

‘Yo sé quién soy’: How don Quijote Does Things with Words (Part I, chaps. 1-5)

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THE MANY COMPLEX PROBLEMS surrounding the related concepts of identity and subjectivity continue to be the focus of much critical thought and have been very close to the center of debate in Spanish Golden-Age studies for more than thirty years. One fine example of this concern is George Mariscal's *Contradictory Subjects: Quevedo, Cervantes, and Seventeenth-Century Spanish Culture* (1991). This insightful study of the discursive construction of subjectivity provides the following notion that will serve as a fundamental assumption throughout this essay:

...the subject is constituted by multiple and often contradictory subject positions and thus is always only a provisionally fixed entity located at various sites within the general relations of production, systems of signification, and relations of power.... early modern culture produced subjects through a wide range of discourses and practices ... to view any of these as autonomous and originary is to efface the ways in which the construct of the individual was emerging from competition between discourses and was being constituted within writing itself. (5)

Within speaking, as well, I would add. As we all know, mod-

ern linguistics points out the dialectical construction of subjectivity as something inherent to language. In his *Problems in General Linguistics*, for example, Emile Benveniste posits subjectivity, not as pre-existent to discourse nor as its origin, but rather as a function of it: “I is the individual who utters the present instance of discourse containing the linguistic instance I” (218). There is, of course, an implicit dialectic to this concept, and not only in the most obvious way; just as the “I” cannot be conceived outside of a dialogical situation—a context that necessarily includes a potential other, a “you”—so does it contain a tension between the grammatical subject of a sentence and the discoursing subject that produces it: both uttered and utterer. The subject emerges as invariably dialogical: producer and produced, referrer and referred, subject and object, potential “I” and potential “you,” contingent upon a variety of factors. Jürgen Habermas echoes this dialogical and “contradictory” aspect of subjectivity within his general theory of communicative competence:

The system of personal pronouns enables every participant to assume incompatible roles simultaneously, namely that of the I and that of the You. Every being who says “I” to himself asserts himself towards the Other as absolutely different. And yet at the same time he recognizes himself in the latter as another I, and is conscious of the reciprocity of this relationship; every being is potentially his own Other. (370)

This formulation finds harmony, not only with Mariscal’s ‘contradictory’ subjects and with structuralist and post-structuralist notions of identity, which are, after all, largely based on linguistics (two obvious examples are Derrida’s and Lacan’s), but also with earlier conceptualizations in analytic philosophy, such as speech act theory.

If J.L. Austin’s theory of speech acts has taught us anything at all, it is that to say something is always also to do something: the theory is, in effect, not simply one of language, but also one of agency and communicative pragmatics. Beginning with *How to Do Things with Words*, first published in 1962, the theory has exercised

enormous influence over a variety of contemporary modes of criticism and philosophy. I would like to begin by quickly reviewing one or two essential concepts from Auston's text and then briefly addressing some of the (Derridean) critiques they inspired. Despite the fact that this debate is now over thirty years old, its parameters are still vital to the concept of subjectivity which I am here attempting to elaborate. The second part of this essay aims to suggest how a speech-act lexicon might be useful in generating a critical approach to subjectivity in *Don Quijote*.

Auston begins his theory by dismissing the so-called "descriptive" fallacy, according to which language is essentially a symbolic system used to express, describe or refer to concepts and states of reality. He dismantles this long-held assumption by establishing an opposition, at least primarily, between 'constative' and 'performative' utterances. Constatives purport to declare or describe a pre-existing state of reality. Performatives, on the other hand, do not describe, but rather, enact or effect realities. (A classic example would be a declaration of war: such a declaration, whether in oral or written form, does not describe a state of war, but actually brings it into being.) Obviously, performative utterances depend upon certain contextual factors already being in place, especially social institutions and conventions; otherwise, they will be hollow or void. Constatives and performatives might adequately be distinguished by considering their relationship to the world-at-large: in the case of constatives, words normally "fit" the world, while in the case of performatives, the world is "changed" by words.

Near the end of *How to Do Things with Words*, Auston collapses his initial opposition between these two types of utterance by claiming that constatives are merely a special variety of performative: all utterances function to enact or "perform" the communal reality that gives them their substance. Social conventions enable utterance but, conversely, communal utterance and agreement constitute social conventions. Despite Auston's final dismantling of his own preliminary opposition, I shall retain the distinction for my own purposes throughout this essay.

Auſton winds up by proposing a general theory of illocutionary forces. Illocution is the true center of his theory and refers to the ſocial and conventional forces inhering in a given utterance or ſpeech act. *How to Do Things with Words* ends with a tentative classification of ſuch acts: veridictives (the giving of a verdict, an eſtimate or an appraisal), exercitives (appointing, voting, ordering, advising), commissives (promising or undertaking), and others. For my purposes here, I ſhall invoke Wittgenſtein’s notion of the “language game” as a rough equivalent to what Auſton calls illocution, although I’ll also use this term ſomewhat figuratively.¹

One thing that makes Cervantes’ maſterpiece a potential object for this type of ſtudy, eſpecially in relation to the queſtion of ſubjectivity, is that it obſeſſively exemplifies and, to a great extent, parodies the problematic ſtatus of literary and other forms of diſcourſe. Another is that it has ſuch a central place, both in the canon of world literature and in contemporary thinking, about early modern concepts of ſubject formation. Finally, and perhaps moſt importantly, it is one of a number of canonical Spanish Golden-Age texts, ſuch as *La Celeſtina* and *El burlador de Sevilla*, that ſeem to be inexorably ſelf-conſcious about their own preſentation of illocutionary acts.² In the caſe of *Don Quijote*, there are three ‘levels’ of illocution that are potential objects of a ſpeech-act analysis; theſe levels are, however, by no means eaſily ſeparable: what complicates and confuſes their relation is preciſely what makes Cervantes’ novel into the elaborate and complex epiſtemological game that it is. There is, firſt off, what is regarded as Cervantes’ original illocution (the complete novel *Don Quijote*). This act is complicated by the fact that it is actually com-

1 Jean-Francois Lyotard makes explicit this aſſociation between illocution and ‘language games’: “Wittgenſtein ... calls the various types of utterances ... *language games*. What he means by this term is that each of the of the various categories of utterance can be defined in terms of rules ſpecifying their properties and the uſes to which they can be put—in exactly the ſame way as the game of chess is defined by a ſet of rules determining the properties of each of the pieces, in other words, the proper way to move them” (10).

2 Inés Azar perceptively analyzes ſpeech acts in *La Celeſtina* (“Self, Responsibility, Diſcourſe”).

prised of two, one occurring in 1605 (Part I) and one in 1615 (Part II). Then there are the illocutions produced by characters within the novel itself: don Quijote, Sancho Panza and anyone with whom they happen to have contact. Finally, and perhaps most difficult to isolate, are those illocutions offered by all the potential and partially-realized narrators, such as Cide Hamete Benengeli, the anonymous Moorish translator, etc., etc. This last, mediate, level has been a primary problem for critics attempting to justify use of speech act theory as an approach to the novel, because, by virtue of all the above-mentioned narrative filters, it is difficult, if not impossible, to assign with absolute certainty any discourse to any given speaker: as readers, all we really have in *Don Quijote* is a labyrinthine regress of narrative referentiality: "...someone said that someone said that someone said..." which brings into obvious question the text's ostensible reliability and authority. The narrators in *Don Quijote* are very much like that liminal figure at the back of Velázquez' painting "Las Meninas": as Michel Foucault has pointed out in his well-known analysis, this figure is neither "here" nor "there," appearing to enter and leave at the same time (11). It is a very different situation with drama, when, as members of an audience at a live theatrical performance or as readers of a dramatic text, we have direct access to discourse spoken by individual characters. This is one reason there has been much more speech-act criticism devoted to drama, as opposed to the novel. Another reason is that the performance aspect—so explicitly related to the notion of the performative—makes drama an almost natural object of study for this type of approach. A speech-act reading of any novel must therefore make a certain leap of faith regarding direct discourse by individual characters: the only thing that one can depend upon with any real degree of certainty is the first level mentioned above—Cervantes' original enunciations—and these, too, are mediated by centuries of variant editions and emendations.

Another broader problem engaging speech act theory is the illocutionary status of literature *per se*, that is, "imaginative" literature. The use of speech act theory to elicit questions about literature appears to go very much against Auston's own stated intentions, for

just as Plato banished the poets from his Republic, Auston appears to banish literary discourse from the land of performatives: “A performative utterance will be in a peculiar way hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy.... Language in such circumstances is in special ways used not seriously, but in ways parasitic upon its normal use” (22). This exclusion is the basis for one of the main critiques aimed at Auston’s theory by Jacques Derrida, who claimed in his well-known essay “Signature Event Context” that the use of the term “parasitic” to describe literary texts, in opposition to so-called “normal” use of language, aligns Auston with a long-standing metaphysical tradition that depends upon just such structures of hierarchical opposition. By this reading, Austin apparently considers literary texts to be secondary—supplemental—to “ordinary” usage and, therefore, in a standard deconstructive gesture, Derrida reverses the terms of this opposition to say that the “parasitic” supplement—literature—is actually primary, not supplementary: so-called “literary” effects are endemic to all language (190-91).

This reading, however, is not wholly consistent with Auston’s actual wording. It is ironic how much debate this passage has inspired, for, as always, Auston’s formulations depend upon a thoroughly social and contextual matrix. The passage refers to an actor on a stage. If, for example, an actor is playing the role of Hamlet, his illocutions as Hamlet would clearly be “hollow or void” with respect to the pragmatic world offstage, but they would clearly not be insofar as he “is” Hamlet and interacting with other characters that together form part of the dramatic world of Shakespeare’s text. His utterances as Hamlet have illocutionary force in that world, just as they do when he is interacting verbally with others in the so-called “real” world.³³

Another of Derrida’s critiques relates to Auston’s ostensible de-

3 The performative status of fiction is, of course, highly problematic: fictional works are, indeed, performative insofar as their discourse functions to “enact” or “produce” a world. However, as previously noted, the illocutionary force of literary texts—if, indeed, one may speak of such a thing—is short-circuited (“hollow or void”) with respect to extra-textual reality. (Searle 78-79)

pendence on oral utterances as examples of so-called “normal” usage, leading to accusations of phonocentrism, that is, of presuming the primacy of oral over written communication. As in the other case, Derrida inverts the terms of this opposition by claiming that writing is primary to oral communication (and not the other way around), and that all discourse is governed by an inherent “iterability” or “graphematics” (179–81). This is another (perhaps willful) misreading, because there is, in fact, nothing in Auston’s text indicating any such preference: both written and oral utterances exercise illocutionary force, though it may function in different ways.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly for my purposes, Derrida accuses Auston of appealing to an implied ethical dimension, embodied in the following well-known phrase: “Accuracy and morality alike are on the side of the plain saying that our word is our bond” (10). This ethics again appears to imply a ‘metaphysics of presence’ that presumes unified subjectivity, intentionality and accountability; as Derrida has it: “One of those essential elements remains, classically, consciousness, the conscious presence of the intention of the speaking subject in the totality of his speech act” (187). Derrida contests this implied ethics by questioning the viability of the very concept of subjectivity: if there is no such thing as a stable, self-consistent and unified subject, how can accountability or ethics, as such, exist? It is true that some versions of speech act theory do depend on the notion of transcendent, unified subjectivity in their formulations of discursive acts. Perhaps the most important aspect of “ordinary language” philosophy, however, is its insistence on the dialogical context—the “total speech situation” (52) of every utterance and the fact that this context is actually an essential aspect of the speaking subject.

Auston’s theory derives much of its force from the fact that, socially speaking, such things as intention and even subjectivity itself are effects inhering in the act of illocution, rather than causes of it. Thus, Stanley Fish in his well-known speech-act analysis of Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus* tells us (quite correctly) that, for speech act theory,

...intention is a matter of what one takes responsibility for by performing certain conventional (speech) acts. The question of what is going on inside, the question of the “inward performance” is simply bypassed; speech act theory does not rule on it. This means that intentions are available to anyone who invokes the proper (publicly known and agreed upon) procedures, and it also means that anyone who invokes those procedures (knowing that they will be recognized as such) takes responsibility for having that intention. (203-04)

A useful analogy might be made here with the “intentionalist fallacy”: texts, literary or otherwise, are no more determined in their significance or illocutionary force by authorial intention than are individual oral utterances, which are likewise enabled by formalized convention. Nor does Austin’s theory posit subjectivity as static, but rather as the constantly evolving intersection of a wide variety of “postures” and situations. As Mary Louise Pratt points out in “The Ideology of Speech-Act Theory”:

...people always speak from and in a socially constituted position, a position that is, moreover, constantly shifting, and defined in a speech situation by the intersection of many forces. On this view, speaking ‘for oneself’, ‘from the heart’ names only one position among the many from which a person might speak in the course of her everyday life. At other points, that person will be speaking, for instance, as a member of some collective, or as a rank in a hierarchy, and so forth the context and the subject continually mutually determine each other. (9)

Judith Butler invokes a similarly dynamic and discursive notion of subjectivity: “Untethering the speech act from the sovereign subject finds an alternative notion of agency and, ultimately, of responsibility, one that more fully acknowledges the way in which the subject is constituted in language ...” (15-16). These two last quotes echo my opening quotation from Mariscal’s *Contradictory Subjects*.

Rather than positing a unified subject that “stands behind” and produces discrete speech acts, Auston’s theory (implicitly) posits a subject that is itself created in the very act of producing utterances—more “process” than “product.”

Essential questions asked by speech act theory are: who is doing the talking?, to whom? and, most importantly, under what conditions? In short, what is the dialogical situation that enables words to do things? The speaker’s position vis-a-vis his or her audience, as defined by a variety of factors—most of them conventional—determines both significance and force in Auston’s universe of performatives, and that positionality is both determined and determining in an unceasing dialectic. Thanks to Auston, and despite his (and our) counting on the fact that “words are our bonds,” we no longer take it for granted that utterances simply describe or express or even “mean what they say.” While locution (utterance in and of itself) has been the focus of a number of modern theories of language, including those of Chomsky, Benveniste, Lacan and Derrida, what distinguishes Auston’s is its insistent focus on illocution, invariably situating language and subjectivity in a fully pragmatic, socially constructed, dialogical context.

I offer the following simple, if trivial, example to illustrate a radical change in illocutionary force, based on context and not on content: a pronouncement declaring the “death of the author” means something very different coming from Roland Barthes in one context than it does when issued by the Ayatollah Khomeini in another. Now, the “death of the author” is something that is important to invoke here, because any consideration of a text’s illocutionary force must take into account, at least in the case of *Don Quijote*, the literal death of the author, that is, the fact that Cervantes’ original “enunciation(s)” occurred in a context radically different from our own. A complex web of factors—economic, historical, cultural, religious (all social and literary conventions)—constituted Cervantes’ reality, and our awareness of them invariably alters our understanding of his novel.

Given the “death” of the author, it is significant that one of

Auston's first examples of the performative is a clause from a last will and testament: "I give and bequeath my watch to my brother" (5). As in the case with Cervantes, the death of the author of this illocution is not at all metaphorical, but rather quite literal and functional. As Sandy Petrey puts it: "...both a will and a text exercise conventional power through conventional means, both interact with readers in the absence of an author, neither depends on physical presence for its words to perform" (79). Just as our reading of *Don Quijote* or any other "classic" begins with a consciousness of the death of its author, it likewise ends, in the case of the final chapter of Part II of Cervantes' novel, with our awareness of the death of its protagonist, whose final illocutionary act is the oral declaration of his own Last Will and Testament. This testament amounts to a final renunciation of his identity as don Quijote and an explicit recognition of his place, as Alonso Quijano el Bueno [the Good], in the world of death, laws, and material properties. In perhaps the strongest (and saddest) irony of Cervantes' novel, the price of regaining that life is, quite literally, death.⁴⁴ So it is that questions about who is doing the talking, to whom and under what conditions, are all represented in the text as questions of life and death, and most particularly in relation to the concepts of identity and subjectivity.

My remaining comments aim to provide at least a preliminary sketch of some of the more important speech acts that occur at the beginning of *Don Quijote*, including don Quijote's first sally—the first five chapters of Part I—and attempt to relate them to the construction of subjectivity.

Illocutionary forces play an important role, not only in framing our critical uptake of the text, but also in framing the universe it represents, because what happens at the end of Cervantes' novel stands in rigorous symmetry to what occurs at its beginning (Schmidt 102). Essentially what occurs in the first chapter of Part I is that, after the well-known description of an unnamed country gentleman and of his general lifestyle and habits, this same gentleman sets about

4 Rachel Schmidt sheds light on the illocutionary status of don Quijote's final act of renunciation in her excellent essay "Performance and Hermeneutics."

establishing a new identity for himself, based entirely upon his obsessive reading of chivalric novels. The principal way he does this is to reconstruct reality, first off, by reshaping some ancient armor and then, most importantly, by naming or, rather, by re-naming things: first his horse, then himself and finally his lady. These acts of re-naming are performative insofar as they enact a new reality, but are clearly problematic from a speech-act standpoint. As Mary Malcolm Gaylord tells us: "In J.L. Auston's terms, Don Quixote's chronic failure to achieve the perlocutionary effects he seeks in his attempts to *do things with words* makes him an emblematic author of infelicitous speech acts" (77).

The fact is, the country gentleman's renaming himself amounts to a self-actualization, at least in textual terms, because the narrator has already made it clear, near the beginning of the chapter, that the protagonist has no (fixed) name until he gives one to himself. Under normal circumstances, the act of naming should ideally conform to the first of Auston's rules for the "happiness" of performative utterances: "There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the utterance of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances" (14). The gentleman's self-naming clearly violates nearly every word of this rule. Names, like epitaphs, are normally conferred by the authority of parents, relatives, or—in some cases—by society itself, but invariably by someone other than the one actually named. As Charles Taylor points out in his masterful *Sources of the Self*:

The close connection between identity and interlocution emerges in the place of names in human life. My name is what I am "called." A human being has to have a name, because he or she has to be called, i.e., addressed. Being called into conversation is a precondition of developing a human identity, and so my name is (usually) given by my earliest interlocutors. (575, n.13)

Judith Butler's explanation of the act of naming also has clear ramifications for this problematic scene at the beginning of *Don*

Quijote:

Consider for a moment the more general conditions of naming. First, a name is offered, given, imposed by someone or by some set of someones, and it is attributed to someone else. It requires an intersubjective context.... The scene of naming appears first as a unilateral action: there are those who address their speech to others, who borrow, amalgamate, and coin a name, deriving it from available linguistic convention, and establish that derivation as *proper* in the act of naming. And yet, the one who names, who works within language to find a name for another, is presumed to already be named, positioned within language as one who is already subject to that founding or inaugurating address. This suggests that such a subject in language is both addressed and addressing, and that the very possibility of naming another requires that one first be named. The subject of speech who is named becomes, potentially, one who might well name another in time. (29)

The unnamed country gentleman appears to exercise his act of naming outside of the conventional intersubjective parameters established by Butler (and priorly by Auston), and he is undoubtedly “both addressed and addressing”—in this sense, he is an ‘unnamed’ namer (of himself): intrasubjective rather than intersubjective.

In the vaunted books of knighthood, the protagonist will often take on a new name as the result of a particular adventure—as don Quijote himself does at several points⁵⁵—but this confers a certain “constative” force upon the name because it then serves to point or refer to that given adventure. By what authority or social convention, then, does the gentleman perform this change upon (and for) himself? Only that which derives from his own self—a self that, in

5 “After having received the proper name, one is subject to being named again. In this sense, the vulnerability to being named constitutes a constant condition of the speaking subject. And what if one were to compile all the names that one has ever been called? Would they not present a quandary for identity? Would some of them cancel the effect of others? Would one find oneself fundamentally dependent upon a competing array of names to derive a sense of oneself? Would one find oneself alienated in language, finding oneself, as it were, in the names addressed from elsewhere?” (Butler 30)

turn, derives from the textual authority of his books of knighthood: his only prior adventure is one of reading. There is certainly no “conventional procedure” here and certainly no sense of any “other” that might serve to ratify this metamorphosis, either intersubjectively or conventionally. The only “other” that might be posited is, indeed, those same books of knighthood. In that magical moment, who is doing the talking, and to whom?

Part of the problem is manifested by a term used near the end of the chapter to describe the gentleman’s transformation:

Limpias, pues, sus armas, hecho del morrión celada, puesto nombre a su rocín y *confirmándose* a sí mismo, se dio a entender que no le faltaba otra cosa sino buscar una dama de quien enamorarse; porque el caballero andante sin amores era árbol sin hojas y sin fruto y cuerpo sin alma. (77, my emphasis)

[Now that his armor was clean, his helmet made into a complete headpiece, a name found for his horse, and he confirmed in his new title, it struck him that there was only one more thing to do: to find a lady to be enamoured of. For a knight errant without a lady is like a tree without leaves or fruit and a body without a soul.] (Cervantes 1950; all translations are from this edition.)

The term *confirmar* [to confirm] alludes, of course, to one of the Holy Sacraments from the Roman Catholic liturgy, and I press the point here because “confirming” essentially has the illocutionary force of constating a pre-existing reality. This is its force in Roman Catholic doctrine, being the second of the Sacraments: to uphold and to ratify something that has previously occurred. The first Sacrament, not mentioned in the text, is baptism, which is, in fact, what has occurred here (in the sense of “christening” or “naming”), even though the term used is “confirmation.” By apparently fusing the two acts into one, however, this first act by the novel’s protagonist anticipates Auston’s own move at the end of *How to Do Things with Words*, when he deconstructs his original opposition between

the two ostensibly separate forms of utterance. It likewise anticipates the dialectical tension that, to my way of thinking, constitutes and determines much of Cervantes' novel: that between constative and performative utterance. Part of don Quijote's problem, we remember, is an essential confusing of purportedly constative enunciations and performative ones: what the protagonist does here with words is create a curious language game by which he may "describe" himself at the same time that he "enacts" himself.

The gentleman calls his horse Rocinante because this name is: "alto, sonoro, y significativo de lo que había sido cuando fue rocín, antes de lo que ahora era, que era antes y primero de todos los rocines del mundo" (76) [grand and sonorous, and expressing the common horse he had been before arriving in his present state: the first and foremost of all hacks in the world]. With the name Dulcinea, the implication of *dulce* (sweet), both to the gentleman himself and to the reader, could not be more obvious. The only name that appears arbitrary and relatively "unmotivated," at least from a purely descriptive standpoint, is "don Quijote." It is, of course, derived from the gentleman's real name, Quijano, a name not fully revealed until the final chapter of Part II; but this is simply another way of saying that the name is not constative of any reality, but is rather a pointer to another, prior and (at this point) unknown name. The gentleman's self-naming in this respect anticipates the principal way he will reshape reality: caught in a curious twilight zone between constativity and performativity, between Alonso Quijano and "don Quijote," his own discourse can ultimately do nothing but recreate itself in its own image. Language imitating language, in this case, chivalric discourse. Michel Foucault has remarked on this as being one of the most important aspects of Cervantes' representation of the quixotic subject, noting of the protagonist that: "His whole being is nothing but language, text, printed pages, stories that have already been written down" (46).

This same confusion between constative and performative utterance recurs in chapter 2; don Quijote here reveals his new name to someone else for the first time, while singing a ballad to two prosti-

tutes (that he, of course, perceives as fine ladies), but then immediately regrets having done so: "...puesto que no quisiera descubrirme fasta que las fazañas fechas en vuestro servicio y pro me descubrieran, la fuerza de acomodar al propósito presente este romance viejo de Lanzarote ha sido causa que sepáis mi nombre antes de toda sazón" (86). [Although I did not wish to reveal myself till deeds done in your service and for your benefit do so for me, the need to adapt this old ballad of Lancelot to the present occasion has betrayed my name to you before the due season]. Leaving aside his antiquated language, used in imitation of chivalric discourse, don Quijote admits that, according to that same chivalric archetype, names should be motivated by and constate a given reality: a name should, by all rights, reflect heroic deeds already accomplished. But don Quijote has no deeds to his credit except, ironically, that of naming himself. At this point, his name is as "blank" as those white armaments sported by new knights and referred to earlier in this same chapter (79). Instead, it is his name that anticipates and will enable those heroic deeds: a case of the "carriage preceding the horse." Don Quijote's new name thus performs as much as it constates.

The "fit" between words—the authoritative, monoglossic discourse of the chivalric novels—and the pragmatic world is also problematized by the negotiation that don Quijote makes between the ballad and the situation in which he currently finds himself: by altering the words of the original ballad, the text demonstrates a circular flux whereby textual reality and lived reality are mutually influential and ceaselessly dialectic—just as the protagonist is a conduit by which literature is enabled to reshape life (performatively), he also enables life to reshape literature. This interchange serves to awaken in the gentleman an awareness, at the end of this chapter, that his name, having no constative value, ultimately lacks any authority in and of itself and thus needs some sort of external, conventional (intersubjective) ratification: "...lo que más le fatigaba era el no verse armado caballero, por parecerle que no se podría poner legítimamente en aventura alguna sin recibir la orden de caballería" (87) [what distressed him most deeply was that he was not yet

knighted, for he believed that he could not rightfully embark on any adventure without first receiving the order of knighthood]. The subjectivity that was so explicitly self-actualized in chapter 1 comes increasingly and inevitably to depend on the society of others to define itself. Interestingly, and as though to reinforce the need for communal ratification, even the narrator waits until the middle of chapter 2 to start indulging the protagonist by referring to him with his new name (82).

Due to don Quijote's growing need to ratify his new status conventionally, chapter 3 opens with his request that the innkeeper dub him as a knight:

... llamó al ventero y, encerrándose con él en el caballerizo, se hincó de rodillas ante él, diciéndole: —No me levantaré jamás de donde estoy, valeroso caballero, hasta que la vuestra cortesía me otorgue un don que pedirle quiero, el cual redundará en alabanza y en pro del género humano.

El ventero, que vio a su huésped a sus pies y oyó semejantes razones, estaba confuso mirándole, sin saber qué hacerse ni decirle, y porfiaba con él que se levantase, jamás quiso, hasta que le hubo de decir que él le otorgaba el don que le pedía.

No esperaba yo menos de la gran magnificencia vuestra, señor míoBrespondió don QuijoteB; y así, os digo que el don que os he pedido y de vuestra liberalidad me ha sido otorgado, es que mañana en aquel día me habéis de armar caballero ... (87-88).

[... {he} called the host. Then, shutting the stable door on them both, he fell on his knees before him and said: 'Never will I arise from where I am, valiant knight, till you grant me of your courtesy the boon I am going to beg of you; it is one which will rebound to your praise and to the benefit of the human race.'

Seeing his guest at his feet and hearing such language, the innkeeper stared in confusion, not knowing what to do or say, and pressed him to get up; but in vain, for the knight refused to rise until his host had promised to grant him the boon he begged.

‘I expected no less from your great magnificence, dear sir,’ replied Don Quixote. ‘So I will tell you that the boon I begged of you, and you in your generosity granted, is that you will knight me on the morning of tomorrow’.]

Now, why does don Quijote ask this of an innkeeper and why does the innkeeper comply? In the first place, don Quijote has implicitly authorized him to do so, partly because the innkeeper is the first male interlocutor he has run into and partly because he is already in a position of authority by virtue of being the master of what don Quijote perceives as a castle. Don Quijote, on first meeting the innkeeper, thus calls him a “*valeroso caballero*” [valiant knight] and, in so doing, performatively recreates him: in effect, don Quijote must implicitly dub the innkeeper as a knight before the innkeeper can explicitly dub him. Another strange aspect of this interchange is the fact that, despite his conferring of ostensible authority on the innkeeper with respect to himself, don Quijote does so from a position of communicative authority, because his request of the innkeeper is conditional, backed up by an explicit threat: unless the innkeeper agrees to what he asks, don Quijote claims that he will never get up from that spot. A further anomalous condition of his request is the fact that don Quijote does not reveal its specific content—the dubbing itself—until after the innkeeper has agreed to comply. As is by now apparent, don Quijote violates the basic conventions—the language game—of requesting in a number of extraordinary ways that tend to confuse statement and performance, describing and enacting.

Another question about chapter 3 concerns—most obviously—the illocutionary force of the dubbing ceremony with which it ends. By what authority, then, with what “happiness,” does the innkeeper issue this pronouncement? The event itself is comically deconstructed from the start by its own context: in a stable, with two prostitutes as witnesses and an innkeeper as master of ceremonies, chanting inaudible gibberish from a book he is pretending to read from and which is emphatically not the authoritative text that don Quijote

(and the rest of us) might believe to be the appropriate one, namely the Bible—instead, he uses his accounting book. All these unconventional factors render this utterance radically “unhappy.” Needless to say, none of this matters from don Quijote’s viewpoint, because there has been no violation of convention, at least, not of literary convention. For him, like any promise issued insincerely, the ceremony *counts as* a dubbing, and that is all that matters.

In chapter 4, don Quijote comes upon Juan Haldudo, a laborer, whipping one of his servants named Andrés, who is tied to a tree. Andrés’ first words in this episode are a promise that responds to his master’s accusations that the servant has lost many sheep due to lack of attention: “No lo haré otra vez, señor mío; por la pasión de Dios que no lo haré otra vez, y yo prometo de tener de aquí adelante más cuidado con el hato” (95) [‘I won’t do it again, sir. I swear to God I won’t do it again. I promise I’ll take better care of your sheep in the future’]. As a performative utterance, the commissive (here, a promise) conforms nicely to the discursive mode of the chivalric enterprise: the sense of personal integrity that all promises entail implies an ethic that is one of the principal ideals of knighthood. Furthermore, Andrés is most obviously a *menesteroso*, i.e., someone badly in need of don Quijote’s newly-ratified status as a knight-errant. This automatically converts his master Juan Haldudo into the evil ‘other’ who, according to the chivalric myth, must be either converted or defeated.

When don Quijote menacingly challenges him, Juan attempts to explain the situation by claiming that Andrés is lying when he accuses Juan of cheating him out of his wages, even though they are being withheld due to the servant’s apparent lack of vigilance. This does nothing, however, but reinforce don Quijote’s primary impression—by calling Andrés a liar, Juan confirms a judgment dictated by the chivalric myth, namely, moral consistency from its players: the helpless victim cannot lie maliciously, for if he or she is good (that is, worthy of being protected or saved), then that goodness is absolute. And, of course, if Andrés is not lying, then it is Juan who must be. His faith firmly established in the apparent reality of the

immediate situation, don Quijote perceives no distinction between his own discourse—imported from the books of chivalry—and that of his interlocutors, for he has spontaneously incorporated them into that myth. So it is that he elicits by the threat of force a commissive from Juan, a promise to pay Andrés all that is owed to him. For his part, Juan plays along with don Quijote's language game by addressing him as "señor caballero" (96) [Sir Knight] from the start, thereby appropriating chivalric discourse in order to then issue a deceptive oath: "Yo juro por todas las órdenes que de caballerías hay en el mundo de pagar ...A (97) ['I swear by all the orders of chivalry in the world to pay']". There are, of course, no chivalric orders left in the world except the one instituted by don Quijote when he named himself and which has recently received external ratification by the dubbing ceremony. Juan's dubious commissive has the desired effect of placating his opponent, because he knows how to behave discursively as the knight into which don Quijote has performatively transformed him, much like the knight-errant did with the innkeeper. Another similarity with the earlier situation at the inn is that, once again, the knight elicits a commissive by issuing a threat. Don Quijote perceives the "here and now" of this adventure—its performance and its performative aspect—with such intensity that he loses sight of any outer context, any logical chain of events, that might have guided things to this point. In effect, the dialogical context that normally determines the illocutionary force of utterances has been suspended and replaced by the chivalric myth. The past lives of Andrés and Juan are effectively erased and whether what they each tell don Quijote is constatively "true" or not is unimportant; as in the case of the dubbing ceremony, the only thing that matters is don Quijote's utter faith in the efficacy of performative utterance. This is made clear by his indifference to Andrés' verbal protests that Juan will not fulfill his promise because he is not, in fact, the knight into which don Quijote's words have magically and performatively transformed him (97).

In this adventure, don Quijote and Juan Haldudo emerge as protagonist and antagonist, while Andrés, the one most obviously af-

fecté by its outcome, remains powerless. Once the verbal exchange between don Quijote and Juan begins, Andrés cannot act, linguistically or otherwise, for he has been caught and reified as a mute object of exchange between two opposing discourses, one mythic and unitary, the other representing economic and material concerns. Andrés is thus relegated to the extreme margins of discourse: either cries of pain or (what amounts to) passive silence. As in the case of the dubbing ceremony, what matters here to don Quijote is what the words uttered *count as* within the immediate context, their conformity to a literary model—this determines their illocutionary force as constituting a true “adventure.” What happens outside that context, either earlier or later, does not matter from the standpoint of don Quijote’s appropriation of chivalric illocution.

However, the text does provide that outer context: as soon as don Quijote leaves the scene, Juan once again ties Andrés to the tree and proceeds to whip him even harder than he might have otherwise (98). In this way, don Quijote’s ‘heroic’ intervention has precisely the opposite of its intended effect. This, of course, is one of the novel’s main sources of irony, that is, the principal way it deconstructs the chivalric myth: by making it dialogue with a variety of other, more down-to-earth, discourses. This becomes explicit to don Quijote in chapter 31 of Part I, when Andrés reappears to inform him about what ultimately occurred with Juan afterwards (389–90). Upon learning what happened, don Quijote immediately renews his own earlier vow to force

Juan to honor his promise, but Andrés now won’t have any of that: “No me creo de estos juramentos ... más quisiera tener agora con que llegar a Sevilla que todas las venganzas del mundo: déme, si tiene ahí, algo que coma y lleve” (391) [‘I don’t believe in these vows ... I’d rather have something to get me on to Seville, than all the vengeance in the world. Give me something to eat and take with me, if you have anything here’]. Rather than making a believer of Andrés in the efficacy of chivalric honor and the performative utterances that constitute it, don Quijote has made him into a cynic. According to Andrés, what is more important than words and the satisfaction

of honor's demands is the satisfaction of material needs like food and money. In this way, Andrés ultimately reinforces the economic discourse proffered earlier by his master, Juan Haldudo.

The other adventure that occurs in chapter 4 is don Quijote's confrontation with the merchants from Toledo. Upon seeing them, the knight orders them to halt their journey, unless they issue a declaration that Dulcinea del Toboso is the most beautiful damsel in the world (100). Unlike Juan Haldudo, the unnamed merchant who speaks for his companions does not enter quite so readily into don Quijote's language game, because, having perceived his madness, he wishes to have a bit of fun with him. He therefore declares that they would be willing to admit to Dulcinea's beauty if only the knight can show her to them. Don Quijote responds by insisting that they make this declaration entirely on faith: "Si os la mostrara ... , ¿qué hicierades vosotros en confesar una verdad tan notoria? La importancia está en que sin verla lo habéis de creer, confesar, afirmar, jurar y defender ..." (100) ['If I were to show her to you, what merit would there be in your confessing so obvious a truth? The essence of the matter is that you must believe, confess, affirm, swear and maintain it without seeing her']. Once again, don Quijote backs up his request with an explicit threat, stating that if they refuse to comply, they must do battle with him. And once again, as in the earlier cases of Juan Haldudo and the innkeeper, the important thing for don Quijote is not the constative power of words to describe a reality (in this case, Dulcinea's supposed beauty) somewhere in the 'real' world, outside of the immediate dialogical situation, but rather the performative utterances themselves and the things words do—their illocutionary force—in this particular context.

The merchant then replies that they would be willing to make such a declaration if only they might see a portrait of her:

... quedaremos con esto satisfechos y seguros, y vuestra merced quedará contento y pagado; y aun creo que estamos tan de su parte que, aunque su retrato nos muestre que es tuerta de un ojo y que del otro le mana bermellón y piedra azufre, con todo eso,

por complacer a vuestra merced, diremos en su favor todo lo que quisiere. (100)

[‘we shall rest assured and satisfied with this, and your worship will be pleased and content. I even think that we are so far inclined to her side already that supposing your portrait shows us that she squints in one eye and drips vermilion and sulphur from the other, even then, to please you, we will say all that you ask in her favor’].

Needless to say, these ostensibly conciliatory words do nothing but infuriate don Quijote, for they insult Dulcinea’s (supposed) beauty and the knight’s honor, at the same time as they effectively undo the force of any declarative whatsoever that might be issued: the merchant’s desire for entertainment at don Quijote’s expense has implicitly deconstructed the power of chivalric utterance in this situation.

The only avenue left by which don Quijote might preserve the efficacy and unity of a chivalric adventure is to attack, but when he spurs Rocinante on toward the merchants, the horse trips and falls (101). Unable to rise, due to the weight of his armor, he resorts once again to verbal abuse and insults the merchants as they leave, but one of them, now angered, breaks don Quijote’s lance into pieces and proceeds to beat its owner with it. Unlike the previous adventure with Juan and Andrés, don Quijote is asked here to make his discourse conform constatively to a pre-existing reality, rather than to enact it. By requiring don Quijote to show them Dulcinea and, barring that, to show them a portrait of her, the merchant forces him to make his words “fit” the world in the most literal sense, and when the merchant then expresses willingness to say anything at all, so long as a portrait of some type is shown, don Quijote understands that the rules of his chivalric language game have been broken and, with them, the game itself. He attempts to recuperate the game and to reincorporate the merchants back into the chivalric model by attacking, but this fails as well. The shattering of the unity of performative

utterance, derived from the chivalric myth, is symbolized at the end of the adventure by the fracturing of his lance: a final “castration” of what could accurately be called a thoroughly phallogocentric discourse.

To summarize: don Quijote has three principal interlocutors during his first sally, all of whom speak a discourse that manifests an increasingly materialist sensibility, a concern with monetary values. The innkeeper, we remember, has his accounting book—the one that served as a figurative Bible during the dubbing ceremony—and makes don Quijote promise to go home and procure clean shirts, bandages and money, before embarking on any new adventures: those material needs that go unmentioned in the books of knight-hood (90). Juan Haldudo’s major concern is, first, with lost sheep and the subsequent financial loss they represent, and then with avoiding paying the wages he apparently owes to Andrés. Andrés, too, returns later on in Part I as a subject now largely informed by economic and material discourses, despite don Quijote’s efforts to the contrary. Finally, the Toledan merchants make explicit the need for words to conform constatively to reality, before swearing to Dulcinea’s beauty—in short, they wish to “see the goods” before “buying into” don Quijote’s version of reality. The discourse of these three is constative, relative to that of don Quijote, in that the material economic world constitutes its essential mode of reference; according to this point of view, words have no value except in their ability to describe and/or refer. They anticipate the introduction, in chapter 7, of another interlocutor who incarnates this growing materialist sensibility, and who will dialogue with don Quijote throughout the remainder of the novel: Sancho Panza.⁶⁶

After having been beaten, don Quijote cannot move and, lying helplessly on the ground, he reverts back to his chivalric models, singing a ballad that presents one of his heroes in a similar situation. One of his neighbors happens by and, recognizing him, calls him by name, but don Quijote does not respond and simply goes on

6 Antonio Gómez-Moriana offers an intelligent analysis of the increasingly materialistic discourses with which don Quijote comes into contact; he also compares Juan Haldudo’s promises with don Juan’s in *El burlador de Sevilla* (88–92).

singing fragments of ballads, taking on different literary identities as fast as they come to him: Valdovino, Abindarráez, Abencerraje. While the neighbor takes him back home, don Quijote attempts to incorporate him into this new language game, by transforming him into—naming him as—a character from Montemayor's *La Diana*, don Rodrigo de Narváez; the neighbor resists this, however, and attempts to bring him back to reality by simply stating that he is Pedro Alonso, a neighbor of his. At the same time, he informs don Quijote that he is neither Valdovinos nor Abindarráez of the ballad tradition, but señor Quijana. Don Quijote responds angrily by maintaining that he has full awareness of who he is: "Yo sé quién soy" (106) ['I know who I am']. Yet, if there were ever a moment at which that identity is in doubt, especially one posited on self-consciousness and discursive continuity, this is it. Who, indeed, is doing the speaking here? That subjectivity which was performatively enacted and unified by naming in the first chapter has been fragmented, like the broken lance, into a plurality of increasingly competing discourses: a man of many names. Perhaps one of Cervantes' greatest novelistic accomplishments in *Don Quijote* is the positing of a more modern subjectivity based on agency and a process of knowledge ("Yo sé quién soy"), rather than an essentialized tautology comprised of blood or honor ("Yo soy quién soy") ['I am who I am']: "In a world reconfigured as an enterprise, the self is no longer necessarily defined through bloodline but may indeed be realized as a process" (Castillo and Spadaccini 187).⁷⁷

The chivalric archetype constitutes a subject, an "I," whose function as knight-errant is conceived largely in ethical terms: to go out and conquer or convert all that is Other—either that which is unknown or that which is evil—into that which is the "same": either the "known" or the "good." This is precisely don Quijote's mission, except that it plays itself out, not on an explicitly ethical battlefield of good and evil, but rather on the battlefield of subjectivity itself or, to put it another way, of language. Don Quijote attempts to convert

7 José Antonio Maravall offers a convincing account of the emergence of the concept of the individual as an ongoing process (168-71).

everything and everyone he sees into performing and performative participants—sometimes unwilling ones—of his own private (chivalric) language game, but in so doing, uncovers the brutal fact that his game was never private to begin with, that it was always already derived from and dependent upon prior conventions of discourse. This process determines the shape of Cervantes' novel and, I believe, of new discursive models of subjectivity that were beginning to emerge in early modern Spain. Like the dialectic between constative and performative utterance, don Quijote's language shapes reality, just as his language is shaped by the reality it encounters. What starts out as an attempted private language is drawn inevitably into more and more active dialogue with other subjects, other discourses. Ultimately, the relation between don Quijote and those other discourses is mediated by Sancho Panza, but in the case of don Quijote, the "other" that is a potential "I" and toward which he asserts himself, as in Habermas' model, consists of everything and everyone that exists outside of his library, and that Other has a name: don Alonso Quijano el Bueno. As Habermas says: "... every being is potentially his own Other."

I have attempted to show how a consideration of speech acts enables a vision of some of the discursive modes by which the subject is constructed—performatively enacted—in *Don Quijote*. Other important aspects, which I have not touched upon except in passing, are the nature of the conception of the Other, how it shapes that construction, and how that dialectic reflects a crisis of sensibility in early modern Spain. One aspect of that crisis is a growing mercantile sensibility; another is the decline of an imperialist consciousness; another is the gradual transition from an essentially oral episteme to one that is inscribed.⁸⁸

Perhaps, after all is said (and done), however, it is no accident that don Alonso Quijano's nickname, "el Bueno" [the Good], discloses an ethic, and we must remember in this instance that the chivalric myth—outmoded as it was, even in Cervantes's day—still represent-

8 Maravall's *Culture of the Baroque* remains the most comprehensive description of these changes.

ed an ideal of honor that was essentially oriented toward the good, however culturally specific and phallogocentric that notion of morality, that ethos, might be. Indeed, as Charles Taylor tells us, most (if not all) of our notions of identity are intimately related to concepts of morality: “Selfhood and the good, or in another way selfhood and morality, turn out to be inextricably intertwined themes” (3).

As an object lesson in both literary and cultural criticism, it is useful to think that Cervantes helps to initiate Spain’s passage into the modern world of mercantile sensibility by effectively deconstructing a medieval myth that had long outlived its usefulness as a discourse by which to live, by which to construct subjects. However, it might likewise be useful to consider whether his novel does not also function to preserve that myth’s implicitly moral dimension, to keep alive the ideal—despite new and ever more rapidly changing discursive constructions of subjectivity—that words were still their bonds.

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