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## A Moment of Sanity: Ciceronian Rhetoric in Don Quijote's Arms and Letters Speech

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Honors Thesis

A MOMENT OF SANITY: CICERONIAN RHETORIC IN DON QUIJOTE'S  
ARMS AND LETTERS SPEECH

By  
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Submitted to Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment  
of graduation requirements for University Honors

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## ABSTRACT

A MOMENT OF SANITY: CICERONIAN RHETORIC IN DON QUIJOTE'S  
ARMS AND LETTERS SPEECH

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Bachelor of Arts

In chapters 37 and 38 of the *Quijote*, Don Quijote gives a discourse to his acquaintances at the inn on the superiority of arms to letters. After the speech, his audience at the inn are dumbfounded that someone so insane could give such a convincing speech, and many believed him to be sane for his presentation. This questioning of his insanity is due, in part, to his use of classical forensic structure and Ciceronian style in the speech.

Cervantes certainly grants respect to Cicero within the *Quijote* and frames the arms and letters speech after Cicero's forensic speeches. The speech's structure fits the patterns put forth by Cicero in his rhetorical handbooks. The careful structure of the speech shows that it was not meant to be taken with the Cervantine irony that his novel tends to use, but that it is to be understood differently than Don Quijote's other speeches. Cervantes's framing of the speech, life experiences as a soldier, and references to Cicero and other classical figures suggest that the speech constitutes a serious stance by Cervantes on the Arms and Letters debate.



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**Introduction:**

Throughout Cervantes' masterwork *Don Quijote*, madness shows itself as a primary theme. All of the knight's misadventures stem from his belief that he is one of the knights errant from his chivalric novels. Because of his faulty interpretation of reality, he seems strange, delightful, and bothersome to those he meets on his many journeys with his squire Sancho. Many audiences of his strange speech and actions spurn his strangeness and become abusive friends or cruel oppressors. While the level of kindness (or lack thereof) shown to Don Quijote varies from character to character due to their respective temperaments, the general view of his hopeless condition is the same, and he is constantly viewed as mad. Or, rather, he is so "*ingenioso*," or caught up in his delusions, that "*juicio*," sound judgment, is crowded out from his mind.

There are, however, two instances in which Don Quijote seems to break free from his deep-set madness. One is at the end of his life, when the toil from his journey finally wears down his idealistic vision of the world and he dies repentant of his misspent life. Much earlier, however, during his second visit to Juan Palomeque's inn, the mad knight gives his speech on Arms and Letters. Because he delivers such a well-presented and reasoned discourse, the residents of the inn are no longer able to view him as insane.<sup>1</sup> What is interesting about this first instance of Don Quijote's perceived sanity is that the knight gives multiple other speeches throughout his travels, but none of these cause others to question his insanity.<sup>2</sup> The Arms and Letters speech, however, has a powerful impact on the audience, causing them to "feel a fresh wave of pity, seeing a man who seemed so wonderfully sound in the head, and who spoke so eloquently of every subject

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<sup>1</sup> Volume I, Chapter 38.

<sup>2</sup> Of particular interest is the Golden Age Speech in I, 11.

he raised, so hopelessly lost when it came to the pitch-black darkness of his unfortunate knight errantry.”<sup>3</sup> At the end of the speech, Don Quijote's audience begins to question whether or not he is actually insane anymore. I argue that this is due, in part, to the classical forensic structure and Ciceronian style of the Arms and Letters speech. This, along with Cervantes's framing of the speech, life experiences, and references to Cicero and other classical figures suggest that the speech constitutes a more serious stance by Cervantes on the Arms and Letters debate. I further this point by examining the speech's structure through the Roman rhetorical handbooks of Cicero, with stylistic comparisons between Don Quijote's speech and Cicero's Catilinarian Orations.

### **Cicero and Rhetoric in the *Quijote***

One set of evidence suggesting the authenticity of the arguments made by Cervantes and given in the Arms and Letters speech can be found in Cervantes's explicit mentions of Cicero. These direct invocations of Cicero's name allow us to see how he is viewed within the context of the book by the characters and allows us to extrapolate some of Cervantes's opinions of the orator. Within the *Quijote*, there are four mentions of Cicero. The first is found in the prologue, where Cervantes's unnamed friend explains to him that scholarly convention of citation and preamble from authoritative poets and nobles need not apply to his novel. He explains that Cervantes ought to include a fat catalogue of sources that he does not really need to read or understand, because nobody

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<sup>3</sup> Volume I, Chapter 38. English Translations from Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote*, Trans. Burton Raffel, Ed. Diana de Armas Wilson, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999.

“*En los que escuchado le habían sobrevino nueva lástima de ver que hombre que, al parecer, tenía buen entendimiento y buen discurso en todas las cosas que trataba, le hubiese perdido tan rematadamente, en tratándole de su negra y pizmienda caballería.*”

of any importance is going to check him on it. Since it is a book about chivalric tales, which great people like Cicero never even knew about, he will be able to get away without thorough citations. Cicero here is mentioned in passing, but we can understand the weight that is associated with him here. The friend refers to him as one of the old, readily cited authorities who would have nothing to do with chivalric tales not only because the novels would have been beneath them, but because they did not exist during his time.<sup>4</sup> A similar idea of Cicero as an object of respect is found in Vol. I, Chapter 48, where the Canon attributes a maxim about theater mimicking reality to Cicero and uses the statement to form an argument about how the *comedias* of the day are full of absurdity. This citation of Cicero is particularly interesting since Cervantes uses him as a source in one of the more substantial, almost academic discussions in the book. While the novel generally casts a sarcastic focus on subjects, a few portions have a more serious tone and are not meant to be taken jokingly. These sections feel like serious arguments and opinions of Cervantes, and they include this discussion between the Curate and the Canon, the incursion into Don Quijote's library by the Barber and Curate to decide which books are worth keeping, and others.<sup>5</sup> Vol II, chapter 22, further attests to Cicero's importance, where Basilio and Quiteria call Don Quijote "an El Cid for his feats of arms and a Cicero for his eloquence,"<sup>6</sup> and in Vol II chapter 32, Don Quijote remarks to the duchess that Demosthenes and Cicero were "two of the best rhetoricians the world has ever known."<sup>7</sup> The direct mentions that we have of Cicero in the novel attest to his

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<sup>4</sup> Vol. 1, Prologue.

<sup>5</sup> See the later sections of this paper for analysis of the Arms and Letters speech as a serious argument and the preeminence of arms as opinion of Cervantes.

<sup>6</sup> "*Teniéndole por un Cid en las armas y por un Cicerón en la elocuencia.*"

<sup>7</sup> "... *es lo mismo que decir retórica de Demóstenes, como ciceroniana, de Cicerón, que fueron los dos mayores retóricos del mundo.*"

authority and the respect he enjoys from those in the novel, which can perhaps be extrapolated and attributed to Cervantes, hence motivating Don Quijote's (and the author's) use of Ciceronian style and forensic structure in the Arms and Letters speech.

Just as Ciceronian references are scattered throughout the novel, so are the influences of classical oratory. The Arms and Letters speech is but one of many orations given throughout the novel; Marcela in her defense against the accusations that she had killed Grisostomo, Sancho at his island, and Don Quijote in the Golden Age speech given to the goatherds in I, 11. The Golden Age speech is of particular interest, since it treats similar themes as the Arms and Letters speech as well as having classical structures and references. Indeed, the idyllic society which was "called by the ancients the Golden Age,"<sup>8</sup> originates from Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Don Quijote also criticizes the current "Age of Iron"<sup>9</sup> by saying that maidens are not safe "though we hide them, lock them away in some new labyrinth like that of Crete,"<sup>10</sup> alluding to Greek myth. Along with these references, the topic of the Golden Age pertains directly to the Arms and Letters speech because Don Quijote invokes the points of his Golden Age speech in it: "Arms strive for that which is a great deal higher [than learning], for their goal and purpose is

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<sup>8</sup> I, 11. "*Dichosa edad y siglos dichosos aquellos a quien los antiguos pusieron nombre de dorados.*"

<sup>9</sup> I, 20. "Edad de hierro." I, 20 contains a small reference to the Golden Age speech in I, 11, and an interesting look at Don Quijote's motivations for setting out. "Let me tell you, Sancho, my friend, that I have been born in this Age of Iron, by the will of Heaven, in order to restore the Age of Gold – Or the Golden Age, as they usually call it." "*Sancho amigo, has de saber que yo nací, por querer del cielo, en esta nuestra edad de hierro, para resucitar en ella la de oro, o la dorada, como suele llamarse.*" This relates directly with the Arms and Letters speech and gives it a stronger purpose for the knight: arms are the means by which he hopes to "restore the Age of Gold."

<sup>10</sup> I, 11. "*Y agora, en estos nuestros detestables siglos, no está segura ninguna, aunque la oculte y cierre otro nuevo laberinto como el de Creta.*"

the attainment of peace, which is the very best thing humans can desire in this life.”<sup>11</sup> The two speeches are thematically intertwined.

However, a key difference between the two is that the Golden Age speech is not received by the knight’s audience with as much enthusiasm as the Arms and Letters speech. This is because the speech differs in two pertinent ways. First, the speech is not a completely structural fit in the forensic style.<sup>12</sup> It begins as an epideictic speech, a form of oratory which is almost more for show of rhetorical prowess than forensic, which is used to persuade. The speech is, until the last few sentences, epideictic rather than forensic, making it muddled and confused in its argument.<sup>13</sup> Epideictic rhetoric does not seek to persuade, but to praise, making it more a means of flaunting rhetorical style (ἐπίδειξις means “a display”) rather than a way to convince a crowd.<sup>14</sup> The speech continues in this style and then suddenly attempts to convince the goatherds of the importance of his station as a knight, turning from epideictic praise of the past age to an attempt at persuasion. Thus, what there is of forensic oratory is unsupported and sudden, making the speech confusing to follow. Second, and more important, is that even if the speech were logically straightforward, the goatherds could not have appreciated it, because they do not understand the speech at all, being simple pastoral figures. Mary Mackey explains that “the fact that Don Quijote leaves the shepherds ‘*embobados y suspensos*’ is not something for which he is to be praised. One of the harshest accusations against baroque

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<sup>11</sup> I, 37. “*pero no de tanta como merece aquel a que las armas atienden, las cuales tienen por objeto y fin la paz, que es el mayor bien que los hombres pueden desear en esta vida.*”

<sup>12</sup> Mary Mackey, “Rhetoric and Characterization in ‘Don Quijote,’” *Hispanic Review* 42, no. 1 (Winter, 1974): 57.

<sup>13</sup> See Mary Mackey, “Rhetoric and Characterization in ‘Don Quijote,’” *Hispanic Review* 42, no. 1 (Winter, 1974) for analysis of the Golden Age speech.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Habinek, *Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 56-57.

rhetoric was that it shocked the audience instead of instructing.”<sup>15</sup> The speech falls on essentially deaf ears, leaving the goatherds surprised and confused, which certainly is not the aim of the knight’s rhetorical display.

The opposite, however, can be seen in the Arms and Letters speech. Unlike his time with the goatherds, Don Quijote succeeds in *persuading* his audience at the inn (in this case, concerning the precedence of arms over letters). Even the Curate, strictly a man of letters, concedes to Don Quijote’s argument. The most plausible explanation for this difference in reception of each of these speeches is the disposition of each audience. The Golden Age speech is given to a group of goatherds who, as mentioned before, are extremely confused by Don Quijote’s manner of speaking since they do not understand most of what he says. This is contrasted by the Arms and Letters speech, which the knight gives to a group composed of men of both letters (such as the priest) and arms (the captive), as well as some with experience in both (Don Fernando, Cardenio, the Barber), as well as to Luscinda, Dorotea and Zoraida, all intelligent and (and spunky) women. Thus, his audience is already predisposed to interest in the subject.<sup>16</sup> The identity of his audience is key to understanding why they view him as sane in this moment. They all know him, and understand the extent of his madness, and yet they see a glimpse of sanity in him because his speech is well constructed and makes a coherent case. Contrast this with the reaction of the goatherds, whose impression of Don Quijote is unchanged by his bombastic speech. These distinct outcomes highlight the importance of audience receptiveness for Don Quijote’s rhetoric. Cervantes understood that this was a key part of

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<sup>15</sup> Mary Mackey, “Rhetoric and Characterization in ‘Don Quijote,’” *Hispanic Review* 42, no. 1 (Winter, 1974): 65.

<sup>16</sup> See Cic. De Orat. I, 31 for the role and importance of audience in classical rhetoric.

any speech, granting to the audience the importance which Aristotle mentions in *The Art of Rhetoric*.<sup>17</sup>

### Forensic Oratory in the Arms and Letters Speech

Roman forensic (or judicial) oratory has a fairly straightforward structure. While the content and style of judicial oratory change based on the speaker and the speech, the blueprint for the points of argument and mode of presentation remains quite rigid for all speeches in the genre. The structure consists of 6 points which come in strict order one after the other: *exordium*, *narratio*, *partitio*, *confirmatio*, *refutatio* and finally *peroratio*.<sup>18</sup> Each of these portions of the speech serve a specific purpose to the orator, and as such each are necessary in some form within a forensic speech. What sets the Arms and Letters speech of Don Quijote apart from his other speeches is that it neatly fits into this form, whereas the others do not follow this structure, nor the structure of any other type of classical oratory genre, nearly as well as the Arms and Letters.<sup>19</sup>

The Arms and Letters speech follows this format. The *exordium* is best described as an introduction to the speech. According to Cicero, its purpose is to “Bring the mind of the auditor into a proper condition to receive the rest of the speech... well-disposed,

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<sup>17</sup> Aristot. Rh. 2.1.4. “In forensic, that the hearer should be disposed in a certain way... for when a man is favourably disposed towards one on whom he is passing judgement, he either thinks that the accused has committed no wrong at all or that his offence is trifling; but if he hates him, the reverse is the case.” “τὸ δὲ διακείσθαι πῶς τὸν ἀκροατὴν εἰς τὰς δίκας: οὐ γὰρ ταῦτα φαίνεται φιλοῦσι καὶ μισοῦσιν, οὐδ’ ὀργιζομένοις καὶ πρῶως ἔχουσιν, ἀλλ’ ἢ τὸ παράπαν ἕτερα ἢ κατὰ μέγεθος ἕτερα: τῷ μὲν γὰρ φιλοῦντι περὶ οὗ ποιεῖται τὴν κρίσιν ἢ οὐκ ἀδικεῖν ἢ μικρὰ δοκεῖ ἀδικεῖν, τῷ δὲ μισοῦντι τοῦναντίον.”

<sup>18</sup> Cicero’s *De Inventione* enumerates each of these sections, which are widely accepted as the norm for forensic oratory. For the *Exordium*, see 1.20; *Narratio*, 1.27; *Partitio*, 1.31; *Confirmatio*, 1.34; *Refutatio*, 1.77; *Peroratio*, 1.98.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Mackey. “Rhetoric and Characterization in Don Quijote.” *Hispanic Review* 42 no. 1 (Winter, 1974): 51-52

attentive, and receptive.”<sup>20</sup> The idea is to catch the attention of the audience. At the beginning of the speech, Don Quijote accomplishes this by appealing to his audience at the inn and making grandiose statements. His initial statements really do nothing to support the argument, and many are in fact false, displaying his mistaken interpretation of reality:

Truly, my dear gentlemen, if we think about it properly, those who adhere to the order of knight errantry come to behold great and quite incredible things. Consider: would any living man, walking through *the gates of this castle* right this minute and, by pure chance, seeing us here, be able to appreciate and understand that we are who we are? Who among them would be able to say that this lady, seated beside me, *is the great queen* we all know she is, and that I am the Knight of the Sad Face whose name is always in Fame’s mouth? There can be no doubt, now, that this art, this profession, is superior to any and every calling ever invented by men, and must be still further esteemed because it is so subject to high danger.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of the *exordium*, he introduces his thesis: “Away with those, I say, who argue that literature and learning take precedence over arms!”<sup>22</sup> Although Don Quijote declares his thesis in the introductory moments of the speech, I read it as conforming to the pattern of *exordium* because it does not contain much substance, just ear-catching talk that gets his audience into the mood of listening.

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<sup>20</sup> Cic. *De Inv.* 1.20

<sup>21</sup> I, 37, emphasis added. “*Verdaderamente, si bien se considera, señores míos, grandes e inauditas cosas ven los que profesan la orden de la andante caballeria. Si no, ¿cuál de los vivientes habrá en el mundo que ahora por la Puerta deste Castillo entrara, y de la suerte que estamos nos viere, que juzgue y crea que nosotros somos quien somos? ¿Quién podrá decir que esta señora que está a mi lado es la gran reina que todos sabemos, y que yo soy aquel Caballero de la Triste Figura que anda por ahí en boca de la fama? Ahora no hay que dudar, sino que esta arte y ejercicio exceed a todas aquellas y aquellos que los hombres inventaron, y tanto más se ha de tener en estima cuanto a más peligros está sujeto.*” The *exordium* of the speech is filled with broad, flattering language, and introduces the ultimate point which the argument of arms over letters hopes to prove, which is that of the greatness of knight-errantry.

<sup>22</sup> I, 37.

Second, after stating his thesis and ending the hook of the *exordium*, Don Quijote moves on to the *narratio*, or the telling of events. Since judicial oratory, true to its name, was used in court to defend or prosecute, the *narration* generally consisted of a recounting of events pertinent to the case. However, it is also used to cast a positive light on one's client and portray the opposition as dark or negative.<sup>23</sup> In the Arms and Letters speech, the next section follows these rules as well. He gives an account of an argument generally made by "those" (whoever they may be) who argue that the study of letters is a higher vocation than the soldiers: "The argument they usually mouth, and the one on which they mostly rely, is that the labors of the soul are superior to those of the body, and that arms are concerned only with the body."<sup>24</sup> Here, instead of arms being lesser than letters, he makes letters out to be almost a lesser form of arms, since arms require the use of knowledge one might gain from his studies. This serves as an exposition of the "case," since Don Quijote is arguing between two ideas and there are not specific actions taken by each party in court.

In Cicero's time, forensic speeches were not generally used for discussing ideas but used almost exclusively in court to defend and prosecute. Argumentation of ideas was generally done in the deliberative, rather than forensic, style. The deliberative genre is generally very simple, and its structure is not quite as segmented as the forensic genre, since it only has two sections, *πρόθεσις* (statement of a position) and *πίστις* (reasons for

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<sup>23</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 4, 1.52. "We shall for instance represent a person accused of theft as covetous, accused of adultery as lustful, accused of homicide as rash, or attribute the opposite qualities to these persons if we are defending them."

<sup>24</sup> I, 37. "Porque la razón que los tales suelen decir, y a lo que ellos más se atienen, es que los trabajos del espíritu exceden a los del cuerpo, y que las armas sólo con el cuerpo se ejercitan."

choosing that position).<sup>25</sup> While the Arms and Letters speech does fit into this genre as well, persuasive speeches of any nature tend to display the pattern of stating a position and then offering evidence. Even the Golden Age discourse fits the deliberative pattern, since it is so vague and unorganized.<sup>26</sup> However, the reason that the Arms and Letters speech stands apart from the others is because it does fit so snugly into the more restrictive framework of a forensic speech, despite its use outside of court and lack of human defendant. For this reason, it is more beneficial to classify the speech as forensic rather than deliberative.

Continuing with the structure, the *partitio* follows as the next section. This serves to summarize the argument, but also to grant points to the opposition, and then turns them in the speaker's favor: "One form shows in what we agree with our opponents and what is left in dispute; as a result of this some definite problem is set for the auditor on which he ought to have his attention fixed."<sup>27</sup> The *partitio* serves as the transition between the flowery introduction of the speech and the real meat of the argument. Here, Don Quijote accomplishes all these purposes. The point that he chooses to grant to the opposition, the defenders of letters over arms, is that the most important cause on the earth is divine learning, of which there is nothing nobler and "is the goal of all goals with which no other can compare."<sup>28</sup> But, he then turns this to his own advantage by demonstrating that arms also pursues this same idea, but through the pursuit of peace, which is attained

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<sup>25</sup> Aristot. Rh. 3.13. It is important to note that in this portion of the *Ars Rhetorica*, Aristotle points out the difficulty of using *narratio* in a deliberative or epideictic speech, since there is not really any traditional narrative in these sorts of speeches.

<sup>26</sup> I, 11.

<sup>27</sup> *De Or.* 2.331. "Sequitur, ut causa ponatur, in quo videndum est, quid in controversiam veniat; tum suggerenda sunt firmamenta causae coniuncte et infirmandis contrariis et tuis confirmandis."

<sup>28</sup> I, 37. "y no hablo ahora de las divinas, que tienen por blanco llevar y encaminar las almas al cielo, que a un fin tan sin fin como éste ninguno otro se le puede igualar."

through war and is part of the aim of divine learning. He then notes the similarities and differences between arms and letters and moves the argument along: “Granting this truth, then, that the goal of war is peace, and that in this respect it is clearly superior to learning, let us turn to the body’s role in both learning and the profession of arms and see which has the advantage here.”<sup>29</sup> This section clearly delineates that the proofs necessary for the argument are about to begin. Because of these characteristics, this section can be well classified as the *partitio* of the speech.

Next is the longest section of the speech, and of most speeches, which is the *confirmatio* and *refutatio*. The *confirmatio* is the presentation of evidence and proofs, and the *refutatio* consists of debunking or nullifying the arguments of the opposition. While these two sections can be considered separately, they really compose one section, since they are so similar in nature. This is in following with what Cicero explains in the *De Oratore*: “Since you cannot refute the opponent’s points without proving your own, nor prove your own without refuting your opponent’s it follows that these things are closely connected in terms of their nature, their usefulness, and their treatment.”<sup>30</sup> In the discourse, Don Quijote does a masterful job of presenting and comparing evidence. While it is not beneficial to go into each in depth in this short paper, one exemplary argument that he gives is the comparison of the poverty of the student and the soldier.<sup>31</sup> He compares the two and quite successfully shows that while the student suffers, the soldier inevitably endures more hardships than the student. Here, the orator employs both

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<sup>29</sup> I, 37. “Propuesta, pues, esta verdad, que el fin de la Guerra es la paz, y que en esto hace ventaja al fin de las letras, vengamos ahora a los trabajos del cuerpo del letrado y a los del profesor de las armas, y véase cuáles son mayores.”

<sup>30</sup> *De Or.* 2.331. “idcirco haec et natura et utilitate et tractatione coniuncta sunt.” Because of this, orators generally tend to intermingle the two types of proofs, since it makes the speech more eloquent.

<sup>31</sup> I, 37.

*refutatio* and *confirmatio*, showing that arms are more difficult by degrading the poverty of letters and showing that the hardships of soldiers include those of the student and more.

This portion displays the sort of arguments and structure that are characteristic of the forensic genre, but it also demonstrates the style of ancient oratory. During this section of the argument, Don Quijote uses multiple figures of speech and has an ethos very reminiscent of Cicero. In fact, throughout the speech the knight almost seems to be imitating the roman orator, since their voices are so similar. The *refutatio* and *confirmatio*, present several examples. The first is found in his manner of addressing his audience. In the Catilinarian orations of Cicero to the Roman Senate, he consistently uses honorifics such as “Patres conscripti” to address his audience, a practice which worked to flatter the audience. In the Arms and Letters discourse, Don Quijote makes similar remarks, calling his small audience “señores míos.” Furthermore, both try to place themselves among their audience rather than speaking directly to it. Cicero employs the pronouns *nos* and *nostra*, and speaks generally in the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural when deliberating, as if to place the audience already on his side, while Don Quijote also uses “nosotros” and similar verbal conjugations. Along with this, just as Cicero and other orators often make references to the gods and other mythologies to move their arguments forward, Don Quijote refers to classical mythology as well, mentioning Scylla and Charybdis when speaking of a naval battle, and Neptune when referring to the ocean.<sup>32</sup> One more evidence is Don Quijote’s and Cicero’s use of *isocola*, or basically long lists. It is difficult to read a

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<sup>32</sup> I, 37. “having been swept safely past Scylla and Charybdis as if carried on Fortune’s wings...” “*pasando por estas Sirtes y por estas Scilas y Caribdis, como llevados en vuelo de la favorable fortuna.*” Also I, 38 “and though realizing that his first careless step will take him on a visit deep into Neptune’s bosom,” “*y viendo que al primer descuido de los pies iría a visitar los profundos senos de Neptuno.*”

few pages of a ciceronian discourse and not encounter an ascending tricolon, a list of three which emphasize the final item in the list.<sup>33</sup> Don Quijote also uses isocola. One is found in his *confirmatio* of the difficulty of arms: “it is with arms that republics defend themselves, and kings maintain their thrones, cities protect themselves, highways are kept safe and open, the seas are cleared of pirates.”<sup>34</sup> These are just a few of the stylistic similarities that strengthen the classification of this part of the argument as forensic.

Finally, to end the speech is the *peroratio*. This is just the conclusion of the speech, but there are certain parameters to follow given in the rhetorical handbooks. One specific way in which the handbooks suggest ending a speech is that “Everything, both in the preceding sections of the speech and particularly in the last, should be aimed at stirring the jurors' emotions as much as possible and at prompting them to think what is to our advantage.”<sup>35</sup> Don Quijote uses this emotional ending rather than the purely logical ones to complete his case:

And when I think of this I must say that my heart is heavy, having taken on this profession of knight errantry, in an age as loathsome as that in which we now live, because although I am myself afraid of nothing, nevertheless it makes me regretful to think that gunpowder and tin may deprive me of the chance to acquire fame and great reputation, across the known world, for the courage of my arm and the keenness of my sword.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> For an example, see Cic. Catil. 1.5: “you cannot be among us any longer, [Catiline]– I will not bear it, I will not permit it, I will not tolerate it.” “*nobiscum versari iam diutius non potes [Catilina]; non feram, non patiar, non sinam*”

<sup>34</sup> I, 38. “*con las armas se defienden las repúblicas, se conservan los reinos, se guardan las ciudades, se aseguran los caminos, se despejan los mares de cosarios.*”

<sup>35</sup> Cicero *De Or.* 2.332 “*Omnia autem concludenda sunt plerumque rebus augendis vel inflammando iudice vel mitigando; omniaque cum superioribus orationis locis tum maxime extremo ad mentis iudicium quam maxime permovendas et ad utilitatem nostram vocandas conferenda sunt.*”

<sup>36</sup> I, 38. “*Y así, considerando esto, estoy por decir que en el alma me pesa de haber tomado este ejercicio de caballero andante en edad tan detestable como es esta en que ahora vivimos; porque, aunque a mí ningún peligro me pone miedo, todavía me pone recelo pensar si la pólvora y el estaño me han de quitar la ocasión de hacerme famoso y conocido por el valor de mi brazo y filos de mi espada, por todo lo descubierto de la tierra.*”

This conclusion fulfills Cicero's requirements for a successful *peroration*, inspiring emotion in the audience. The images elicit sadness and even melancholy, a theme which follows the knight throughout the book.<sup>37</sup> Along with this, we receive confirmation from the narrator that the audience "felt a fresh wave of pity"<sup>38</sup> from the speech. This is more due to his condition than perhaps the speech itself, but the emotion is brought about nonetheless. Thus, the knight's conclusion fits Cicero's pathetic *peroration* description.

### **Cervantes: A Man of Arms**

Read in isolation, the Arms and Letters speech presents a fairly convincing case for the superiority of Arms; the reader might be tempted to conclude that the speech conveys the genuine sentiment of the author. However, the entire novel drips with irony, leading the reader to question whether the Arms and Letters should be seen as persuasive or as additional evidence of Don Quijote's insanity: that is, the framing of the novel lends a new dimension to the discourse, perhaps undermining the idea that Cervantes truly believes Don Quijote's argument of the superiority of arms. When read from the point of view of Don Quijote's dinnermates at the inn, the speech itself is a coherent and impressive argument. But the audience of the *Quijote*, reading the words of Cervantes through the mediating voice of the narrator, must sift through the multiple levels of irony in the speech. First, Don Quijote contends that arms are of much more importance than

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<sup>37</sup> Don Quijote constantly refers to himself as the "Knight of the Sad Face" "*Caballero de la Triste Figura*", and at the end of his life, in II, 74, Sancho begs him "Don't die, your grace, my lord, but take my advice and live a long, long time, because the worst madness a man can fall into, in this life, is to let himself die, for no real reason, without anybody else killing him or any other hands but those of sadness and melancholy taking his life." "*¡Ay!– respondió Sancho, llorando–: no se muera vuestra merced, señor mío, sino tome mi consejo y viva muchos años, porque la mayor locura que puede hacer un hombre en esta vida es dejarse morir, sin más ni más, sin que nadie le mate, ni otras manos le acaben que las de la melancolía.*"

<sup>38</sup> I, 38. "*En los que escuchado le habían sobrevino nueva lástima.*"

letters, but he skillfully uses stylistic and formulaic rhetoric, a form of letters, to defend them. Next, the novel's audience reads a piece of fictional literature which contains a mad knight's oration on the subject, i.e. more "letters" doubly encasing the "arms" presented by Don Quijote as well as the rhetorical "letters" of his speech about Arms and Letters. This elevates the preeminence of letters in the context of the speech even more. The only way that anyone would be able to read the discourse is by reading a novel, a piece of literature. As Americo Castro points out, the great works that are written about heroic acts make letters perhaps more important, since the stories and acts accomplished by the sword are distributed through literature. Who would the warrior Achilles be if Homer hadn't existed?<sup>39</sup> Julián Marías agrees with this claim, pointing out that in the second volume of the novel, Don Quijote is widely known: "La fama de Don Quijote es debida a un novelista, porque su libro es una novela."<sup>40</sup> Each of these ideas seem to undermine the idea that the speech ought to be understood as a serious argument from Cervantes. The many cloaks of irony that cover the speech can cause the reader to throw the speech aside as nothing more than a pretty piece of rhetoric and nothing more than eloquent nonsense coming from the knight. However, zooming out one narratological frame further gives some evidence for understanding of the speech as the genuine thoughts of Cervantes, because the life of the master narrator and soldier, Cervantes, was itself was heavily influenced by both war and erudition, making the speech almost personal to him.

Cervantes was likely genuinely interested in the debate between arms and letters, because both were prominent aspects of his life. Before he wrote his masterpieces and

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<sup>39</sup> Américo Castro, *El Pensamiento de Cervantes* (Barcelona: Editorial Noguer, 1972), 218.

<sup>40</sup> Julián Marías, *Cervantes, clave española* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2003), 157.

became what one might call “a man of letters,” he was a soldier on the ship *Marquesa* in the massive naval battle of Lepanto, and was wounded multiple times but continued fighting, which resulted in the crippling of his left hand. According to María Antonia Garcés’s analysis, he was an especially courageous and dedicated soldier.<sup>41</sup> There can be no doubt that Don Quijote’s example in the Arms and Letters speech of the soldier at sea was inspired by Cervantes’s experience as a soldier on the *Marquesa*:

Consider... a situation where two galleys come smashing together, bow to bow, out in the middle of the vast ocean, jammed tightly together, and for the soldier standing out on the battering ram the world is limited to the boards on which his two feet are planted, while at the same time he sees himself facing precisely as many ministers of death as there are yawning cannons aiming at him from the enemy ship, barely a spear length away, and though realizing that his first careless step will take him on a visit deep into Neptune’s bosom, yet, in spite of all this, his heart feeling no fear, sustained by the sense of honor that urges him on, he sets himself up as a target for all that artillery and struggles to cross that narrow bridge and get onto the other ship.<sup>42</sup>

Marías describes this section of the speech as “casi autobiografica.”<sup>43</sup> The speech is lined with sentiments and opinions which seem to match the former soldier’s experiences. Don Quijote voices his distaste for firearms in battle, “which [allow] a vile, cowardly arm to pluck the life out of a brave knight.”<sup>44</sup> This is matched by the biography of Cervantes, who was wounded multiple times by firearm at Lepanto. Many of his shipmates on the

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<sup>41</sup> María Antonia Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers: A Captive’s Tale* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002), 26-28. Garcés analyses multiple primary sources of soldiers who fought alongside Cervantes and noted his dedication and valor, even though he was sick with fever during the battle.

<sup>42</sup> I, 38. “*Y si éste parece pequeño peligro, veamos si le iguala o hace ventaja el de embestirse dos galeras por las proas en mitad del mar espacioso, las cuales enclavijadas y trabadas, no le queda al soldado más espacio del que concede dos pies de tabla del espolón; y, con todo esto, viendo que tiene delante de sí tantos ministros de la muerte que le amenazan cuantos cañones de artillería se asestan de la parte contraria, que no distan de su cuerpo una lanza, y viendo que al primer descuido de los pies iría a visitar los profundos senos de Neptuno; y, con todo esto, con intrépido corazón, llevado de la honra que le incita, se pone a ser blanco de tanta arcabucería, y procura pasar por tan estrecho paso al bajel contrario.*”

<sup>43</sup> Julián Marías, *Cervantes, clave española* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2003), 156.

<sup>44</sup> I, 38. “*con la cual dio causa que un infame y cobarde brazo quite la vida a un valeroso caballero.*”

*Marquesa* were killed, and even more wounded. Certainly the loss of those men affected him greatly, instilling in him a real connection with the argument which his knight makes, admiring the bravery of soldiers and spurning the cowardice of cannons, which reduce the utility of valor on the battlefield.

Furthermore, the following chapter containing the story of the captive is certainly influenced by his capture by the Moors following his military service. It must be noted that the Arms and Letters speech serves as a prelude to the Captive's tale. Immediately after Don Quijote finishes his speech and dinner comes to a close, Don Fernando asks the Captive to tell his story, and he obliges, but prefaces the story with the warning that it is not pleasing, since it is a tale of captivity and woe. And as much as parts of the Arms and Letters speech are biographical, as Marías puts it, the Captive's story parallels Cervantes's own even more. His tale begins with his enrollment in the Venetian armada, led by Don Juan of Austria, and continues to his efforts at Lepanto, subsequent promotion, and then capture by Turkish pirates and imprisonment in Algiers, where he was eventually ransomed. The previous sentence could have either Cervantes or the Captive as the subject, and still be accurate. The resemblance does stop there, since the Captive escaped with the monetary assistance Zoraida, a pretty Turkish girl whom he later marries. Cervantes, on the other hand, was freed by a group of Mercedarians, but before this he had attempted multiple escapes, which is even mentioned directly by the Captive as that "Spanish soldier named Saavedra" who had "always been trying to win his freedom."<sup>45</sup> But, so much of the what the Captive says displays similar sentiments to

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<sup>45</sup> I, 40. "Sólo libró bien con él un soldado español, llamado tal de Saavedra, el cual, con haber hecho cosas que quedarán en la memoria de aquellas gentes por muchos años, y todas por alcanzar libertad, jamás le dio palo, ni se lo mandó dar, ni le dijo mala palabra."

what we can expect Cervantes to feel after his experiences as a soldier and a captive. First, the Captive's appraisal of the "dichoso" day of Lepanto is that it was a great success, even though Ottoman naval power was still formidable after the battle.<sup>46</sup> This matches the pride Cervantes displayed for the fighting in Lepanto after the battle and for the glory he felt because of the wounded hand he received at the battle: "él la tiene por hermosa, por haberla cobrado en la más memorable y alta ocasión que vieron los pasados siglos."<sup>47</sup> This emphasis on the glory of battle weighed against the damages that the soldier receives is the principal argument made in Don Quijote's speech. The parallel is continued with how the Captive was treated and ransomed by his captors. The captive says that he was locked up in a *baño*, since his captors believed he was a nobleman who would be ransomed, just as Cervantes was.<sup>48</sup> The mind of a soldier and captive runs deep in both the Arms and Letters speech and the tale immediately following it.

Cervantes's connection with arms gives the reader more reason to take Don Quijote's argument as a valid argument outside of the context of the novel. However, one fact may seem to supersede this idea: after his service and capture, Cervantes eventually turned to writing, or letters. While he was later a writer, this need not necessarily grant writing precedence over arms. There are many possible explanations for this. First, Cervantes could have simply grown too old, and been too affected by his wounds, to continue the life of a soldier. Second, a distinction needs to be made between the writing

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<sup>46</sup> See Fernand Braudel, *En Torno del Mediterraneo* (Spain: Ediciones Paidós, 1997). While the victory was decisive and surprising, it did not really make an impact on Turkish naval supremacy. However, the psychological victory over the Goliath Turkish navy, damaged its perceived invincibility.

<sup>47</sup> Prologue to the *Novelas Ejemplares*.

<sup>48</sup> I, 40. Further evidence of Cervantes' autobiographical portrayals can be found in *El Trato de Argel [Life in Algiers]*, which is another play deeply based on Cervantes' experience in Algiers. See again Garces' work for more comparisons between Cervantes' time in captivity and his writings.

of Cervantes and what constitutes “letters” in the speech. If we look at Cervantes’s discussion with his friend in the prologue to volume I, we can see the difference between the two. Cervantes’s friend instructs him to throw in multiple haphazard references to random scholars works and classical sources, so that he may seem learned. The reality is, that Cervantes, as evidenced by his well-crafted novel, was learned. By including this discussion with his friend, Cervantes shows his distaste for the scholarship of his age. These are the “letters” which he ranks below arms.

### **Sanity in the Speech**

While the narrator explicitly states that Don Quijote’s audience at the inn is in awe of his eloquence and believes him to be sane, the reader can question whether he really has stepped out of his insanity to deliver this speech. In short, I conclude that he does not completely free himself of his madness until the final chapter of the book. Evidence for this is found in the context of the speech, and Don Quijote’s ideological motives and goals concerning his adoption of knight-errantry. First, the speech is preceded and followed by intercalated stories that do not directly include Don Quijote. The intercalated story of *El curioso impertinente* is punctuated and interrupted by Don Quijote’s brawl with the wineskins, which he insists were enemies changed into wineskins due to the magic of the place. After his speech, the Captive gives his story, during which Don Quijote is quiet, and he then eloquently welcomes the unwitting Judge (the Captive’s younger brother) to the inn, calling it a castle and speaking in his customary eloquence, referring back to his Arms and Letters speech:

Your grace can enter this castle, and rest yourself here, in perfect confidence, for though it is cramped and poorly fitted out, there is nowhere in the world so

cramped and uncomfortable that it cannot find room for arms and learning, especially when both arms and learning enjoy loveliness as their guide and leader, as we see your grace's learning does... So enter this paradise, your grace, for here you will find suns and stars to glow alongside the firmament you bring with you; here, I say, you will find arms at their very height of perfection, and beauty at its absolute rarest.<sup>49</sup>

This sudden outburst after the Captive's tale demonstrates the disparity between the eloquence and brilliance of the Arms and Letters speech and Don Quijote's madness. He turns the topic, which he treated with such detail in the speech, into wordy nonsense immediately after the Captive's tale. After all have retired, Don Quijote also offers his hand to the innkeeper's daughter (the "princess" of the "castle"), who together with Maritornes, appeals to his chivalry, asks for his hand, and strings him up by one hand outside the barn and leaves him suffering (another oblique allusion to Cervantes's crippling injury at Lepanto). All of Don Quijote's actions, and of course his medieval manner of speaking, still demonstrate the madness surrounding his Arms and Letters speech. And in fact, his mode of speech is perhaps what makes his argument so eloquent. However, this same "eloquence" makes people ridicule him in most cases, but when applied to a forensic style speech, it accentuates his points, making the speech stylistically persuasive. His audience at the inn does not consider him sane because he has emerged from it, but because in the scope of oratory, his condition works to his advantage. The speech accentuates the more laudable aspects of his madness while

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<sup>49</sup> I, 42. "*Seguramente puede vuestra merced entrar y espaciarse en este Castillo, que, aunque es estrecho y mal acomodado, no hay estrechez ni incomodidad en el mundo que no dé lugar a las armas y a las letras, y más si las armas y letras traen por quía y adalid a la fermosura, como la traen las letras de vuestra merced en esta fermosa doncella, a quien deben no sólo abrirse y manifestarse los castillos, sino apartarse los riscos, y devidirse y abajarse las montañas, para dalle acogida. Entre vuestra merced, digo, en este paraíso, que aquí hallará estrellas y soles que acompañen el cielo que vuestra merced trae consigo; aquí hallará las armas en su punto y la hermosura en su extremo.*"

allowing the others to briefly subside, giving the impression that he has become sane, when really his illness still lingers.

Along with the context of the speech demonstrating the knight's madness, Don Quijote's entire ideological makeup does not change at any point during the speech. In the opening of the novel, Don Quijote chooses to embark on his chivalric quest not only for his own honor, but also "for his duty to the nation,"<sup>50</sup> and he did not delay in leaving because of "how badly the world might suffer if he delayed."<sup>51</sup> These ideas demonstrate a benevolence, and large ideals, in Don Quijote's condition. His hope is to create a better world through acts of daring and justice. According to Maravall, he seems to be attempting to restore the Golden Age which he praises in Chapter 11. Or, rather than restoring it, preventing the world from modernizing and moving even farther away from the ideals of a simple, premodern era.<sup>52</sup> In the Golden Age speech, the knight says that the goatherds are remnants of the best age, when life was simple and pastoral, and that knight's errant are defenders of that age in a modernizing world that cares about matters such as clothes and wealth. In this, we see the utopian vision of Don Quijote. As the world moves further from the ideal age, his Golden Age speech, and in fact his entire knighthood, has an aim of halting modernization and its negative effects on society.

While this is strongly evidenced in Don Quijote's Golden Age and Arms and Letters speeches, which are both related to the defense of knight-errantry, most of his adventures include some sort of speech to convince his audience that there really are

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<sup>50</sup> I, 1. "*así para el aumento de su honra como para el servicio de su república.*"

<sup>51</sup> I, 2. "*Hechas, pues, estas prevenciones, no quiso aguardar más tiempo a poner en efeto su pensamiento, apretándole a ello la falta que él pensaba que hacía en el mundo su tardanza.*"

<sup>52</sup> José Antonio Maravall, *Utopia and Counterutopia in the Quixote*, trans. Robert W. Felkel (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 158-159.

fantastical dangers and that he is in fact a gallant knight. This constant employment of his ideology through rhetoric is examined by Tarvin:

“Quixote's rhetoric has as its goal the persuasion of others to accept his vision of reality and his code of ethics that goes along with that vision, overcoming both the physical constraints of his environment and the psychological constraints of an audience skeptical of his interpretations. Quixote thus represents, in an exaggerated form at least, any rhetor who feels that the primary struggle is to open the eyes of others to a reality, a threat, and a possibility that they heretofore could not see, and to inspire them to accept a mission that to the uninitiated might seem insane”<sup>53</sup>

We see this view evidenced almost any time that the knight speaks; Don Quijote's constant struggle is not so much with false giants and imaginary wizards. Rather, his fight is a rhetorical one against the beliefs of those around him. He constantly attempts to rationalize his mistaken feats to his squire Sancho, explaining for example that wizardry had turned giants into windmills. He attempts in vain to convince his friends within the inn that two wineskins were in fact giants, but he has no success in accomplishing this task since they pretend to believe him as a joke. As Tarvin explains, Don Quijote's true enemies are the perceptions of others, and his rhetoric is aimed at conquering them.

The Arms and Letters speech then is not a moment of sanity for the knight, contrary to what the guests at the inn may believe. Rather, it is a speech which displays Don Quijote's distorted, utopic ideology in its best light, making him seem sane when in fact he is just as caught up in his knight errantry as before and after. There are multiple factors contributing to the façade of sanity in the speech. Aside from his suit of armor, one of Don Quijote's most noticeable symptom of madness is his manner of speech.

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<sup>53</sup> David Tarvin. “The Rhetorical Strategies of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza,” *LSU Doctoral Dissertations* (2013), 111.

When he meets people, the way he speaks often puts them off more than what he is wearing.<sup>54</sup> He speaks in a medieval dialect, using “fabla” and haughty, elegant speech. This form of speech is extremely out of place in 16<sup>th</sup> century Spain, considered even archaic. But, his grand manner of speech, unusual in most of his daily interactions, seems perfectly suited for oratory. The Arms and Letters speech is stylistically sound because of it. Don Quijote has a non-imposing, but authoritative ethos in the speech. One reason he assumes this respectable persona during the speech is that he argues impersonally about arms, using as examples normal soldiers rather than himself, or other knights errant. He shows great restraint in this, as he tends towards self-glorification, but allows his eloquence to shine, since he is making an argument about actual ideas rather than themes pertaining directly to his madness, such as whether giants turned into windmills or whether Sancho understands the rules of knight-errantry. For the audience at the inn, this authoritative ethos seems to replace the mad knight with nothing more than an eloquent speaker for a moment. However, as discussed above, this ethos is conjured with the help of the eloquence that accompanies Don Quijote’s madness, making it likely that the knight is still indeed mad at the time of the speech.

### **Conclusion:**

This analysis of how Don Quijote’s speech can neatly fit into the constituent sections of a forensic speech perhaps offers an answer as to why this speech, and none of the others throughout the book, allow him to become, or at least to be seen as sane, and

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<sup>54</sup> For example, the judge in I, 42 is astonished by his manner of speech: “Don Quixote’s eloquence astonished the judge, who stared fixedly at our knight, no less struck by his appearance than by his words” *“Admirado quedó el oidor del razonamiento de don Quijote, a quien se puso a mirar muy de propósito, y no menos le admiraba su talle que sus palabras.”*

for his audience to experience “a fresh wave of pity, seeing a man who seemed so wonderfully sound in the head, and who spoke so eloquently of every subject he raised, so hopelessly lost when it came to the pitch-black darkness of his unfortunate knight errantry.”<sup>55</sup> The conclusion that Don Quijote is mad during the speech needs to be tempered with an acknowledgement of the degree of his madness. While Don Quijote is indeed out of his mind, there is a certain sanity to many of his actions and reasonings. Anthony Close, in his study of Don Quijote’s lucidity within his sophistry, relates back to Cervantes’ fusion of wisdom and sophistry within the character of the knight himself.<sup>56</sup> One thing that makes Don Quijote’s madness so compelling, and even realistic, is that he constantly teeters on a line between lucidity and madness. He certainly has moments where reality slips from his grasp, but many of his ideas for how the world could improve from the existence of knights-errant are entirely sound. Delusional people are rarely detached completely from reality. Thus, the Arms and Letters speech shines through to his audience as if it were a moment of sanity when it fits perfectly well within Don Quijote’s distorted worldview.

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<sup>55</sup> I, 38. “*le habían sobrevino nueva lástima de ver que hombre que, al parecer, tenía buen entendimiento y buen discurso en todas las cosas que trataba, le hubiese perdido tan rematadamente, en tratándole de su negra y pizmienta caballería.*”

<sup>56</sup> Anthony Close, “Don Quixote’s sophistry and wisdom,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 55, no. 2 (1978): 103-114.

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