encouraging the murder. The selfish actions of Inés contributed heartily to the situation in which Casilda finds herself on the brink of losing her honor, and by extension, Peribáñez's well-guarded honor.

We will now synthesize these examples in order to apply the idea of bisexuality as

summarized previously by Myers and proposed by Cixous. With Casilda, this idea is more obvious, at least in terms of her behavior. Her masculinity has been shown in the same way as the stereotypes have been broken: she is given authority over the harvesters and is granted a special commendation by the Queen, an honor normally reserved for men. Her femininity is evident in the nature of the plot: as the attractive woman, she is subjected to the desires of other men, both of her class and above. She is subservient to Peribáñez because he is her husband and because he is a man, and she is indebted to the Comendador because he is a man and because he is of a higher class.

This duality leads us to the idea of the excluded middle. This term was originally applied to Fenisa, whom we will examine in the next chapter. However, it can be designated for use with other characters who serve a similar purpose. Casilda embraces, either consciously or unconsciously, both the masculine and feminine sides of her personality. In doing so, she becomes a "middle," which is neither male or female in its entirety.

Casilda is a very special character. Her physical beauty is one of the first aspects of her character to be described for the audience. This gives the impression that she will be no different from any other supporting character of the time. However, as the action progresses, she is revealed to be an opinionated woman, equal in several situations to her husband. She fervently fights to maintain her honor and virtue, against the manipulative authority figure of the town, and ultimately succeeds in doing so. These characterizations all merge together to form a very unique figure. Her prominence in the play brings immediate attention to her, and her positive portrayal, down to the final scene, presents the audience with something they had scarcely seen before: a modern woman, situated in

the tradition of marriage, but not resigned to silence and helplessness.

Casilda can be said to represent the idealization of Elena Osorio. As we mentioned in the Introduction, Lope de Vega experienced a devastating loss when Elena left him for another, wealthier man. With Casilda, Lope creates a character able to withstand the same temptations; when faced with the possibility of abandoning Peribáñez for the richer Comendador, Casilda refuses. She declares repeatedly her love for Peribáñez and demonstrates her loyalty to him. Thus, on paper, Lope is finally able to know a woman with integrity. By extension, he is able to grant dignity to all females, departing slightly from the tradition of the weak and guilty female. This further contributes to the emergence of a new model of modernity.

Chapter 2: Fenisa

La traición en la amistad by María de Zayas y Sotomayor tells the story and interactions of a community of women. This is the first clue that this work will not exactly follow the pattern set by other Golden Age playwrights. There are five important women in the play, but the one that will be the focus of this chapter is Fenisa, arguably the driving protagonist behind the principal argument. We will examine Fenisa in terms of her personal choices and the opinions of those around her. From this analysis, we will be able to evaluate the character in terms of stereotypical behavior and characterization. Finally, we will draw a conclusion as to her purpose in the play.

This drama is a web of love and deceit, with Fenisa as the spider, located at the center of almost every conflict. Darci Strothers concisely captures the nature of this web in the following summary: "Marcia is loved both by Gerardo and Liseo. Liseo, in turn, is loved by Laura, Marcia, and Fenisa, while Fenisa, in addition to her love for Liseo, is attracted to and flirts with Don Juan, Gerardo, and the servant Lauro. At the same time, Belisa is also in love with Don Juan" (121). From this description, we see that Fenisa finds no need to limit her amorous emotions to just one male; she actively pursues Liseo, Don Juan, Gerardo, and Lauro at the same time. Her cavalier behavior towards her supposed friends and relationships in general causes friction between the ladies. The men are not present, in terms of significant emotional contributions; they serve instead as a mere vehicle for the exploits of the women. Fenisa's choices cause the conflicts. She tries to be the controller of her situation, juggling men and betraying her friends.

Early in the work, we find her attempting to manipulate Marcia under the guise of maintaining their friendship. Upon learning that Marcia too holds feelings for Liseo, Fenisa attempts to convince her that her attraction will wane, as it has for Gerardo. The advice she gives Marcia is in direct opposition to the way she lives her own life: “Es más justicia estimar a quien te quiere, más que a quien quieres” (1.132-4). Fenisa is advising Marcia to stick with the men she knows reciprocate the attraction, while Fenisa herself goes after men regardless of their feelings for her. Thus, in this circumstance, she resorts to manipulation and hypocrisy to have her own way, disregarding the desires of her alleged friends. Fenisa discovers that she and Marcia share an attraction for the same man, but decides that her wants are more important than those of Marcia. Fenisa tries to convince her to let go of her attraction to Liseo so that she, Fenisa, will be able to pursue him freely.

This situation with Liseo, of Fenisa nurturing amorous emotions for him while Marcia expresses her love as well, further develops into a conversation between Fenisa and Don Juan. He proclaims his love to her, and she responds by inquiring after Liseo. Her manipulative skills are showcased once more when she takes the upper hand in a situation that could have easily spiraled out of her control. When Don Juan responds with indignation at Fenisa's desire to know more about Liseo, she first lies to him, stating that he has no cause to be jealous. In reality, she has already mentioned that she is enamored by Liseo, but is blatantly denying this truth in order to hold power over Don Juan. Then, she proclaims that she will force herself to fall in love with Liseo as punishment to Don Juan. By placing doubt on her recently professed devotion, she is able to leave Don Juan begging after her, providing her the upper hand in that situation. She also sets herself up

for a hypothetical future defense, should she be discovered in suspicious circumstances with Liseo; she will only have to remind Don Juan of her decision to love Liseo.

Fenisa demonstrates no reservations or misgivings about her feelings for Liseo, knowing that Marcia loves him as well, nor about treating Don Juan in the way she does. In fact, she declares her position in an aside to the audience. She states: "...en mi alma hay lugar para amar a cuantos veo. Perdona, Amistad, que Amor tiene mi gusto sujeto" (1.434-5). She knows that she is betraying her female friends, but she does not try very hard to stop herself. She decides that there is nothing she can do to stop love, and that the only logical course of action is to give in, juggling multiple men through the art of deceiving and decrying friendship.

A startling example of her apparent disdain for her relationship with Marcia can be found in the middle of Act Two, in a conversation with Gerardo. It was already revealed that Marcia's feelings for him have passed. Fenisa uses this information to coax an expression of love from Gerardo for herself. He comes to her for intercession, and she responds by calling Marcia an "ingrata" twice in the same speech (2.1527, 1533). She uses no euphemisms in her blunt revelation that Marcia has moved on to another man.

Because her actions directly influence the relationships with other people, we are able to look at them for insight into how her behavior has influenced her reputation. At the beginning of the play, it is obvious that Fenisa is in good standing with her friends, particularly Marcia, as the latter has no qualms about confiding in the former. However, as her relationship with Liseo becomes common knowledge, Marcia's attitude changes. In the Second Act, after Laura shares her story with Marcia, she reveals that there is a solution to Laura's problem of lost honor through relations with Liseo, and "tal que he de

dar a Fenisa lo que merece su intento" (2.1033-4). Fenisa's behavior cannot go unpunished. After realizing that their friendship is over because of Fenisa's decision to pursue Liseo, Marcia completely changes her opinion, marking Fenisa as the enemy. Marcia reiterates this opinion by telling Belisa and Laura that "tal maldad así paga los extremos de mi voluntad Fenisa" (2.1079-81).

Fenisa's reputation with Liseo is no better. Perhaps initially flattered by the attention, a conversation between Liseo and León reveals that Fenisa is being treated the same way as she treats the men. That is to say, when discussing his potential spouse, Liseo refers to his relationship with Fenisa as a joke: "si yo a Fenisa galanteo, es con engaño, burlas, y mentira" (2.1298-9). It is possible that Fenisa feels genuine love for the men she entertains, as she insists throughout the work. More likely, though, Zayas is using Fenisa to caricature men from male-authored plays who freely love more than one woman. Regardless, it is undeniable that she juggles men as though it were her hobby. Liseo clearly does not love Fenisa,[3] but rather regards her with the same cavalier attitude as she appears to project.

Belisa is a bit kinder in regards to her comments about Fenisa. In a conversation with Don Juan, she remarks that Fenisa is free with her reputation. The tone of the opinion is gentle, with Belisa merely stating that Fenisa would not do these things if she were a little more circumspect. From this we see that Fenisa's carelessness has put her multiple affairs and lascivious behavior in the consciousness of those around her. However, she is not so cold-hearted as to have turned everyone violently away from her. Her outright betrayal of Marcia has definitively disintegrated that relationship, but she

3 It is also worth asking whether or not Liseo actually loves any woman. He has taken Laura's honor and left her, he shows little genuine affection for Marcia, and we see here that he feels no love for Fenisa either. In other words, we could consider him another "don Juan" figure.

appears to have merely disappointed some of the other ladies instead of violently severing any contact with them.

This changes at the end of the play, when Belisa is paired with Don Juan. Entering into Marcia's house, Fenisa demands Don Juan's attention, but Belisa stands in the way. Fenisa tries to be self-righteous in her indignation, but Belisa will not tolerate any of her claims. She responds to the charges with "¡Mientes, villana grosera!" and the two begin a physical fight (3.2764). At this point, Fenisa has gone from being the trusted friend to the most unladylike warrior, at odds with all those she used to support. Don Juan comments that her behavior is shameful, and with this we see that Fenisa has lost everyone. Liseo practically despises her, Marcia considers her an enemy, Don Juan looks upon her with disgust, and Belisa is physically opposed to her. She is a condemned woman, denounced by her community of friends and neighbors.

Fenisa is not the archetypal Golden Age heroine. Her behavior establishes her as, in the words of Valerie Hegstrom, liberated in the extreme (19). She is very much a man in terms of her choices. Often compared with Tirso de Molina's Don Juan figure, Fenisa acts upon her own desires. We have already established that Fenisa acknowledges her betrayal as she carries it out, but makes the choice to pursue perceived love instead. She is not concerned with her reputation as she should be, but rather in personal pleasure.

The physical location of Fenisa's action symbolically breaks the archetypes of the time. Catherine Larson points out that "women of early modern Spain were, in the main, expected to remain enclosed in their domestic space" (133). In all interpretations of the word, Fenisa is away from a domestic space. She is unmarried when we meet her, and remains so at the end. Most importantly, though, she is usually seen outside her home.

This is a subtle rejection of the stereotype for women. It also serves to further equate Fenisa with many male characters of her time. Mercedes Camino describes the outer space as the “exterior environment of adventure and danger which is associated with the masculine” (“Solidarity” 9). By stepping away from the domestic world, she is stepping closer to the masculine world more often portrayed on the stage.

We see then that Fenisa appears to subvert the stereotypes of the time through her behavior and physical location. However, it is debated as to whether or not that is the intent. We look now to the conclusion of the play in an attempt to decide whether or not her ultimate purpose is to break from the conformity of her society. After all her manipulation, Fenisa seems ultimately defeated by the sharpness of Marcia, who is able to pair off her remaining friends with the men. When all is said and done, Fenisa remains, alone. She no longer has any men who respect her, nor does she find herself with a suitable match. These are the facts of the work. However, the interpretation is ambiguous.

There is no clear-cut message of the play. Strothers explains in passing that “the feminist theme...is expressed in a subtle and subversive way...in order for it to be allowed to participate in the public-theatre dialogue without rejection” (110-1). Had Zayas been outright in her criticism of the patriarchal society or in her feminist tendencies, the play would never have experienced the success it did, and the message would ultimately have been lost. However, denying the feminist message is contrary to Zayas's pattern established in her novellas.

On the one hand, we see that Fenisa remains a solitary woman, an undesirable station for a female in sixteenth- and seventeenth- century Spain. From this standpoint, she is being punished for her actions. She is not allowed to have any of the men she has

strung along, and she ends up without any of her female friends as well. We can say that her betrayal of her friends has cost her participation in the community we saw at the beginning of the play. Joshua Ferrer tackles this assertion in his thesis about community in the play. By consciously deciding to separate herself from her friends, Fenisa opens herself up for the criticism that comes at the end of the work (Ferrer 31-2). She must face abandonment as the other women turn their backs on her because of her behavior.

The other possible interpretation of the ending arrangements is that she was actually being spared worse consequences. As León points out to the men of the audience, Fenisa is still free to carry on with her philandering ways:

> León: Señores míos, Fenisa,
> cual ven sin amantes queda.
> Si alguno la quiere, avise
> para que su casa sepa. (3.2911-14)

She is not tied down to a specific man, and though she lost her friends, she is still in control of her independence and choices. She defied the system and won. In general, Ruth Jenkins repeats the words of Carmello Virgillo and Naomi Lindstrom, who remark that "women have generally been considered silent figures, submissive to the patriarchal powers that govern their society" (63). This is not the case in *La traición* due most notably to the fact that there are no men in authority positions until the end of the work. The fathers are inexplicably gone, and the men are not connected in such a way to the women until their marriages. Constance Wilkins points out that the lack of patriarchs in the play allows the women to exercise their independence (116). All the women are shown to make their own decisions, but once they are married, this freedom of choice

will be taken away. The husband will assume the position the father previously held. By not being married, Fenisa is allowed to keep her sovereignty.

Also, she is arguably being saved from a fate the others have to suffer: a loveless marriage. Though the marriages work out with the characters' best interests at heart, meaning they solve problems of compromised honor, they are not based on mutual affection and emotion. Liseo, for example, is paired with Laura, not Marcia, though it is the latter who has the stronger desire for Liseo. Marcia engages in self-sacrifice in order to help and to restore the honor of her friend, a woman used and thrown away by Liseo (Wilkins 115). The others, those who did not try to rebel against their position in society, are now faced with a lifetime of commitment to men who will probably engage in multiple affairs, as their nonchalance with regards to Fenisa demonstrates that they hold little regard for their ladies' emotinos. Fenisa, on the other hand, broke convention and is therefore being spared the fate of unsatisfactory matrimony.

During this time, the options for women were limited largely to marriage or life in a convent. As Fenisa is left without a spouse, her options have been reduced only to life in a convent. However, we can deduce that Fenisa is at an age where it is acceptable for her to still be available. She and her former friends were all single at the beginning of the work, so they must be young enough to be unmarried without having to join a convent. Fenisa, therefore, would still have time to tease and pursue multiple men before crossing over into the age by which she should be married. So, even though her options are limited, she is still independent at the end of the work after the matches have been made.

If we accept the ending that Fenisa is being punished, whether by exclusion from her circle of friends or from respectable marriage, we can assert that Zayas is pointing out

the hypocrisy of her society. In this particular work, Liseo, who has engaged in exactly the same behavior as Fenisa, is able to rejoin society without retribution (Hegstrom 21). That is to say, he ends up with a wife and does not have to suffer the humiliation of being taught a lesson, so to speak. This contrast serves to show that women, represented by Fenisa, are punished for the same behavior that men, represented by Liseo, freely enjoy.

However, this does not seem to be the likely interpretation intended by Zayas. Irma Vasileski explains that "doña María de Zayas se queja airadamente de la posición a que la mujer ha sido relegada por el hombre" (68). In other words, it is not likely that Zayas would create an entire drama to condemn a woman for breaking free of the constraints of men when she has already established herself as an opponent to this reality. Fenisa would be the character Zayas promotes, one she perhaps wishes she could be. It is counter-productive to create a female who subverts and is punished. Rather, this would serve only to reinforce the male hegemony that Zayas is attempting to condemn.

Taking this analysis as the more accurate one, we can then discuss the impact of this character. Looking first at the concept of the subaltern proposed by Gayatri Spivak, we see that this characterization of Fenisa as breaking the stereotypes is a way to provide a voice for the subaltern, which in this situation is the female. Ordinarily in this society, the women would represent a faction relegated to silence (Jenkins 63). This play serves as a voice on two distinct levels. First, the fact that the subversion of the norm is so subtle allows for the performance of the work, which immediately provides a voice since the author is female. Beyond that, the success of the work popularized the character of Fenisa and therefore provided a long-standing consideration for women.

We can also examine Mulvey's theory about visualization. Though this is not a

cinematic work, we can still find some of the components of the theory applicable. In her article, she describes women as defined by men (6). That is to say, men are traditionally the definers of the meaning placed upon women, through looks or through language. By repeating the fact that men of authority are virtually absent from the work, we note that the women become their own creators of meaning. This subversion provides the audience with a hint of the independent and liberated woman.

Also, when we discuss Mulvey's visualization theory, we can look at women in terms of the masculine gaze. The case of Fenisa is unique in that, though she is the one doing the initial looking, she ultimately becomes the victim of the look. As Jannine Montauban explains, Fenisa's reaction to being shown Liseo's image by Marcia transfers the victimization from Liseo to Fenisa (44). In an aside, Fenisa expresses the feelings elicited by the portrait, questioning whether or not she is under a spell and remarking about Liseo's bewitching eyes (Zayas 1.99-102). Even though Liseo is not physically present, he becomes the dominating figure in the scene. Fenisa, whether consciously or not, becomes the victim of Liseo's gaze. In the previous chapter, we discussed Casilda in terms of the masculine gaze. In that situation, the representation is reversed, but the effect is the same. Lope constructs Casilda as the object in the portrait, whereas Zayas puts Liseo in that position. However, in both circumstances, we find that the women end up being the stereotypical victim of a masculine gaze.

Continuing with the idea of the liberated woman, as proposed and discussed by Hegstrom and Mulvey, we can move to the the so-called “symbolic bisexuality,” defined previously by Meyer (360). Basically, each person has a feminine and masculine part. Traditional behavior of the woman would fall under the category of the feminine part.

However, Fenisa does not completely follow this archetype, as we have already discussed. We return to Hélène Cixous for further explanation of this phenomenon. She explains that men are bound into proving themselves to one another. Women are automatically given a choice by possessing both sides of the gender roles, but we find in Fenisa an exaggerated version of a character embracing the masculine part of her being. We have already established that her openly expressed behavior more resembles that of a man of the time. She has no reason to prove herself to anyone and is therefore able to act out on this masculine side.[4] She seems to be a fully liberated individual.

At this point, we discuss the idea of the "excluded middle," introduced in the previous chapter regarding Casilda. In *La traición en la amistad*, all the characters conform and adhere to social classification and gender roles, except Fenisa, who defies them. Hegstrom states that with this behavior, wanting to act both male and female, "Fenisa tries to break out of this opposition, searching for another place in- or between- the terms" (21). We will show momentarily that Zayas was successful in this breaking, even though Fenisa does not escape without some punishment.

This brings us to the idea of feminism as outlined theoretically by Robbins. In her summary, she explains that "[literature] offers us alternatives to the real (through critiques of reality as we live it, or through imagining alternative modes of being as in fantasies, utopias, dystopias, and science fictions)" (50). Through Fenisa, Zayas provides an alternative way for women to live. Fenisa shows a freer behavior, in which women are able to pursue their own interests regardless of societal standards. We cannot deny that

4 We should also note that Fenisa adopts only the male discourse, in comparison to other female characters who adopt the male clothing as well. Rosaura, who will be discussed in a later chapter, is an example of this kind of masculinity. Fenisa only becomes male in terms of her actions and attitudes, as we have discussed, but not in her physical appearance.

Fenisa suffers somewhat, which we will discuss in a moment. However, she is not outright punished. This serves to show women that they do not necessarily have to follow the guidelines and rules for behavior imposed upon them.

We have provided reasons to support the idea that Fenisa represents an alternative lifestyle to the accepted norms of society. However, we cannot ignore the fact that she does suffer because of her rejection at the hands of her friends. A community was established in the very beginning, and broken as the action progressed. As Wilkins points out, Fenisa is ostracized because of her betrayal, not because of her treatment of the men (115). It is remarked by other characters throughout the play that her worst crime is the way in which she behaves towards her friends. We should not take this to mean that Zayas is condemning the behavior of Fenisa, but rather is showing that caution must be exercised when one deserts one's community. Risks must be taken to behave outside the norm, and sometimes the consequences are beyond what the benefit is.

It would appear that Zayas is using Fenisa to say that women can be different, and can live a life outside the expectations. However, women must exercise caution when doing so. Fenisa is her own woman, making her own decisions about love and relationships. She juggles men as men typically do of women. She takes her liberation a little bit too far as she purposefully manipulates her friends and her men. In the end, she is rewarded for her individuality by being allowed to remain single and pursue her lascivious desires. But, she is punished by being left alone, abandoned by her friends. Individual liberty is promoted, but discouraged at the cost of friendship. Finally, we commend María de Zayas for the use of such subtlety of characterization that allows the production and presentation of such a subversive work that ignites debates about her

intent even today.

We can also compare Fenisa with Casilda from the previous chapter. Since we hope to show that these authors are all creating a new model, we should observe the differences between the characters to establish the universality of the modern woman. Casilda, as we emphasized multiple times, is a peasant, born into the base laboring class. Fenisa, on the other hand, is suggested to be more of a lady. She is able to interact in a social and personal manner with *dons*, such as Don Juan. Their title indicates that they come from a wealthy background, held in high esteem in society. For this reason alone, we know that she is of a comparable social class. Also, she spends all her time engaged in leisure activities. For her, this is limited to chasing men and their affections. Regardless, she is allowed this pleasure, in contrast with Casilda, who must attend to menial labor tasks, such as housework and managing the harvesters.

In addition to the difference in social class, we see that the space in which these ladies are presented is distinct. Fenisa is part of a community of women. The actual setting of her story is not as important as this fact. Though she ultimately breaks with this group, we must note that at the onset of the work, she was deeply involved in a company of similar figures. Casilda, on the other hand, is presented as a married woman. She is usually seen as part of a pair, either with her husband, her cousin, or the Comendador. Her social circles are much smaller and tighter than the loose construction of Fenisa's space.

The purpose of acknowledging this disparity is to show that this modern woman is emerging in all parts of the social environment. It is not a phenomenon limited to the upper class, nor to the laboring lower class; it applies to everyone.

Chapter 3: Rosaura

Pedro Calderón de la Barca is widely considered to be the last great Spanish Golden Age playwright. Accumulating fame even before the death of Lope de Vega, he was very popular with the court. He is extremely well-known for his one-act *autos sacramentales*, but critics and admirers alike cannot ignore his immense volume of more extensive plays.

One of the most famous plays of all Spanish literature is *La vida es sueño*. This three act work weaves a tale of the conflict between free will and fate, while not neglecting the ever-important theme of honor. The action of this work, set in Poland, centers on two intertwining plots. The first, and widely considered primary story, is that of Segismundo, the son of the king of Poland, who has been put away alone in a tower because of a prophecy. Basilio, the king and an accomplished astronomer, believes that his son will be violent and cause unnecessary death, even to Basilio himself. The king decides to reveal the existence of Segismundo, bringing him to the castle as a test to see how he will react in this setting. He wakes in a strange environment and behaves inappropriately, even throwing a servant out of a window. He is drugged, sent back to the tower, and told that it was a dream. Ultimately, an uprising occurs, orchestrated by the people who want a natural born heir instead of an appointee, and Segismundo goes to battle to defend his birth right. He wins, and his decisions immediately following prove him to be a worthy and wise ruler, capable of taking control of the throne.

Meanwhile, a woman, Rosaura, has come to Poland, the country of the action,

seeking revenge on a man who destroyed her honor. She comes dressed as a male traveler and accidentally finds Segismundo. Clotaldo, his keeper, recognizes the sword she has and realizes he, Clotaldo, is her father. He takes her to the palace, where she disguises herself as Astrea, a lady-in-waiting to Estrella, a pretender to the throne and distant relative of Basilio. When the uprising in favor of Segismundo occurs, Rosaura dons the garb of a soldier and joins the fight for him. She is rewarded by Segismundo's decision to match her with Astolfo, the man who took her honor. Much of the plot will be recalled throughout this chapter, but because of disguises and plot twists, it is prudent to include this brief summary now for future reference.

Containing some of the most iconic figures to ever grace the stage, *La vida es sueño* presents the audience with a fascinating female with Rosaura. This dramatic character occupies the secondary plot of the work and serves as a vehicle by which the primary plot is developed. Because of this developmental prominence, it is necessary to examine her character construction. However, it is difficult to separate different aspects of her persona. For example, many times her physical appearance lends itself to commentary by other characters, and external situations often influence her reactions. For this reason, it is best to examine her character development in terms of how she follows the established, traditional stereotypes and how she conversely represents a break from them. At times, these two situations overlap, as will be noted, with attention paid to the aspects of each circumstance that break and that conform to the stereotypes.

First, we find an instance in which Rosaura is characterized according to the traditional stereotypes as she converses with Clotaldo. She tells him of the quest on which her mother has sent her: to go to Poland with the sword and find the noble who,

upon seeing it, favors her (1.386-93). Though it is not concretely revealed, it can be inferred that Rosaura knew that her mother has also been seduced and subsequently betrayed by a nobleman. Otherwise, there would be no need to reveal the sword to the unknown elites of Poland. Still, Rosaura herself falls victim to the same plot. Even if she had not realized the nature of her mother's disgrace, or if it had not been revealed to her before her tryst with Astolfo, she would have been aware of the rules that governed her society. She knew that a prince would not be able to marry someone without a father or lineage, yet she allowed herself to be seduced by his words and empty promises. Therefore, we can conclude that she is capable of being overcome by emotion, disregarding information that could save her from shame and disgrace. She is painted above all as a victim, and it is her own fault because she gave in to her emotions instead of viewing the situation as history repeating itself.

Rosaura is victimized once again during her time disguised as Astrea in the palace, though this time by an outside source. She encounters Segismundo, who tries to force himself on her. Ultimately this does not occur, but its imminent threat reduces Rosaura not only to an object for the taking, but also victim of the tyranny of man. In this way, her character conforms to the stereotype of the damsel-in-distress.

To find more evidence of Rosaura as stereotypical, we can examine the way in which Segismundo describes her in this encounter. Convinced he has seen her before, Segismundo chooses to focus his attention on her physical attributes, stating that, "Yo he visto esta belleza otra vez" (1.1580-1). He equates Rosaura as nothing more than a pretty face. He continues referring to her only in regards to how beautiful she is, for example asking, "¿Quién eres, mujer bella?" (1.1590). By not affording her a personality, she is

reduced to a mere one-dimensional figure that, if given his way, will be nothing more than a victim of Segismundo's inappropriate behavior.

Later in a conversation between Astolfo and Estrella, we find another example of Rosaura being reduced to a stereotype, this time in the form of a physical image. Astolfo carries with him a locket of sorts with an image of Rosaura, which causes friction with Estrella, to whom he has proposed a strategic political marriage for them to rule when Basilio dies. Introduced in Act One, the locket is mentioned again in Act Two, when Estrella challenges the compliments paid to her by Astolfo, saying that they are genuine, but meant for the woman he carries with him (2.1750-7). In these moments, Rosaura becomes reduced to nothing more than that picture. Calling upon the visualization Mulvey's theory, we see that she has been thrown into a traditional role of inferiority, subject to the gaze of the man, in this case, Astolfo. When the locket is the center of attention, Rosaura loses her own identity.

Astolfo continues the visualization-based victimization in Rosaura's next encounter. He tells Estrella that he will remove the picture to allow space for her (Estrella's) beauty to enter. After making this proclamation, he apologizes to the image, referring to it as "Rosaura hermosa" (2.1774). For him, Rosaura will be nothing more than a picture hanging around his neck. She is not a person, but a victim of his lust. This identification has reduced Rosaura, in the words of Camino, to a two-dimensional figure, separate from the full personality Rosaura normally tries to develop for herself ("Negotiating women" 208). This changes slightly, however, when Astolfo sees Rosaura, as Astrea, approach him. He immediately recognizes her for two reasons: her voice and her face. She is partly redeemed and restored as a full character with personality when

Astolfo jumps initially to her voice as being the indicator of her identity. However, he does keep her subjected to his interpretation by insisting that Astrea's face is the same as Rosaura's.

Astolfo's locket is no different than the painting from *Peribáñez* or Liseo's portrait from *La traición*. All three women are subjected to the gaze of men through visual representations. The only difference we find is with Fenisa, who becomes subjected to the masculine gaze through a representation of the male; in the other two works, the women as subjected to the gaze by being the object of the painting. Regardless, we see that none of the women is able to escape this stereotype and are all made inferior, at least temporarily, by the men around them.

Rosaura's trusting nature towards Clotaldo further establishes the idea that she is at least partially a conformist. Though she scarcely knows the man, and even had to beg for her life before him, she takes his instruction at face value. In Act Three, Rosaura provides a sort of recapitulation of the events so far, stating that "mandásteme..que disfrazada viviese en palacio, y pretendiese (disimulando mis celos), guardarme de Astolfo" (3.2500-4). This reveals that Rosaura was willing to sacrifice the result that she set out to procure in order to follow the commands of Clotaldo. She subjected herself to the authority of a man she scarcely knew. This is clear behavior of a conforming character, negating personal independence.

Finally, the resolution of the various conflicts of the play demonstrate that Rosaura is still at least somewhat confined to the traditions of her time. In contrast to the beginning of the play, where she is given the opening monologue, she is allowed only a mere exclamation at the end. During Segismundo's meting out of the fates of all those

involved, Rosaura is discussed by the men, as though she were not present and able to speak for herself, which she has been doing for the vast majority of the work. Segismundo declares that he will give Rosaura's hand to Astolfo, who objects, citing her lack of heritage and lineage as the reason for his inability to marry her. Clotaldo intervenes, saying, “Rosaura es tan noble como tú, Astolfo, y mi espada lo defenderá en el campo; que es mi hija, y esto basta” (3.3268-71). Astolfo once again takes away her value as a person, reducing her worth to her relationship with an upper class man. Clotaldo does no better, making her a piece of property to be claimed. Granted, this ending restores her lost honor, but it manages to shift the focus away from her, removing almost all the value of her sacrifices up until this point. She has ignored her desire for violent revenge and disguised herself at the insistence of Clotaldo, but he and Astolfo become the emphasis of the ending scene and not Rosaura. It is as though her choices and actions do not matter once Clotaldo speaks.

Now that we have provided instances in which Rosaura is developed according to a stereotype and not a person, we can shift slightly our focus to an examination of situations in which she seems to defy and conform to these generalizations at the same time. When discussing her physical depiction as seen in Act One, there are two elements to address: first, we have her true-to-self appearance, and second, her appearance to those around her, as these two are not always the same. In the opening scenes of the work, the audience is introduced to the figure of Rosaura, but not as Rosaura. She is disguised as a traveling man on a personal quest to win back her lost honor. Regardless of this masculine costume, Segismundo still notes that there is something gentle, perhaps even feminine about the figure who has stumbled upon his hidden cell. In response to

discovering that someone has been listening to his sorrowful soliloquy, Segismundo says, “Tu voz pudo enternecerme, tu presencia suspenderme, y tu respeto turbarme” (1.190-2). Even though she is parading as a man, she cannot hide her delicate feminine qualities. It seems that at the very same time that her clothing breaks with the stereotypes, her perception by Segismundo keeps her within them.

Next, we come to Rosaura's use of the word “esclavo” in relation to herself. The first time we see this is right after Rosaura and Clarín, her traveling companion and servant of sorts, are spared because of the king's decision to reveal the truth about Segismundo's existence. She expresses her gratitude to Clotaldo, saying, “eternamente seré esclavo tuyo” (1.900-1). First, we note that she cannot possibly consider herself already to be a slave, since she is offering this as repayment for her perceived debt. That is to say, she does not consider herself to be inferior to the point of servitude to this man. In this example, she can be said to be breaking the stereotypes, exemplifying what would in the 21st-century be termed “healthy self-esteem.” However, this changes, ironically in reference to her relationship to another female, Estrella. She is disguised as Astrea at this point, and is proclaiming her loyalty by declaring, “Tu esclava soy” (2.1792). It is obvious that in this case she is playing a part, but we must not neglect her use of the same word—“slave.” She could just have efficiently referred to herself as a maid, servant, or helper. Instead, she chooses a term that connotes a much more base, subservient relationship. It implies a lack of free will and removes any dignity that being a lady-in-waiting could afford. In this example, she has used the word to conform herself to a stereotype.

At this point, we shift our attention to circumstances and aspects of character

development that clearly define Rosaura as a liberated woman, breaking the mold of most ladies before her. We have shown how she is characterized as conforming to stereotypes. We have also provided circumstances in which she appears to break with them and conform at the same time. Now, we look at evidence of her complete disruption of tradition.

Multiple times throughout the play, Rosaura's statements and use of classic references and varied verse establish her as an intelligent woman, educated perhaps above her station. In Lope de Vega's *El arte nuevo de hacer comedia* he specifies that the characters should speak in a language that reflects their position in the work and their social class. As Calderón uses many of Lope's conventions, we can apply this concept to *La vida es sueño* and show that Rosaura's speech is that of a knowledgeable character. In the opening lines of the play, she references both a hippogryph and the son of Helios, a Greek god (1.1, 10). The extra-textual purpose of this is for the playwright to establish himself as well-educated. However, the fact that Rosaura serves as the vehicle for this demonstration allows her to be classified as a cultured woman. Though she has not led a life of privilege,[5] she has somehow managed to educate herself enough to pass as a refined woman. Though it would not necessarily be unusual for a woman to have knowledge of classical mythology, it is rare to find one allowed to present it in a dramatic work. Immediately from the start, Rosaura is set up to be different, to break the pattern.

Her use of classical allusions continues throughout the work. Towards the end, she explains her situation to Segismundo, recounting the details of her history. In this extended soliloquy, she draws parallels with the myths of Danae, Leda, and Europa, all

5 The reader should immediately understand that Rosaura's lack of paternal parentage signifies that she has not enjoyed a soft life. Also, the conversations in which Astolfo reveals that the reason he abandoned her it due to her “bajeza,” it is clear that she was unable to lead a courtly life (186).

three victims of the lust of a man of higher station (3.2747). Further in this same speech, she equates herself once more with figures of the ancient world. Describing her costuming, she references Diana and Pallas (3.2888-9). It is interesting to note that the first example includes the names of Greek victims, while the second uses the Roman names of the famous goddesses. She is knowledgeable about many aspects of the classics, but, most importantly, is given the opportunity to showcase this education.

Similar to her exposition on classical mythology, she employs a parable to identify with Segismundo. After hearing him wail about his poor state, she tells of a wise man who, upon asking if there could be any more miserable than himself, looks up to find another man scrambling for the scraps left by the first (1.253-62). Within the text, the moment serves to create a connection between the miserable Segismundo and the persecuted and shamed Rosaura. Outside the text, this connects Rosaura to the Biblical tradition of allegorical teaching employed in the New Testament. She thus proves to have had a religious in addition to a classical education. Her appropriate employment of such a rhetorical device also serves to establish her as a clever woman, capable of discerning and engaging in the correct approach when dealing with a potentially hostile stranger.

For further support for the claim that she defies tradition, we need to look no further than her many demonstrations of bravery. In the very beginning, when she is confronted with Segismundo and Clotaldo, she shows no fear in the face of their threats. Immediately after Segismundo declares that "la muerte te daré," she announces that her plan is "postrarme a tus pies para librarme" (1.180). As he is locked up in his tower cell, it would be easy for her to attempt an escape. However, she stays and bravely appeals to his humanity. When Clotaldo explains to her the inevitable consequences of this trespass,

she lays down her arms, once again appealing to his piety and mercy (1.355-8). She accepts the reality of her situation and bravely faces the outcome. This valiance is in contrast to the typical weak image of women of the time.

Rosaura is allowed once again to exercise her intelligence and discernment in Act Two, when she examines the situation in which she finds herself, reviewing her options and their potential outcomes. She recognizes that it would be ungrateful to reveal her identity because it could offend Clotaldo, but she cannot continue her façade with Astolfo. Though she is unable to make a decision, she does not shrink from her duties. She ends this monologue with "pero hasta entonces ¡valedme, cielos, valedme!" (2.1882-3). She finds herself in an impossible situation. Traditionally, the men of the drama would be consumed with such questions, as is Clotaldo earlier when he weighs his choices regarding Rosaura's identity. The fact that she has the space to express her situation and does so eloquently defies traditional archetypes.

Her free will is given voice in Act Three in the face of Clotaldo's solution to her problem. In typical male fashion, he seeks to hide her away in a convent as a way to restore her honor, insisting that this arrangement will please all parties involved. However, Rosaura finds her voice, calmly replying, "Cuando tú mi padre fueras, sufriera esa injuria yo; pero no siéndolo, no" (3.2628-30). She acknowledges that Clotaldo has only been a biological father, and, as such, she owes him nothing. She does not want to be stowed away, instead opting for the more pleasing solution to her: "matar al duque" (3.2632). She is clear in her intent, firm in her resolve, and liberated enough to express it. In this, she is most definitely a unique, non-conformist character.

Finally, her portrayal as a militant soldier defies classification as a typical Golden

Age woman. She explains her situation to Segismundo, affirming that he can help her. Therefore, she has dressed herself in military fashion and is prepared to go into battle to defend him, which she does. Perhaps the furthest image from the delicate wife paradigm is that of a soldier. By assuming this as her third disguise, Rosaura completely shreds the illusion of femininity and stereotyping. This only emphasizes her break from the femininity seen in the opening scene, when Rosaura appears dressed as a male traveler in order to be able to undertake her journey. We saw in this situation that even though her outward appearance suggested masculinity, Segismundo recognized her femininity. In this instance, we do not find any such identifications; she is completely masculine.

These examples serve as evidence of the concept of bisexuality discussed in the previous two chapters. Disguised twice in the drama as a man, it is not a surprise that this is a manifestation of her masculinity. Her plot, that of a quest to regain lost honor, is also extraordinarily masculine. It was the duty of the man to recover lost honor, through marriage or the death of the victimizer. By assuming control of her own fate, Rosaura plays the part of the man. However, she is also constantly identified as a daughter and is disguised as a lady-in-waiting, both decidedly feminine classifications. In this respect, we can safely say that Rosaura is a bisexual character according to the description provided by Meyer, just as are Casilda and Fenisa.

Now that we have established Rosaura as both a conformist and subversive character, we discuss her significance. Keeping in mind that the general nature of Rosaura's plot (that she, through various disguises, has decided to take her fate into her own hands and avenge her lost honor) is subversive, we can conclude that Calderón intended her to be a dissident character. We cannot, however, forget all the situations in

which she does conform to stereotypes. As she herself points out at the end of the work, her character is a dual one, both male and female:

> Mujer vengo a persuadirte
> al remedio de mi honra,
> y varón vengo a alentarte
> a que cobres tu corona.
> Mujer vengo a enternecerte
> cuando a tus plantas me ponga
> y varón vengo a servirte
> cuando a tus gentes socorra.
> Mujer vengo a que me valgas
> en mi agravio y mi congoja,
> y varón vengo a valerte
> con mi acero y mi persona. (3.2902-13).

We should not focus on the male and forget the female.

The complexity and duality of this character is important to analyze because of contemporary critics who refuse to acknowledge Rosaura as necessary to the plot, which ironically points to the groundbreaking nature of the character. Frederick de Armas cites Richard Chenevix Trench, who, in his commentaries about the play as a whole, neglects to discuss Rosaura's secondary plot due to his desire to address only the “more earnest side of this drama” (48). Even though, or perhaps because, Rosaura represents a new type of woman who both accepts and defies tradition, he fears that her plot reduces the seriousness of the issues discussed by Segismundo.

Edward FitzGerald fell victim to the same mindset as Trench. A well-known translator of the works of Calderón de la Barca, FitzGerald chose to leave out scenes of the drama that developed Rosaura's plot. De Armas cites an 1858 letter in which FitzGerald himself says that he wishes “to subdue” her “so as to assist and not compete with the Main Interest” (Armas 55). However, Rosaura cannot be subdued.

In the play itself, she is a force of nature to be dealt with by the men in her life who have wronged her. In readings of the play, she cannot be ignored because of her characterization and because of her necessity in furthering the Main Interest, or Segismundo's plot. She serves most importantly as a vehicle for his transformation. She is an example for Segismundo in his quest for justice, guiding towards forgiveness (Armas 57). She also appears in many critical points, allowing Segismundo the opportunity to prove that he is not the monster he has been predicted to be. We have mentioned in the discussion about Rosaura's bravery that she confronts an upset Segismundo in his tower with cries to his humanity. C. Christopher Soufas points out that this provides Segismundo with one of the first times in his life he has had to examine the consequences of his actions (292). Though he slips in his new self-image during his time in the palace, he has begun to examine himself in a new light. In the end as well, her situation allows him to right a wrong, facilitating his discovery of his own wisdom and worthiness as king. Without Rosaura's facilitation, it is plausible that Segismundo would not have experienced his conversion, thus fulfilling the prophecy and renouncing the idea that free will is more powerful.

With this thought in mind, we can turn our attention to Joachim Küpper, who states concisely that “the function of Rosaura in this play is to represent an attitude

towards life that we may call the basis of modernity, a radically different position from earlier periods" (510). Küpper is amplifying the purpose of Rosaura, using her actions to indicate a general change of not accepting the idea of fate as the ultimate decider of life. Indeed, the overarching theme of *La vida es sueño* is free will versus fate. Küpper is using Rosaura to support this theme, which is interpreted as illustrated primarily through Segismundo and Basilio. For us, however, the behavior represents also a change towards modernity for women. It is doubtful that Calderón chose to use a female in this pivotal role as an accident. That is to say, another subplot focused on a male character could have served the purpose of furthering the free will and fate argument. By using a woman in a quest to regain her lost honor, Calderón is implying that women, too, can be in charge of their own fate, not designating it the responsibility of a man to protect them. This idea would certainly represent a modern way of thinking for the time period.

Rosaura's physical appearance, which we have mentioned often deviates from her actual identity, serves to further the titular theme of the work. Jeannette Goddard looks to the actual performance of the play to illustrate this point. We have mentioned that Segismundo sees Rosaura as a male, though he recognizes her feminine qualities. He is not alone in this impression. The audience also sees the pun of a female character dressed as a male (105). This disparity between reality and appearance serves as the first example of the idea of life as a dream, as the title suggests. Normally this philosophy is attributed to Segismundo, but Rosaura is actually the one who introduces this concept, and even continues its development through the employment of her various disguises.

The strength of the character also creates a commentary on the honor system of the time. Goddard concisely states that Rosaura seems to be "impotent" in regards to her

ability to regain her own honor (109). As we have already observed, she subjects herself to the authority of Clotaldo, forsaking her initial goal of regaining her honor from Astolfo. The system has failed her, as evidence by her having to assume the costuming of a man in order to begin and end her quest (Goddard 111). Calderón uses her to show that even though Rosaura manages to break away from the stereotypes, she cannot ultimately avenge herself without a man, either herself disguised as one, or the help of a physical man.

Turning now to a comparative view of the three women, we need to discuss her portrayal in terms of space. In the previous chapter, we noted that Fenisa is developed within a community of women, while Casilda is represented as part of a pair. Rosaura is the only woman established apart from her surroundings. For all but the last few pages, Rosaura is separate, yet part of a crowd. She opens with her traveling companion, Clarín, and engages in conversations and tasks with other characters, such as Clotaldo and Estrella. However, she is removed from them, single-minded in her task. Her interaction is limited to necessity. At the end of the work, she becomes more involved with two characters, Segismundo and Astolfo. By sharing so intimately her identity and history with Segismundo, her fate becomes tied with his. After the battle, Segismundo matches Rosaura with Astolfo, making the two of them a more intimate, private community. Thus, Rosaura's relations follow the opposite pattern of Fenisa's, who begins *La traición en la amistad* with a full community, but ends alone, rejected by that same group.

We must also compare Rosaura's social class with that of the two other women discussed in the preceding chapters. We have mentioned already that Rosaura is established as a well-educated character, successfully employing classical allusions,

varied verse, and parable in her speech. Her disguises place her in a variety of social classes, from lower maid servant to upper male soldier. Rosaura herself also seems to pertain to multiple classes. She is the daughter of a nobleman, Clotaldo, but she does not know this until the end of the work. Until this point, she has spent her life as an illegitimate child, unable to enjoy the benefits of such a lofty birth. However, it is doubtful because of her education that she lived in the same way as Casilda. On the other hand, we also know that she has not had the same leisurely experience as Fenisa. She seems to be part of the two classes without pertaining to an actual middle class. She is a Fenisa by birth, but a Casilda by circumstance.

The purpose of this, as we stated at the end of the previous chapter, is to show that this new female mindset of independence and liberation is not limited to a single demographic. It applies to women of all social classes and those who do not appear to pertain to a social class; women involved in a large community, those part of a small grouping, and those who do not have a community at all.

Conclusion

Over the course of the preceding chapters, we have sought to analyze three distinct female characters in terms of conformity to and subversion of common stereotypes. Organizing our discussion in chronological order of the publication dates, we began with *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña* by Lope de Vega, examining Casilda, a wife whose beauty jeopardizes her and her family's honor. We then proceeded to discuss Fenisa, from María de Zayas's *La traición en la amistad.* Fenisa, very different from Casilda, is a noblewoman who values love above friendship. Finally, we investigated a woman on a quest to regain her honor, Rosaura, from *La vida es sueño* by Calderón de la Barca. Now we will summarize and synthesize our findings.

As each chapter progressed, we built on the information emphasized with the previous character(s). We have described the differences between the three females to show that any conclusions drawn from their portrayal may accurately be applied to a large group of seventeenth century women. The findings will not be limited to a phenomenon appearing in the upper classes, represented by Fenisa, nor can they be limited to the lower classes, represented by Casilda. Rosaura even manages to find a middle space to cover any individuals not identifiable with the other two. We also examined the space in which they are presented, or rather, their relationships with other characters in the works. Fenisa is developed within a community of women while Rosaura is portrayed as distant from those around her. In this instance, Casilda is the middle figure, associated with only a small number of people; she is not as surrounded as

Fenisa nor as isolated as Rosaura. From this comparison, we see that the analysis of women's roles extended to all women of the Golden Age, not just a specific demographic or subcategory.

Once we established the universality of the conclusions drawn from the characterization of these protagonists, we looked to their similarities in more detail. Obviously, they are similar in that they both subvert and conform to established norms. More specifically, we saw that the way in which they achieve this is quite similar. We stated in the Introduction that our thesis would show evidence of the emergence of a new modern woman in society through a duality of personality created in the characterization of these three women portrayed on stage. This duality is the unifying factor between the three. Though they are shown to demonstrate their masculine and feminine sides in different ways, the presence and use of both suggests that women were more complex than society had previously allowed them to be.

All the characters, by virtue of their gender, illustrate a feminine side. Fenisa uses her femaleness to attract men, but that is where much of it stops. Casilda is more feminine, as she emphasizes her female form and beauty through clothing. The action driving the plot, her defense of her honor, is also a display of her femininity. Rosaura shows this side of her personality in the same way. Her second disguise as a lady-in-waiting also points to her femininity. It was not an overwhelming task to portray a woman according to her feminine side. As we stated, the archetype would have a woman behave entirely according to this aspect. The subversion enters the equation with their embracing of the masculine side.

Fenisa's masculine side is incredibly powerful, directing and influencing most of

her behavior. As we discussed, Fenisa behaves in the same manner as many men of the time. Her embracing of this lifestyle is her masculinity. Casilda is given temporary control over the harvesters, as we mentioned. What is more important, however, is the fact that the harvesters respected her enough to listen to her orders. This is a clear manifestation of Casilda's masculinity. Rosaura is masculine both physically and in action. She, like Casilda, puts herself in charge of regaining (protecting, in Casilda's case) her honor. In doing so, she adopts masculine clothing twice in order to have access to situations traditionally denied to women, such as traveling with only a servant. Both of these examples represent Rosaura's masculinity.

We recapitulate this information to emphasize that breaking with convention and tradition created a new woman, liberated because of her bisexuality and duality. Robbins explains that feminist texts seek to create "alternatives to the real…produced out of a specific reality, and it bears the marks of its time, place, and mode of production" (50). These texts are an ideal example of this. The traditions upheld, including the employment of the honor theme, are a direct reflection of the values of seventeenth-century Spain. The situations in which the women find themselves bear the mark of their time. However, their strength of subversion provides this "alternative to the real" (Robbins 50). It provides the spectator[6] a glimpse at a different way to live. Even though Zayas's work includes a warning[7] in its ending, she shows that it is hypocritical for the man to be allowed to do whatever he wishes. Lope shows that a woman is capable of loyalty, being trusted, and protecting her own virtue to the best of her ability. Calderón uses Rosaura to

6 We must remember that these works are dramatic. Therefore, the majority of the people receiving this information at the time would be part of a physical audience, not a reader.

7 Because of the implications of the title and the fact that Fenisa is left alone at the end of the work, we see that Zayas is advocating female liberation, but not at the expense of friendship.

demonstrate not only that free will is more powerful than fate, but that women can be proactive in their destiny and their honor, just as Casilda is in *Peribáñez*.

This negated middle, the space for the bisexual duality characterization, is the symbol of modernity. Created within a society focused on appearances and propriety, these playwrights have managed to create a new figure: a woman that is still confined to stereotypes is acceptable to the masses and the censors; a woman that defies tradition, however subtly, points toward a future in which women will not be expected to abide by such archaic notions of behavior, or condemned for daring to be equal to their male counterparts. Hegemonic cultural influences of the culture are undeniable, but they also manage to offer a new archetype in which the woman is neither asexual, villainous, nor virginally ideal. As theatre is a reflection of life, we assert that this modernity is appearing gradual in society. These playwrights are seeing change and, through these characters, are expressing their approval. In modern readings, these characters may seem oppressed and denied any liberties. However, when we take into account the time period of production, the women are actually as free as they could be.

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