
Jongleuresque Dialogue, Radical Theatricality, and Maese Pedro's Puppet Show

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or many critics, “dialogue” between two or more characters—unmediated by a narrative voice—is the basic marker of theater.¹ Witness the longstanding debate over the “problematic” genre of *Celestina*. Our theatrical prejudice for literary dialogue can be traced back to the ancient myth of Thespis’s “invention” of Western drama, to the very moment when, it is said, he separated himself from the chorus he had previously led in order to engage it in a kind of antiphonal exchange of voices. Yet, despite the twenty-five centuries of critical tradition that have privileged this literary exchange, the “dialogue” responsible for producing “theater,” at its most basic level, does not occur between several characters (and certainly not between several actors), but between the performer and the spectator themselves who, as Richard Schechner argues, “co-create” (202)

¹ This essay is part of a larger study examining the performative influence of medieval street theater on the early Spanish stage. The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

an interdependent relationship that plays itself out within the confines of what Hollis Huston calls an interactive performative contract: "I will watch, says the viewer, as long as you do something that is worth watching. I will do something that is worth watching, says the actor, as long as you watch" (76).² It is this "dialogue" that is universal to all performance traditions whether ancient or modern, Eastern or Western; it is this "dialogue" that remains even when the "dramatic text" has been reduced to an act of juggling.

As "literature" became increasingly complex, and thus went from being an essentially oral phenomenon directed toward "hearers" to being an essentially written and then typeset entity disseminated to "readers," this performative exchange slowly evolved into the dialogic relationship between "narrator" and "narratee." Along the way, however, especially while the boundaries between oral and written literature were still extremely fluid (that is, before the arrival of what Marshall McLuhan [11] has famously called the "Gutenberg Galaxy"), residual traces of this aboriginal performative dialogue continued to appear in various texts and in various ways. We find it visualized in a thirteenth-century illuminated manuscript in which a fool grimaces directly at the reader (see illustration); it recurs in the oft-repeated formula of the *romancero viejo*, "bien oiréis lo que dirá" (Díaz Roig 137); and it re-exerts itself on the modern, complex stage whenever a character breaks the illusion of the "fourth wall" in order to explicitly engage the audience in an aside or

² Barbara Freedman posits a definition of theatricality similar to Huston's in her book, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy*, when she says, "What do we mean when we say that someone or something is theatrical? What we mean is that such a person is aware that she is seen, reflects that awareness, and so deflects our look" (1). Unlike Huston or Schechner, however, Freedman clearly views this relationship in antagonistic—rather than cooperative—terms, especially when she argues that this "fractured reciprocity" (1) results in nothing less than the actor's "staring down of the spectator" (67).



Bute Master, *Initial D: The Fool, with a Dog Face and Wearing Winged Headgear, Menacing Christ; bas-de-page A Fool Making Face at the Reader*, from the *Bute Psalter*. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. 92 MK.92 (Ms. 46), folio 72.

soliloquy. More importantly, it surfaces ever so briefly in the final paragraph of *Don Quixote* II, 25, as the narrator is about to introduce Maese Pedro's puppet show: "Puestos, pues, todos cuantos había en la venta, y algunos en pie, frontero del retablo, y acomodados don Quijote, Sancho, el paje y el primo en los mejores lugares, el trujamán comenzó a decir lo que oirá y verá el que le oyere o viere el capítulo siguiente" (II, 25; 239).

George Haley, in a brilliant and influential narratological study published in 1965, carefully examines this passage and rightly notes its contextual connection to a much larger segment of the novel, one that—as we will see—begins well before the "Braying Tale" and culminates with the puppet show itself. However, because Haley is interested primarily in exploring the ways in which the puppet show functions as "an analogue to the novel as a whole, [reproducing] on a miniature scale the same basic relationships among storyteller, story and audience that are discernible in the novel's overall scheme" (163), his interpretation of this passage serves primarily to inscribe the reader within the confines of Cervantes' text: "we are promised that what the assistant tells will be both heard and seen either by the one who hears the assistant, the spectator at the inn, or by the one who sees the next chapter, the reader of the book" (150). His reading of the audiovisual verbs in this passage essentially sets up a two-tiered subdivision in which the visual action is performed by the "idle reader" who stands outside the text looking in, while the aural action is accomplished by *Don Quixote's* several characters themselves, who remain well inside the discursive framework established by the narrator. In this way, Haley argues, the audience seated in front of the *retablo* "has been subtly expanded to encompass the reader explicitly" (150).

Coming from a slightly different angle, I would like to suggest an alternative reading for this passage, one that does not subdivide the narrative space, but which ultimately places the "hearer" within the same exterior frame as that of the "idle reader." And by doing so, I will argue, the book recovers a latent—but radical—theatricality that has been partially obscured by the

poetics of print. In other words, the final sentence of Part II, chapter 25 constitutes a unique textual moment that has nothing to do whatsoever with the “literary dialogue” associated with drama and everything to do with the “performative dialogue” of theater. Before exploring this radically theatrical dialogue in detail, however, a brief discussion of what I will be calling “jongleuresque performance” and its relationship to *Don Quixote* is in order.

The Poetics of Jongleuresque Performance.

In its most limited sense, of course, “jongleuresque” refers specifically to the activities associated with the *mester de juglaría*, the oral, “poetic” tradition whose heyday occurred roughly between the ninth and thirteenth centuries and which is said to have produced such canonical literary texts as the *Poema de mio Cid*, the *romancero*, etc. A great number of scholars—including such eminent figures as Manuel Milá y Fontanals and Ramón Menéndez Pidal—have written extensively on the *mester de juglaría* as a poetic tradition, and there is no need to rehearse their findings here, especially with regard to such well-known aspects as the predominance of the *mester's* historical themes, the existence of its oral formulas, its almost exclusive use of *rima asonante*, its preference for *octosílabos* (whether written down as single sixteen-syllable lines divided by a hemistich or as separate eight-syllable lines), etc.

However, because the *mester de juglaría* was an inherently “oral” phenomenon, the performative context within which the *cantares de gesta* and the *romances* came into being is just as important as the formal aspects of this oral poetry itself.³ As Menéndez

³ The exact nature of the performativity associated with the *mester de juglaría* is a hotly disputed issue. In very general terms, “oralists” and “traditionalists” insist that the *cantares de gesta* and *romances* came into being through a process of oral improvisation in which generations of singers—relying on a repertoire of metrically and thematically determined formulas—re-created the songs anew each time they sang them, and that these texts were only written down much later. “Individualists,” on the other hand, insist that the *cantares* and *romances*

Pidal rightly argues in his discussion of what he calls the *jongleur's* "espectáculo público" (3), these performers should be considered much more than just poets, that is, something other than just quasi-literary figures. The category of *juglar*, he says, must be comprehensive enough to include "*todos los que se ganaban la vida actuando ante un público, para recrearle con la música, o con la literatura, o con charlatanería, o con juegos de manos, de acrobatis-mo, de mímica, etc.*" (3, emphasis in the original). His excellent definition—which is flawed perhaps only by his privileging of professionals over amateurs (who, I would argue, are equally important)—echoes that of E. K. Chambers, who also reminds us that the "antithesis between the higher and lower minstrelsy" can be pushed too far: "After all, the minstrels were entertainers, and therefore their business was to entertain" (1: 66).

In a broader sense, then, "jongleuresque" can also be used as a generic classification for a whole mode of popular performance, one centering around the performative poetics of what Huston calls the "simple stage." Building on Peter Brook's concept of theatrical "empty space,"⁴ Huston defines his "simple stage" as "the circle that the street performer opens in a crowd" (1), a space paradoxically constituted by the very performance it contains: "The *mimus* fills that space by keeping it empty, possessing it, making it impossible for us to enter. That now-empty space is the

came into being like any other literary text—that is, composed at a particular point in time by a particular writer, however anonymous he or she may be today—and that these literary texts were only performed after the fact. Although I lean toward the oralist/traditionalist viewpoint, I find a number of individualist arguments to be quite persuasive. Still, especially with regard to the theatricality of these jongleuresque texts, I am less interested in the circumstances of their composition than I am with the performative context of their dissemination. For more on these issues see Daniel Eisenberg (especially with regard to Cervantes and the *romancero*), Walter Ong, Colin Smith (especially with regard to the *Poema de mio Cid*), and Paul Zumthor.

⁴"I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged" (Brook 9).

stage, a proof of presence. The stage is the sign of a contract, and exists for precisely that length of time during which the contract is fulfilled. ...When the show is over, and an act of the simple stage completed, the actor folds up her illusion: people who had been spectators then walk through the place where the stage had been, as if the event called performance had never happened" (76).

Of course, the particular terminology one uses to designate the performer associated with this "simple stage" (i.e., minstrels, jesters, histrions, etc.) is somewhat arbitrary and depends to a great extent on the field in which one happens to work and the specific focus one wishes to stress. Huston obviously prefers the term "mimus," while Schechner, whose own theories of performance are profoundly informed by socio-anthropology, repeatedly uses the term "shaman." William Willeford, for his part, uses the term "fool" in his study of clowns and jesters and their audiences. Gerald F. Else, a classics scholar who brilliantly examined the performative relationship between Thespis and the ancient Homeric bards, employs the term "rhapsode" (70), while Albert B. Lord, another important classicist who traced the poetic ties between ancient Greece and early twentieth-century Yugoslavia, famously refers to his object of study as the "singer of tales."⁵ Following Menéndez Pidal, I myself prefer the term "jongleur" (as should be more than obvious by now), partly due to its specific relevance to the performance traditions of the Iberian peninsula, and partly due to its theoretical expansiveness, embracing—as it does—both literary and non-literary, humorous and

⁵In his own study of medieval theater, Luigi Allegri suggests that this proliferation of terminology was, perhaps, more important during the Middle Ages than it should be for us today. Medieval society, he says, was profoundly concerned with the correspondence between names and functions, especially with regard to considerations of social hierarchy. Because of this, minute differentiations in function would be marked by equally minute differentiations in name. Nevertheless, from our current perspective, these "multiform" performers have much more in common with each other than the primary sources would lead us to believe, and certainly have much more in common with each other than with other medieval figures (60–61).

non-humorous, mimetic and non-mimetic activities. The jongleur sits at the midpoint on a diachronic axis that stretches historically from Else's Homeric rhapsode to such contemporary street performers as 1999 Nobel laureate Dario Fo. At the same time, the jongleur sits at the midpoint on a synchronic axis that stretches laterally from the shaman to the *mimus* to the jester to the histrion (although I would not really attempt to fix their relative positions on any line). As such, the jongleur marks the intersection of these two performative axes and arguably constitutes—far better than Thespis—the archetypal actor of the Western theatrical tradition.

Within this jongleuresque performance tradition two characteristics will be fundamental to our reading of *Don Quixote*. First, the essence of most medieval theater—both before and after the rise of the liturgical drama—was the lone “singer of tales” (whether amateur or professional) performing on the bare “simple stage.” In other words, the medieval theater was essentially an *ad hoc* phenomenon. (This is particularly true in Spain, of course, where a dearth of extant dramatic texts has led many critics to posit a “lack” of medieval Iberian theater, despite the fact that from a performative perspective the songs and narratives associated with the *mester de juglaría* are just as worthy of being considered the basic “scripts” of Spain's medieval theater as the *Auto de los Reyes Magos*.) Chambers suggests that this sparse state of theatrical affairs arose after the “demise” of the Roman institutional theater when the Latin *mimus*, the central figure of the Roman *spectacula*, merged with the Teutonic *scôp*, the singer of Germanic epic poetry (23–41). The “blending” of these two performers, he says, came to its fruition under Charlemagne when “both types of entertainer [came] under the common designation *ioculator*” (35), the linguistic forerunner of the vernacular *jongleur*, *guillare*, and *juglar*. John Wesley Harris, however, argues that the austerity of the medieval performance tradition began well before the fall of Rome through the inordinate ascendancy of the principal actor of the Roman *cantica*. As the performance of these ancient spectacles began to center more

and more on the main actor, he says, the rival performers were nearly banished from the stage entirely, so that the central performer acquired for himself all the other parts. Soon it was "the soloist who filled the stage, singing, miming and dancing his way through the whole piece, and giving life and substance to all the action" (11).

This theatrical vision will obviously seem counterintuitive to our modern notions of "theater" and "drama" because we continue to surround ourselves, both on stage and on screen, with a complex performance dominated by literary "dialogue." Simplicity, however, is not a sign of inferiority; instead, it is one of the exigencies of a performance tradition that is inherently nomadic. Performers who must move from town to town (at times, one step ahead of the local authorities) must travel lightly and cannot afford, in terms both economic and practical, to carry all the accouterments of the complex stage. We should not marvel, then, that when they set up their performance spaces in the various towns of medieval and early modern Europe they limit themselves to a few wooden planks and a blanket hung over the limb of a tree, perhaps the very blanket they will use latter that night to provide shelter from the night air as they sleep beneath the same tree or one very nearly like it. We must remember that the complex stage constitutes an enormous economic investment and that rarely, if ever, have individuals undertaken its construction. The theaters of ancient Greece and Rome were civic monuments, while the "stages" associated with both the medieval liturgical drama and the courtly banquet halls (home to such performers as Juan del Encina) were established by economic entities far beyond the scope of the individual performer. Even today in the commercial age of New York's Broadway and London's West End, very few theatrical structures exist independent of some non-theatrical entity (i.e., a nation-state, a university, a distinguished list of wealthy benefactors, etc.) whose function it is to underwrite the costs of maintaining that structure.

Keeping this in mind, then, Lord's description of his "singer of tales" provides us with an invaluable glimpse into what most

medieval theater probably looked like.⁶ The principal location, Lord tells us, for the performance of the *guslar* songs in the towns and villages of what used to be Yugoslavia is (or at least *was* before the disasters of the late twentieth century) the coffee house, the inn, the tavern. Inside these *ad hoc* theaters a number of various people mix and mingle, including farmers (who “drop in for a short while to sit and talk, sip coffee or raki, and listen to songs,” 14), shopkeepers, and even caravan drivers simply passing through town on their way to someplace else. The picture Lord paints for us is indispensable because it demonstrates some important connections—as well as highlights some significant divergences—between the “medieval” stage and its “modern” counterpart. Most notable among these, of course, is the fact that the basic function of the singer—as Menéndez Pidal and Chambers so succinctly note—is to “entertain” (that is, to literally “hold between”) an accidental audience on the move from one place to another. In our determination to discover a respectable social relevancy for our dramatic and literary institutions, we all too often forget that the primary reason we tell and listen to stories is not because we want to “instill values” in the minds of our children or because we want to “interrogate power” (although both of these may very well be important secondary considerations), but because first and foremost we simply enjoy telling and listening to stories. Paul Zumthor emphasizes the importance of this ludic motivation (which is ultimately the basis for all literature, but which is most especially central to the simple theater) when he tells of an Inuit man who gathers his grandchildren around him in order to sing to them about their history and their culture. “For all its banality,” says Zumthor, what counts most is that each of this man’s stories, each of his performances, “more by the warmth of presence than by any pretext, would fill a void in the world” (38). And is not this simple pastime—what Zumthor says

⁶ Obviously, if we accept Lord’s thesis that the “formulaic” structure of these performers’ texts is part of an oral tradition that extends back as far as Homer, it is certainly not out of the question to posit a kinship between their performative modalities and those of the medieval jongleurs.

"we ambiguously call theater" (39)—at the heart of two of the most important works of all medieval literature: Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*?

While it would clearly be unwarranted to suggest that either of these works is inherently "dramatic" or "theatrical" (at least according to the literary definition of these terms), they do open up an indispensable window on the basic mechanics of the simple stage in its medieval context, especially as that context relates to "filling a void in the world." In societies where "written" texts were few and far between, and where the majority of "readers" could not access them even when available, performed narrative (frequently accompanied by music) was the only means by which most people come into contact with "literature." As Nicholas Spadaccini and Jenaro Talens point out, the concept of "private reading" during the Middle Ages "only made sense to those few people who had access to the libraries of the monasteries, for most of the population was illiterate" (81). It is not inconsequential, then, that *Canterbury Tales* begins in a "hostelry" (20)—a site not unlike the taverns Lord speaks of—or that Chaucer uses the theatrical locution "playing your parts" to set up the notion that his travelers should "while the time in tales and fun" (40). He understood (as many modern critics do not) that his characters are *actors* every bit as much as they are *pilgrims*. What Chaucer has essentially written is a significantly rarefied representation of the age-old activity responsible for the very fact that modern researchers are able to "catalogue" texts like the Spanish *romances* in the first place. The "oral tradition" is not just a history of oral texts handed down from one generation to the next for the mere sake of remembering those texts. Ballad transmission has never simply been an act of rote memorization as is, say, the memorization of times tables by school children. Instead, the "ballad tradition" is really the continued history of countless evenings of simple entertainment, countless moments of intensely personal "theater." The ballad singers catalogued by such researchers as Antonio Sánchez Romeralo or Beatriz Mariscal de Rhett are not merely "informants" or "transmitters" (Mariscal 257–58); they are peo-

ple who have sought to brighten the dreariness of a long journey across the expanses of Spain, or (like the *lavanderas* in Lorca's *Yerma*) to make an afternoon of washing clothes in a river less burdensome by singing songs and telling stories to themselves and to each other.

This brings us to the second important characteristic of jongleuresque performance. The medieval simple stage was not only an *ad hoc* creation; it usually existed within a natural gathering place that also served multiple functions. As Walter Cohen incisively notes: "The medieval audience did not enter the world of the theater; the theater entered the world of the audience" (35). For this reason, the performances that occurred on the jongleuresque stage were generally part of some larger phenomenon; that is, the performative boundaries separating one individual "text" from another (whether literary, musical, acrobatic, etc.) were to a great extent far less rigid than the boundaries governing much of the complex theater since the Renaissance. In other words, the medieval theater was an essentially multiform event. In the *Decameron*, for example, the storytelling is but one pleasant activity among many, while each tale itself is but part of a ten-day narrative competition which includes a hundred such tales. The same holds true for Chaucer's individual narratives. Likewise, as we have seen, Lord's "singer of tales" performs his work in a setting that has neither been erected solely for the purpose of his performance nor which exists independent of the setting's other functions. Few, if any, of the *guslar* spectators have come to the tavern to listen to only one singer, let alone one song; they have come to eat, drink, converse, listen to the performances of other singers, and perhaps even perform themselves. In many ways, the medieval spectator received in one setting the cumulative pleasure that modern Western audiences can usually find only by going to numerous locations: it is not uncommon for a "night out" to include dinner at a restaurant, followed by a show at a theater, both of which might culminate with nightcaps and dancing at a nearby club.

Nowhere is the multiplicity of jongleuresque performance

more vividly represented than in the Provençal romance, *Flamenca*, in which a courtly banquet culminates precisely with the kind of “espectáculo público” that inspired Menéndez Pidal’s sweeping definition:

When they had eaten, they washed again,
but just as they were
they stayed and drank wine,
for such was the custom there.
Then the napkins were removed;
soft cushions along with fans
were placed in front of everyone,
so that no one was without one
to lean upon, should he wish.
Then the minstrels stood up;
each one wanted to be heard.
Then you would have heard resound
strings of various pitches.
Whoever knew a new piece for the viol,
a song, a descort, or lay,
he pressed forward as much as he could.
One played the lay of the Honeysuckle,
another the one of Tintagel;
one sang of the Noble Lovers,
and another which Yvain composed.
One played the harp; another the viol;
another, the flute; another, a fife;
one played a rebeck; another, a rote;
one sang the words; another played notes;
one, the sackbut; another, the fife;
one, the bagpipe; another, the reed-pipe;
one, the mandora and another attuned
the psaltery with the monochord;
one performed with marionettes,
another juggled knives;
some did gymnastics and tumbling tricks;

another danced with his cup;
one held the hoop; another leapt through it;
everyone performed his art perfectly.

vv. 587–620; *Romance of Flamenca* 33–35

What stands out in this spectacle, of course, is the sheer variety of activity that creates it. At each step of the way, every event taking place is part of some larger event; like the discrete stories of the *Decameron*, each individual “literary” text (whose topics eventually range from Helen and Paris to David and Goliath to the Knights of the Round Table to Charlemagne) is but one episode among many. The “literary” narratives themselves (again, as with the *Decameron*) constitute just a small portion of the total festivities, which also include dancing, singing, and acrobatics; the jongleuresque performance described by the poem is part and parcel of the feast that preceded it; and, finally, the banquet is only a single component of the chivalric tournament for which all the participants have come together. While much of our theater since the Renaissance has become more and more a singular, “text-oriented” event (Alter 186), occurring in a specific place, at a specific time, for a specific group of people all of whom have purchased tickets, medieval jongleuresque performance was an open-ended, multiform, multi-tiered phenomenon, occurring in various places, at various times, for (and in collusion with) various people.

Jongleuresque Dialogue in Don Quixote.

No discussion of theatricality—“radical” or otherwise—in *Don Quixote* would be complete without an acknowledgment of the crucial interrelationship that exists between Cervantes’ narrative and dramatic works. Although best-known today as the “inventor” of the modern novel, we should not forget that Cervantes originally saw himself (or, at least, *wanted* to see himself) as a dramatist, and that most of his narrative fiction was not published until relatively late in life. As is clearly evident in his prologue to his *Ocho comedias y ochos entremeses*, Cervantes genuinely

considered himself an "heir" to Lope de Rueda's theatrical tradition, and he was justly proud of the fact that his earliest literary successes—*Los tratos de Argel*, *La Numancia*, and *La batalla naval* (now lost)—had played themselves out, quite literally, on the *corral* stage. At the same time, however, he readily admits that with the coming of Lope de Vega, whom he famously christened "el monstruo de la naturaleza" (10), he found it impossible to locate an impresario willing to stage his plays. For this reason, he claims, he was left with no other recourse than to publish them in book form as a kind of consolation in his old age. And it is, thus, *not* coincidental that the complete title of this belated publication would include a caveat noting that many of these "new" works remain "unperformed." Throughout his prologue, Cervantes demonstrates an acute anxiety toward the dissemination in print of texts most readers—including the playwright himself—would consider inherently performative.

Many critics see in Cervantes' discomfort here with "publishing the performative" an ambivalence toward drama and fiction that profoundly informs much of his work on both sides of the generic divide. On the one hand, a number of scholars have argued that Cervantes' seemingly innate predilection toward "narrative" often causes him to "novelize" his theater. This is especially true, say Florencio Sevilla Arroyo and Antonio Rey Hazas, of his stage directions, which seem deliberately articulated toward readers rather than spectators ("Introducción" xxix). (In this, Cervantes anticipates by more than three hundred years a playwright like Eugene O'Neill, whose own stage directions are lushly poetic.) Spadaccini and Talens add to this analysis by commenting that "it is precisely the opposition between reading, on the one hand, and the witnessing of a staged performance, on the other, that provokes in Cervantes' discourse the necessity to inscribe the 'stage' in the written page," what they call the transformation of "theatricality into narrativity" (63). In fact, as Cory A. Reed provocatively argues, Cervantes' natural tendency toward "novelization" may very well have been a contributing factor in his lack of theatrical success: "Cervantes' extensive use

of novelistic elements in his drama may have rendered his *entremeses* unperformable within the context of contemporaneous theatrical production" (62).

Conversely, a number of critics have uncovered a rich "theatricality" in Cervantes' narrative works. Helen H. Reed, for instance, observes that what stands out in "Rinconete y Cortadillo" is precisely the fact that the two eponymous protagonists "are presented dramatically, characterized by external description and through dialogue, as though on stage" (75). This proclivity to "show" what other authors prefer to "tell" (75) creates a textuality in which imagery—especially "theatrical" imagery—provides Cervantes' solitary reader of the *Novelas ejemplares* with what Francisco Sánchez calls "the experience of being an 'audience'" (77). But this inscription of a "spectator consciousness" (Freedman 21) is by no means limited to Cervantes' short fiction. Verónica Azcue Castillón, in a comparison of "El retablo de las maravillas" with the well-known dispute over the "baciuelmo" in Part I of *Don Quixote*, suggests that the two generically different texts parallel each other in significant ways by highlighting the "indeterminación de los límites entre el teatro y la vida" (80). At the same time, Francisco Vivar indicates that the events surrounding Camacho's wedding are profoundly informed by what he calls "la sociedad del espectáculo" (83). Jay Farness argues that most of Part I, in fact, "organizes an ad hoc theater" that "improvises its play according to a specific Saturnalian logic of festival ritual that temporarily turns the world upside down" (106–07). This textually embedded "festive theater" (105) ultimately leads Cervantes to move from "climax to climax extracting all the melodrama in the air, working the imagined stage business to the hilt, even though the narrative, when viewed curiously or skeptically, contradicts such dramatic resolutions" (114). Jill Syverson-Stork, for her part, goes even further when she argues that the entire text of Cervantes' novel "abounds with theatrical technique" (9)—what she characterizes as his "dramatist's sense of timing, gesture, and movement through space" (99)—and that this inherent theatricality culminates with a "disappearing act performed by

the narrator" (33), whose metaphoric exit into the wings "afford[s] the characters greater apparent autonomy on 'stage'" (20). Again, for Syverson-Stork, as for so many other critics, the theatrical aspects of the novel are largely a function of Cervantes' "increasing reliance" on unmediated, literary dialogue (21).

Interestingly, the one obvious theatrical episode conspicuously absent in many of the comprehensive studies on the "theatricality" of *Don Quixote* is precisely Maese Pedro's puppet show, an episode in which the theoretical relationship between "literary dialogue" and "theater" is at its most problematic. It is to this episode we now turn, because, as we shall see, it is the embedded poetics of jongleuresque performance in the text—together with the residual traces of a latent "jongleuresque dialogue"—that ultimately mark the "theatricality" not only of this segment, but of the novel as a whole.

As we have already said, the Maese Pedro episode is part of a much larger section of the novel that begins some three chapters before and culminates with the puppet show itself. It is a segment in which Cervantes shrewdly locates the puppet theater along a continuum of popular performance, and in doing so, creates a kind of microcosm of the early Spanish theater. For, as with the simple stage associated with Lord's "singer of tales," the locus of Maese Pedro's puppet show is precisely an inn; and like the multiform jongleuresque performance described in *Flamenca*, the culminating puppet show is but one part of a total performance event that includes such non-literary elements as a trained animal act. In fact, the total theatrical "happening" actually begins not only before Maese Pedro arrives on the scene, but well before Don Quixote and Sancho themselves even arrive at their place of lodging. And it begins with simple acts of storytelling that are not far removed in form and function from the tales told by Zumthor's Inuit hunter who surrounds himself with his grandchildren as an audience.

Toward the end of Part II, chapter 24, Don Quixote, Sancho, and the young scholar are suddenly confronted with not one, but two examples of jongleuresque performance. As they travel

down the road, discussing the possibility of finding lodging at a nearby hermitage, they encounter the arms-carrier hastily making his way toward an unnamed town. When they inquire as to the reason for his haste he replies that he simply does not have time to discuss the matter, but that he will be spending the night at an inn located beyond the hermitage, and that if the travelers would like to know more, they should follow him to the inn where he will be glad to recount what he calls “maravillas” (II, 24; 225). Whether he has intended to or not, this arms-carrier has acted as his own barker by giving his potential audience a “teaser” of what lies in store for them if they come to his simple stage. And the advertising works so well that Don Quixote decides then and there against sojourning at the hermitage, preferring instead to seek out the “marvelous” show the errant performer has promised. Moreover, on the way to the inn, the simple theater Cervantes has introduced on a purely potential level is quickly realized in the form of a page who arrives singing *seguidillas* to himself as a way of lightening the burden of a tedious journey. Again, Don Quixote is so taken by this performance that he invites the page to accompany them to the inn, where he, too, can contribute to and participate in the anticipated marvelous theater.

It is significant that the theater represented in these two short episodes, especially the latter, is precisely that of the pilgrim theater of the *Canterbury Tales*, where, in the absence of professional performers, people must create their own entertainment as they go. It is also significant that Cervantes establishes several dichotomies between high-cultural and low-cultural approaches to this indispensable pastime, the most important of which deals specifically with questions of space. The scholar, clearly the voice of high culture, has expressed his strong desire to spend the night at the hermitage in the company of a man who, he claims, has a reputation for being a “buen cristiano, y muy discreto, y caritativo además” (II, 24; 225), even if—as he readily admits—the austerity of this hermit’s circumstances cannot rival that of “aquellos de los desiertos de Egipto, que se vestían de hojas de palma y

comían raíces de la tierra" (II, 24; 225). Given such a setting, in which water is likely to be the only beverage available (a fact confirmed a short time later when the travelers stop by the hermitage for a drink on their way to the inn), we can only imagine the corresponding lackluster entertainment to which they would be treated, regardless of the profundity of the intellectual exchange that might very well transpire. Don Quixote, on the other hand, a character so steeped in chivalric romances and ballads that plain reality has literally disappeared from his view, insists on following the "itinerant storyteller" to a setting more likely to provide a complete evening's entertainment, including proper food and beverage.

Thus, upon their arrival at the inn—a space Cervantes is careful to underline as such by insisting that Don Quixote "la juzgó por verdadera venta, y no por castillo, como solía" (II, 24; 229)—they immediately seek out the arms-carrier in order to coax out his story. And it is here that they make their initial approach toward Huston's simple stage. In essence, what they attempt to do is get the arms-carrier to fulfill his part of Huston's performative contract. He has promised to recount "maravillas" if they would come to the inn; they now present themselves as active "co-creators," eager to resume the immanent performative dialogue he has pledged to engage. Unfortunately, however, simply agreeing "to watch" (as Huston puts it) is not always enough; for although Don Quixote and company have seemingly fulfilled their part of the bargain, the arms-carrier still defers his promised performance, saying: "Más despacio, y no en pie, se ha de tomar el cuento de mis maravillas" (II, 25; 230). The arms-carrier's temporary refusal to engage his audience highlights the fact that it is not just the recounting of the narrative itself that matters; it is also the leisurely creation of an effective performance space within which that narrative can unfold, a creation he would prefer not to undertake while feeding his mule. Though the simple stage can spring into existence almost *anywhere*, its "timing"—as they say—is everything.

And it is here, then, that the economics of the simple stage

come into play. As anyone familiar with the activities of street performers knows, very few engage a crowd without at least inviting some kind of monetary remuneration for their work. "Watching" is one thing; compensation is something else altogether, as a medieval jongleur so pointedly reminded his own immediate audience several centuries ago:

El romanz es leído
Dat nos del vino;
si no tenedes dineros
echad allá unos peños,
que bien vos lo darán sobr'ellos.⁷

Hence, in response to the arms-carrier's performative reticence, Don Quixote humbly offers to help him with his mundane chores almost as a way of paying for the pending performance: "humildad que obligó al hombre a contarle con buena voluntad lo que le pedía" (II, 25; 230). By "pre-enacting" this required "payment," Don Quixote seeks to recompense the arms-carrier's goodwill through a kind of barter of labor. And it is really a remarkable offer on his part, since throughout the novel he exhibits a marked sense of his own rights and prerogatives as a knight-errant. The fact that he would agree to "lower" himself to the level of muleteer—that he would offer to perform manual labor, despite his social standing—demonstrates the clear importance of this economic exchange within the world of the jongleuresque stage. And it is only after this humble payment has taken place that the performer finally sits down and begins to weave his story of the "Braying Tale."

⁷ *Poema de mio Cid*, 3733–35. This explicit is believed to have been added to the manuscript of the *Poema de mio Cid* by a fourteenth-century jongleur. Its performative function is similar to the final lines of many seventeenth-century plays, which conclude with a quintessential moment of jongleuresque dialogue by having one of the actors acknowledge the spectators directly in order to ask for their applause. In citing these verses I have adopted the spelling and configuration employed by Steven Hess (70), among others.

Because the storyteller of any performance such as this is usually a single actor, the theater encapsulated in the story (or song or poem), although divided into various components, necessarily must come together through the figure of the performative narrator. But unlike a "literary" narrator, who more often than not slips unnoticed from the reader's view, disappearing into the text itself, a performative narrator is always already present. He or she is a corporeal entity whose voice—the vehicle of textual transmission—has a pitch and a timbre, and whose physical intrusion into the very real space of the listener cannot easily be ignored. The twenty-first-century reader of the *Decameron*, for instance, in the dazzling proliferation of days and narratives, can easily forget which character is telling which story (although this in no way detracts from the reading). The various listeners within the book, however, know all too well whose turn it is to narrate, and, in fact, since the storytelling activity is a literary contest of sorts, they devote at least some attention to manner in which it is told. The audience for such performances, then, like all theatrical spectators, must therefore juggle two contrastive artistic spaces. The first of these is the imaginative world that exists within the text, a space inhabited by the "characters" of the story whose actions and speech are a very real product of the exterior performer. The second is the physical world of the performance itself, the very same space inhabited by both the audience and the storyteller, the latter of whom physically creates the theoretical entity telling the tale. The only figure present in both spaces, of course, is this "narrator"—nothing less than a performative construct of the actor—who must function as a bridge between the two overlapping "worlds."

The arms-carrier begins, then, as do most performers on the simple stage, by addressing his audience directly in order to establish the imaginative setting of his tale. In Huston's words, he "unpacks [the] illusory space with his act" (76):

—Sabrán vuestas mercedes que en un lugar que está cuatro leguas y media desta venta sucedió que a un regidor dél, por

industria y engaño de una muchacha criada suya, y esto es largo de contar, le faltó un asno, y aunque el tal regidor hizo las diligencias posibles por hallarle, no fue posible. Quince días serían pasados, según es pública voz y fama, que el asno faltaba, cuando, estando en la plaza el regidor perdidoso, otro regidor del mismo pueblo le dijo... (II, 25; 230)

This brief "prologue," which ends with the promise of a direct quotation—that is, with the imminent realization of performative characterization—is, in fact, little more than a preamble to a burgeoning exchange of literary dialogue which (although interrupted by the narrative voice several times for editorial comment, clarification, and brief resetting of the imaginative scenery) continues for a number of paragraphs. In this complex interplay of description, narration, and characterization, the "Braying Tale" exhibits a structure not unlike the epics and *romances* performed countless times before in just such a tavern setting and in just such a manner. It is a text whose literary dialogue is frequently offset from the story by such formulaic snippets of jongleuresque dialogue (directed precisely toward the performer's audience) as "bien oiréis lo que dirá." Hence, the arms-carrier's performance, like that of countless other jongleurs before him, remains punctuated by such simple statements as: "respondió el hallador" (II, 25; 230), "dijo el otro" (II, 25; 231), etc. For the reader of *Don Quixote*, this story within a story is clearly part of the narrative structure of what has become known as a "novel"; it is just one among many narratives that make up the larger text. For the fictional audience inscribed within the frame story, however, the "Braying Tale" can be taken as nothing less than a piece of simple theater whose characters come to life through the vocal characterization of the single actor/narrator.

This simple theater is only the first of several texts, however, to which the audience will be treated during the evening. As the arms-carrier finishes his tale, Maese Pedro—without missing a beat, as it were—arrives on the scene with his fortune-telling ape and puppet show. At this, the innkeeper, who is undoubtedly

familiar with the multiform poetics of jongleuresque performance, gleefully announces the arrival of the puppeteer. Clearly he has spent many pleasurable evenings participating in such "total" entertainments and relishes the possibility that the arms-carrier's lively and entertaining story will be followed up by other stories and other shows. In fact, he is so excited by the prospect of a continuation of the burgeoning theatrical event currently underway that he makes the rather outrageous statement that, even if the inn were full, he would put the Duke of Alba out of his room in order to make a place for the newly arrived performers, a statement made all the more scandalous when we remember that Maese Pedro is, in reality, Ginés de Pasamonte, an escaped fugitive from the King's galleys.

The puppet show itself (and we will briefly skip over the Fortune-telling Ape for the moment), like the *cantares de gesta* from which it purportedly takes its material, features the voice of a single actor who will render all the necessary verbal aspects of the play. Despite the existence of a physical stage (complete with costumed "characters" and a proscenium of sorts), the boy actor must still create the imaginative space of the performance by giving his audience some crucial information on its origin and history. Unlike the opening of the "Braying Tale," however, which moves almost immediately into the "argumento," the puppet show's introduction moves much more slowly toward the actual story, pausing, as it does, to pointedly tie itself to the street performances of the ballad tradition and to highlight its predominant balladistic theme. (The boy narrator even sings a couple of lines from a *romance* as a way of underlining the performative context of his show.) In fact, this prologue moves from "program notes" to "play" in mid-sentence when its speaker, at long last, draws our attention to the puppets themselves, saying, "vean vuestas mercedes allí como está jugando a las tablas don Gaiferos" (II, 26; 240). When the boy actor finally does arrive at his story, he goes on at some length recounting its plot and describes not only the actions pantomimed by the puppets, but many of their psychological states as well; which is to say, his narration

alone determines the flow of the story.

This last fact seems to have bothered Haley somewhat: “the words themselves of the puppet play are not in the dramatic mode that even puppet plays require. The puppets do not have voices, let alone individual voices, supplied by the puppeteer” (152). In other words, what is ironic about this performance is that, while claiming to be taken “word for word” from the French chronicles and Spanish ballads, it is far less “dialogic” than most of these “precursor” texts (hence Haley’s complaint). In fact, throughout the puppet show there are only two instances of explicit literary dialogue. The first occurs when Charlemagne declares, “Harto os he dicho: miradlo” (II, 26; 241), while the second occurs when Melisendra (in a moment reminiscent of the *romance* “La esposa fiel”) ironically says to Gaiferos, “Caballero, si a Francia ides, / por Gaiferos preguntad” (II, 26; 243). Thus, not only does the entire “text” itself virtually belong to the single actor, but the vast majority of its discourse emanates from the voice of an all-too-literary narrator. Or, as Spadaccini and Talens note with regard to “El retablo de las maravillas,” “the wonders of [the] puppet theater will depend on the power of language” (56). But the irony of this, of course, is that despite the prominence of the narrative voice, the boy’s “narration” itself has converted his “audience” into “spectators”—that is, “hearers” become “viewers”—precisely because the aural formulaic locution, “bien oiréis lo que dirá,” so typical of *romancero* texts, has been pointedly transformed here into visual markers: “vean vuestras mercedes allí,” “miren vuestras mercedes,” etc.

Here we confront a thorny—though, admittedly, esoteric—question, one intrinsically raised by numerous critics who define jongleuresque performance as (only) a “semi-dramatic” mode (Surtz 22). Can this puppet show truly be considered “genuine” theater? The *cantares de gesta* and the *romances* are said to hint at—but ultimately lack—theatrical legitimacy, despite the clear performative nature of their inscribed literary “dialogue,” because they make no attempt at visual mimesis. As Dámaso Alonso argues, such texts are only “semi-representational”; they exist

somewhere halfway between narrative and drama (70). Maese Pedro's puppet show, on the other hand, stands accused of lacking a theatrical legitimacy because it contains virtually no dialogue, in spite of its strong visually mimetic components. Most people (including, I suspect, both Haley and Alonso) would certainly agree that the puppet show is nothing if not theater. But is this because the puppets pantomime the narrated actions, and thus embody, in the words of Jean Alter, a requisite theatrical "iconicity" (97)? Or is it because Cervantes' "singer of tales" vocalizes the story into existence? If we are inclined to take a strictly literary view we must insist that the actor/narrator is responsible for this theater, since the "text" (i.e., the linguistic component of his performance) is produced by him alone; in which case the puppet "show" itself becomes, in a Platonic sense, an even paler imitation of an already pale imitation. If, however, we cannot allow for a "theatrical text," the vast majority of whose composition consists of "narrative" rather than "dialogue," then we must locate the "theater" of this puppet show in the interaction between the puppet icons themselves (as does the puppeteer when he subtly privileges the "spectacular" over the "aural" within his *retable* by telling Don Quixote: "*operibus credite, et non verbis*" [II, 26; 239]). This, however, severely reduces Maese Pedro's "theater" to a kind of dumb show or pantomime not unlike that of the early silent films (or even opera for most modern monolingual audiences), a "theater" that cannot stand on its own without some kind of "writing" inscribed in the margins of the performance space. As Haley himself notes: "The assistant stands alongside the stage, yet he is a central figure in the spectacle. His physical position shows that he is not part of the play, yet the operation he performs from the sidelines is essential to it" (151).

In either case, as happens so very often in *Don Quixote*, Cervantes is already way ahead of us in moving beyond these kinds of questions. What is remarkable about this segment of the novel is that the thematic thread which ties the sequence of episodes together is the whole question of "performative mimesis," especially one that erases the usual boundaries of literary genre, es-

tablishing instead a more expansive notion of theater. In the "Braying Tale," for instance, the story itself revolves around the issue of vocal mimesis; that is, on the performative talent for imitating a voice not one's own. The two aldermen who wander the mountainside in search of the lost ass, braying as they go, do such a fine job of mimicking its voice that each mistakes the other for the real thing, and not once, but several times, each ends up finding the other instead of the missing animal. And thus, as an echo of the "dialogue" vocally created here by the single performer between these two characters, the story itself presents a mimetic "dialogue" between the two braying aldermen so exquisite that the characters have to devise a numerical system of brays in order to distinguish the "acting" from the real thing. The story is, in essence, a contemplation on the poetics of performative representation. For, the first time each man runs mistakenly toward an ass that turns out only to be the other alderman, each praises the other's braying as if both were deferential nominees for the title of best actor at the Academy Awards.

The central issue of the Fortune-telling Ape episode, on the other hand, is not that of vocal mimesis (although that certainly does play a part), but of theatrical personification, especially a personification that pretends precisely not to be a mimetic representation. Maese Pedro, as we have already observed, is a stage name—an alias—for Ginés de Pasamonte. Thus, the "puppeteer" who greets Don Quixote and Sancho is as much a "dramatic character" as is, say, "Segismundo," while the actor who plays him, Ginés, must always be wary of maintaining a believable performance out of fear that he will be caught by the Santa Hermandad who would undoubtedly recapture him if given the chance. (Ginés's eyepatch, incidentally, functions as both disguise and theatrical mask; it allows him to both "watch" and "be watched" at one and the same time.) This, of course, draws our attention to the performative similarities between "Maese Pedro" and "Don Quixote," whose own identity is also a mimetic construct. Hence, the "dialogue" between these two "characters" is an echo of the ongoing dialogue throughout the novel in which various people

assume what can only be called "theatrical roles" in order to engage Don Quixote on his level of imaginative discourse.

Moreover, and in stark contrast to the kind of trained animals we find in numerous illuminated manuscripts, whose performances are generally confined to demonstrating some kind of acrobatic trick, the Fortune-telling Ape also engages in an anthropomorphic mimesis by pretending to be endowed with superhuman cognitive powers.⁸ In a paradigmatic reversal of the vocal mimesis of the "Braying Tale," in which the human characters mimic the "speech" of animals, the Fortune-telling Ape feigns human speech by pretending to whisper into the ear of Maese Pedro, who pretends to understand him and then pretends to "relay" the information to his audience. And as in the episode in which the two aldermen praise each other's braying, Don Quixote becomes a theater critic, pondering the seemingly unnatural abilities of the performers. Yet instead of seeing and properly appreciating mere representation where it exists, like the agents of the "Santo Oficio" whom he invokes (II, 25; 237), Don Quixote attributes this performance to some kind of Faustian bargain. His criticism of the poetics of this performative representation echoes the complaints of churchmen throughout the entire medieval period (and beyond) that performative representation is an inherently evil activity, whose essence must certainly be something nefarious. (It is perhaps not rhetorically coincidental that Maese Pedro's theatrical "mask" covers his *left* eye, and thus serves to obscure his "sinister" motives.)

If the "Braying Tale" and the "Adventure of the Fortune-telling Ape" exist as meditations on performers and their representations, the puppet show complicates this meditation by bifurcating the mimesis between two very different performative elements: namely, the puppets and the narrator. In other words, within the puppet show there no longer exists a one-to-one relationship between the individual performer and his creation.

⁸ For a comprehensive study on medieval images of performance, including the performance of trained animals, see Davidson.

Thus, by juxtaposing the “Braying Tale” and the “Adventure of the Fortune-telling Ape” with the culminating puppet show, all of which occur during a single performance event that gets progressively more complex with each new component, Cervantes has created a kind of allegory of theater history. (Haley even describes the interactive braying of the aldermen as “antiphonal” [149] and thus ties it—even if unintentionally—to the commonly recognized origins of medieval liturgical drama). By locating this multiform theatrical world within the context of the pilgrimage and its roadside taverns and inns, Cervantes has demonstrated the enduring strength of the jongleuresque tradition, ubiquitous in Spanish society even at the height of Lope de Vega’s stellar career as a professional dramatist. In essence, the voyage from the open countryside to the enclosed inn is not just a physical journey; Don Quixote’s meandering route from the arms-carrier’s simple theater to Maese Pedro’s *retablo* can also be seen metaphorically as the performative itinerary from *ad hoc* stage to delimited *corral*.

And this brings us back to our point of departure, to the central moment of jongleuresque dialogue in the text, when the narrator (that is, Cervantes’ narrator) tells us that “el trujamán comenzó a decir lo que oírás y verá el que le oyere o viere el capítulo siguiente” (II, 25; 239). What is most striking about this locution is precisely the way in which it uncannily echoes the aforementioned *romancero* formula: “bien oiréis lo que dirá.” This echo, of course, is highly appropriate here precisely because Maese Pedro’s young assistant is about to become a jongleuresque narrator, recounting the story of Gaiferos and Melisendra within a performance purportedly based on a cycle of ballads in which this very locution (i.e., “bien oiréis...”) occurs not once but four times. In this, the echo functions as a kind of inside joke for those perceptive enough to hear it. More importantly, however, by setting up the next chapter in this particular way, the narrator (again, Cervantes’ narrator) inscribes himself performatively within the jongleuresque tradition. For a very brief instant he becomes the fool grimacing at the reader, the jongleur speaking

to the crowd, the actor making an aside to the audience. In essence—to borrow and reformulate Haley's apt phrase—the *theater* occurring at the inn has been subtly expanded here to encompass the *narrator* explicitly. And within the dialogic framework established by this formulaic echo, the reader, then, necessarily (and ironically) becomes a "hearer" of sorts simply by virtue of his position opposite the jongleuresque narrator (in direct contrast to the book's interior audience who, as we have said, become "viewers" opposite the boy narrator).

It might be objected, of course, that the syntactic structure of the sentence in question makes this reading a bit hard to sustain, especially given the existence of the indirect object pronoun immediately preceding the verb "oyere." Clearly, the "le" refers to the "trujamán," which is precisely why Haley ascribes to him the oral action of the sentence while ascribing to the book its visual action. Yet, what is at stake here is not the issue of whom is being heard, but who is doing the hearing. And on this point, the syntax actually supports my reading in a number of ways. Within the *romancero* itself the "bien oiréis" formula always functions to set up the imitation of "character dialogue" by the jongleuresque narrator whose mimetic representation of this secondary speech will be "heard" not only by the other characters within the text, but by the performer's own exterior audience as well (which is precisely why many scholars have sought to classify the *romancero* as a "semi-dramatic" form). The very same dynamic holds true for Cervantes' narrator here the minute he inscribes himself within this oral tradition. By echoing the "bien oiréis" formula he highlights the fact that the young assistant's words will be "heard" both by Maese Pedro's interior spectators and by Cervantes' exterior audience at one and the same time. The syntactic existence of the indirect object pronoun does not change this; the assistant's words must pass through the narrator on their way to both the interior and exterior audiences.

On the other hand, if Cervantes is deliberately mimicking the *romancero* formula, we are faced with the nagging issue of his decision in this sentence to change the traditional second-person

plural conjugation of these verbs into a third-person singular. In other words, why does “oiréis” become “oirá?” And to whom does this new third-person singular subject pronoun refer? In Haley’s reading, of course, there are actually two interconnected subject pronouns at play: the “el que viere” refers to the reader, while the “el que oyere” refers to the “spectator at the inn” (150). But this in itself raises a number of questions. Having just told us, for instance, that “everyone” at the inn had gathered for the performance (“Puestos, pues, todos cuantos había en la venta, y algunos en pie, frontero del retablo” [II, 25; 239]), why would the narrator switch from an established plurality to an unprecedented singularity when conjugating the verbs that follow? Moreover, what is the function of the future subjunctive verb tense? After all, while he may not know the exact identity of the reader at hand, having enumerated the various characters now sitting in front of the *retablo* (among them Don Quixote, Sancho, the page, etc.), there would seem to be little reason for the narrator to posit such an open-ended “listening” audience. Taking both these issues into account—and accepting for the moment Haley’s reading—we might be intrepid enough copy editors to recommend that Cervantes rework this sentence to read something like this: “el trujamán comenzó a decir lo que oirán los que estaban en la venta o verá el que viere el capítulo siguiente.”

Having said that, however, what I would like to suggest is that Cervantes deliberately seeks to create a narrative ambiguity here. For, as we have said, this very brief jongleuresque moment occurs at the center point of what is essentially an extended exploration of the multifaceted performative poetics of the early Spanish stage, from simple storytelling to trained animal acts to elaborately mounted plays (relatively speaking). What would seem to be lacking in this theatrical microcosm, however, especially at a time and place where universal literacy was not even dreamt of, let alone achieved, is a representation of reading aloud as a form of communal entertainment (as happens in the first part of the novel when the priest reads “El curioso impertinente” to a slightly different tavern audience). Yet, by inscribing

himself within the jongleuresque poetics of the oral tradition, the narrator here posits his "text" not only as something he is in the process of narrating, but also as a written document that may be experienced in two different ways at some hypothetical future date: it may be "seen" by a literate reader, or it may be "heard" by someone who sits listening to that hypothetical reader read aloud.⁹ The future-subjunctive listener becomes the theoretical audience for a performance constructed by a future-subjunctive reader. In essence, what the narrator does is fold the narrative back on itself, placing himself in a position usually occupied by those literary characters whose words must pass through a jongleuresque performer in order to be "heard." He draws attention to this fact in the first sentence of the next chapter by deliberately uttering an implied first-person pronoun: "Callaron todos, tirios y troyanos, *quiero decir*, pendientes estaban todos los que el retablo miraban" (II, 25; 239; my emphasis). This verbal intrusion into the narrative space—which, for all other intents and purposes, is entirely superfluous here—serves to highlight the underlying performative nature of reading aloud. In the mouth of Cervantes' future-subjunctive (oral) reader, this narrator suddenly and inevitably becomes a physical entity, a corporeal and vocal "yo;" just as the possessive pronoun embedded in the modern title of the *Poema de mio Cid*—which is taken from an epithet that frequently appears within the text itself—is a vestige of the very real performer who originally composed the epic narrative.

This is truly a remarkable moment within the text because it functions to create a significant performative context for the en-

⁹In his new translation of *Don Quixote*, John Rutherford perceptively renders the final sentence of chapter 25 as follows: "With everyone at the inn in front of the puppet theatre, some of them standing, and with Don Quixote, Sancho, the page and the cousin in the best seats, the announcer began to say what anyone who reads the next chapter or has it read to him will see or hear" (II, 25; 662). Compare this to the appended subject heading of Part II, chapter 66, whose belated author seems to have understood Cervantes' earlier authorial intent perfectly, and upon whom Rutherford seems to have based his own translation: "Que trata de lo que verá el que lo leyere, o lo oirá el que lo escuchare leer" (II, 66; 541).

tire novel. It can be seen as a kind of backward glance towards the orality that lies at the origins of both literature and theater. According to Cervantes' narrator, his very narration (i.e., the printed text of *Don Quixote*) can literally be read, to borrow a phrase from Sylvia Huot's elegant study *From Song to Book*, "as a script prepared...for future presentation by others" (42).¹⁰ And thus, in contrast to Syverson-Stork's contention that the theatrical aspects of the novel reveal themselves more and more as the narrator slowly moves "off stage" (33), I would argue that the exact opposite is true. *Don Quixote* is at its *most* theatrical when its narrator, like Maese Pedro's young jongleuresque apprentice, moves front and center in order to draw attention to himself as a performative construct. For it is at this moment that Cervantes—the frustrated dramatist—achieves his greatest success as a "scriptwriter," implicitly recognizing that *Don Quixote* could (and would) be "performed" far more often than all of his plays combined. It is at this moment—when Cervantes deliberately conjures up images of future readers and listeners "co-creating" an intimate readers theater (whether in a darkened tavern or on board a ship bound for the Americas)—that Huston's performative contract is most clearly articulated in the text. It is at this radically theatrical moment that the essence of theater fully emerges within a new literary genre said to be the very antithesis of drama.

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¹⁰ The same can also be said of the *Poema de mio Cid*. For even if one accepts Colin Smith's thesis that this epic is the exclusive product of Per Abat's thirteenth-century literary imagination (73), the text's subsequent life as a "script" for future jongleuresque performances cannot be denied, as Smith himself observes (207).

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