Cervantes' "Coloquio de los perros," a Novel-Dialogue

L. A. Murillo


Stable URL:
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0026-8232%28196102%2958%3A3%3C174%3AC%22DLPA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-X

_Modern Philology_ is currently published by The University of Chicago Press.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at http://www.jstor.org/journals/ucpress.html.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

The JSTOR Archive is a trusted digital repository providing for long-term preservation and access to leading academic journals and scholarly literature from around the world. The Archive is supported by libraries, scholarly societies, publishers, and foundations. It is an initiative of JSTOR, a not-for-profit organization with a mission to help the scholarly community take advantage of advances in technology. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.
CERVANTES' COLOQUIO DE LOS PERROS, A NOVEL-DIALOGUE

L. A. MURILLO

I

The colloquy of the dogs is generally considered to be Cervantes' most original work after the *Quijote*. Perhaps because the obvious quality of Cervantes the narrator of matured and conscious powers readily disarmed the enchanted analyst, critical opinion has sanctioned the little masterpiece with this distinction without a really determined effort to isolate or to define, with any degree of precision, the truly original features of the conversation between Cipión and Berganza. The complex nature of that Cervantine quality is, of course, the very obstacle to the comprehending of the ultimate simplicity of the colloquy's narrative features, compressed as they are in a design of minor dimensions. The colloquy is, first of all, a rare work of imagination; yet, as a "cuadro de costumbres" it shows us Cervantes at his best in the art of realistic description of types and scenes. Beyond this we perceive, on the one hand, that detached and ironical, half-censorious, half-indulgent, discreetly sympathetic understanding of human life, human weakness and wile, of Cervantes the exemplary moralist and exemplary novelist. On the other hand we are drawn to the artful manner in which he has imbued the two worthy canines with human affections, differences, feelings, and outlooks—in short, to his characterization of the dogs. Then, finally, synthesizing these perceptions, we shall discern an originality like that of *Don Quijote*, the result of the transformation worked by Cervantes in the art of narration: the unfolding of a personality within the confines of circumstantial actions. But *Don Quijote* is a complex, dense production without essential ties to previous works. A summation of previous novelistic themes and techniques, its over-all plan is altogether different and vaster than any one of them. In this respect, also, the colloquy is a minor work. Only when we have reduced this complexity of elements to the point where we grasp the significance of the exotic fusion of form and content already indicated in the title, do

1 The first of a line of scholars and critical commentators in the twentieth century. Francisco A. de Icaza set down an appreciation which may be considered the point of departure for contemporary evaluation of the *Coloquio*: "'Los cuentos—como dice Cipión a Berganza—unos encierran la gracia en ellos mismos, otros en el modo de contarlos,' y esta novela del *Coloquio de los perros* tiene la gracia en ambas cosas. Sin lo que Cervantes llama preambulos y ornamentos de palabras, daría contento conocer la historia picaresca del perro aventurero; pero contada como lo está, es, con el *Quijote*, la obra de imaginación más original, interesante y perfecta de aquellos tiempos" (Las "Novelas ejemplares" de Cervantes, sus críticos, sus modelos literarios, sus modelos vivos, y su influencia en el arte [1st ed., 1901, 2d ed., Madrid, 1915], p. 220). The following notes will provide as complete a reference as space permits to the more recent critical studies on the *Coloquio*. In this way the present study may partially fill the need for the complete bibliographical study on the *Coloquio* which Agustín G. de Ameza and Mayo would have provided had he lived to complete his extensive study of Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares*. The study is indispensable to the Cervantes scholar, in spite of Castro's misgivings about it. Castro related the thought of Cervantes to the intellectual currents of sixteenth-century Europe. Chap. VII (pp. 321 ff.) takes up several aspects of the *Coloquio*. The study is indispensable to the Cervantes scholar, in spite of Castro's misgivings about it. Castro's more recent study, "La ejemplaridad de las novelas cervantinas," *NRFH*, II (1948), 319–32, and the other articles cited have been collected in *Seminarios y estudios españoles* (Princeton, 1956) and *Hacia Cervantes* (Madrid, 1957).

we isolate the one feature that explains both the components and the method of this Cervantine alchemy: the containment of a narrative substance within a dialogue form, novela y coloquio.¹

The purpose of this article is to outline the manner in which novel and dialogue have been combined and to suggest an area of relevancy in which the originality of the Coloquio may be explained by reference to this unusual combination. The novel-dialogue, Novela y coloquio de los perros, is in turn inclosed within another

¹ See Ameztia’s explanation of novela y coloquio in the Introduction to his critical edition, El casamiento engañoso y el Coloquio de los perros... edición crítica con introducción y notas (Madrid, 1912), p. 421. The question of Cervantes’ originality in the Coloquio has evolved, of course, first from the study and consideration of the possible sources or models and then from a further comparison with works of similar form or of relevant content (e.g., the plebescito). Icaza’s purpose in his remarks on the Coloquio was to correct and discredit the supposition that it was an imitation of Apuleius’ The Golden Ass. Cervantes, he argued, had worked out a form for the Coloquio which broke with literary precedents and models; and its originality, historical verity, and artistic realism proceeded from Cervantes’ powers of direct observation. Ameztia also explained the originality of the Coloquio as a close imitation of reality (pp. 95–98). Rudolph Schevill and Adolfo Bonilla stressed the Coloquio’s literary value as a “cuadro de costumbres” in the Introduction to their edition of the novels (Madrid, 1925), III, 400.

The question of sources for the Coloquio is twofold: literary and historical. Chaps. v and vi of Ameztia’s Introduction are the fullest study on the historical sources and background, but the notes to the Schevilli-Bonilla edition and the Rodriguez Marín edition (Clásicos Castellanos; see n. 6) are important. See also N. Alonso Cortés, “Los perros de Mahudes,” RFE, XXXVI (1942), 298–302. At the time of his death (1955) Ameztia was working on the second volume of the extensive study, Cervantes, creador de la novela corta española, introducción a la edición crítica y comentada de las “Novelas ejemplares” (2 vols.; Madrid, 1956–58), in which he dwelt again upon the many questions concerning the Coloquio. His discussion of historical references and literary sources is very complete and methodical, especially the discussion of Lucan-esque influence, but unfortunately the unfinished chapter on the Coloquio is entirely without bibliographical notation. While conceding the critical importance of recent studies on the colloquy (e.g., Casalduero’s), Ameztia reaffirmed his earlier opinion on Cervantes’ originality.

Frank Pierce, also, has summarized the earlier studies on possible literary sources and influences in “Cervantes’ ‘The Animal Fable,’” Atlántico, 555, 103–15. On two occasions, in those rhapsodic passages in praise of Lucan, Menéndez y Pelayo insisted upon the resemblance between the Coloquio and Lucan-esque novel, El casamiento engañoso,² where (in the typically Cervantine way of disclaiming direct authorship while inventing a fictitious one) it has been set down by Campuzano, who overheard the dogs at the hospital during a night’s insomnia but who now falls asleep while Peralta (and the reader) reads. In his manner of reporting the dogs’ conversation, Cervantes followed the traditional, the simplest and most narrow method for the dialogue, understanding its form to be a conversa-

² See Ameztia’s explanation of novela y coloquio in the Introduction to his critical edition, El casamiento engañoso y el Coloquio de los perros... edición crítica con introducción y notas (Madrid, 1912), p. 421. The question of Cervantes’ originality in the Coloquio has evolved, of course, first from the study and consideration of the possible sources or models and then from a further comparison with works of similar form or of relevant content (e.g., the plebescito). Icaza’s purpose in his remarks on the Coloquio was to correct and discredit the supposition that it was an imitation of Apuleius’ The Golden Ass. Cervantes, he argued, had worked out a form for the Coloquio which broke with literary precedents and models; and its originality, historical verity, and artistic realism proceeded from Cervantes’ powers of direct observation. Ameztia also explained the originality of the Coloquio as a close imitation of reality (pp. 95–98). Rudolph Schevill and Adolfo Bonilla stressed the Coloquio’s literary value as a “cuadro de costumbres” in the Introduction to their edition of the novels (Madrid, 1925), III, 400.

The question of sources for the Coloquio is twofold: literary and historical. Chaps. v and vi of Ameztia’s Introduction are the fullest study on the historical sources and background, but the notes to the Schevilli-Bonilla edition and the Rodríguez Marín edition (Clásicos Castellanos; see n. 6) are important. See also N. Alonso Cortés, “Los perros de Mahudes,” RFE, XXXVI (1942), 298–302. At the time of his death (1955) Ameztia was working on the second volume of the extensive study, Cervantes, creador de la novela corta española, introducción a la edición crítica y comentada de las “Novelas ejemplares” (2 vols.; Madrid, 1956–58), in which he dwelt again upon the many questions concerning the Coloquio. His discussion of historical references and literary sources is very complete and methodical, especially the discussion of Lucan-esque influence, but unfortunately the unfinished chapter on the Coloquio is entirely without bibliographical notation. While conceding the critical importance of recent studies on the colloquy (e.g., Casalduero’s), Ameztia reaffirmed his earlier opinion on Cervantes’ originality.

Frank Pierce, also, has summarized the earlier studies on possible literary sources and influences in “Cervantes’ ‘The Animal Fable,’” Atlántico, 555, 103–15. On two occasions, in those rhapsodic passages in praise of Lucan, Menéndez y Pelayo insisted upon the resemblance between the Coloquio and Lucan-esque
tion between a source and a listener. He was aware that in the novel-dialogue he had attained a new level of narration peculiar to the work and that its ingeniousness was its very simple complexity; *artificio, invención,* are the terms Peralta uses in Spain. In the fifteenth century Pero Díaz de Toledo *fabla de dos,* *uno que pregunta,* *otro que responde.*

Throughout the sixteenth century the prose dialogue had been a favorite genre for humanists and moralists writing in the vernacular.  

The prose dialogue is primarily a manner of exposition, and its principal feature is its dialectical structure. In most cases the persistence of this dialectic in the sixteenth-century dialogue corresponded to the intellectual importance that the author attached to his work. The dialectic was sharp and analytical if his purpose was satire, as in the case of the two dialogues by Alfonso de Valdés and the anonymous *Peregrinaciones de Pedro de Urdemalas* (ca. 1557); censorious and diagnostic if his purpose was moralistic, as in the case of Pedro de Luján’s *Coloquitos matrimoniales* (1550); but weak and scarcely evident if his intent were only to convey information, as in the case of Pero Mexía’s *Diálogos o coloquios* (1547) and the numerous dialogues of informative nature. Further, the dialectical starting point and procedure formed the dialogue’s structure of ideas, and the characters who spoke them were usually together by a fantasy. *Coloquio* referred to the form of a genre that was traditionally didactic, moralistic and censorious, and even mordantly satirical, and that could easily include philosophical or miscellaneous comment.

Throughout the sixteenth century Spain the prose dialogue had been a favorite genre for humanists and moralists writing in the vernacular.  

The prose dialogue is primarily a manner of exposition, and its principal feature is its dialectical structure. In most cases the persistence of this dialectic in the sixteenth-century dialogue corresponded to the intellectual importance that the author attached to his work. The dialectic was sharp and analytical if his purpose was satire, as in the case of the two dialogues by Alfonso de Valdés and the anonymous *Peregrinaciones de Pedro de Urdemalas* (ca. 1557); censorious and diagnostic if his purpose was moralistic, as in the case of Pedro de Luján’s *Coloquitos matrimoniales* (1550); but weak and scarcely evident if his intent were only to convey information, as in the case of Pero Mexía’s *Diálogos o coloquios* (1547) and the numerous dialogues of informative nature. Further, the dialectical starting point and procedure formed the dialogue’s structure of ideas, and the characters who spoke them were usually together by a fantasy. *Coloquio* referred to the form of a genre that was traditionally didactic, moralistic and censorious, and even mordantly satirical, and that could easily include philosophical or miscellaneous comment.

Throughout the sixteenth century Spain the prose dialogue had been a favorite genre for humanists and moralists writing in the vernacular.  

The prose dialogue is primarily a manner of exposition, and its principal feature is its dialectical structure. In most cases the persistence of this dialectic in the sixteenth-century dialogue corresponded to the intellectual importance that the author attached to his work. The dialectic was sharp and analytical if his purpose was satire, as in the case of the two dialogues by Alfonso de Valdés and the anonymous *Peregrinaciones de Pedro de Urdemalas* (ca. 1557); censorious and diagnostic if his purpose was moralistic, as in the case of Pedro de Luján’s *Coloquitos matrimoniales* (1550); but weak and scarcely evident if his intent were only to convey information, as in the case of Pero Mexía’s *Diálogos o coloquios* (1547) and the numerous dialogues of informative nature. Further, the dialectical starting point and procedure formed the dialogue’s structure of ideas, and the characters who spoke them were usually together by a fantasy. *Coloquio* referred to the form of a genre that was traditionally didactic, moralistic and censorious, and even mordantly satirical, and that could easily include philosophical or miscellaneous comment.

Throughout the sixteenth century Spain the prose dialogue had been a favorite genre for humanists and moralists writing in the vernacular.  

The prose dialogue is primarily a manner of exposition, and its principal feature is its dialectical structure. In most cases the persistence of this dialectic in the sixteenth-century dialogue corresponded to the intellectual importance that the author attached to his work. The dialectic was sharp and analytical if his purpose was satire, as in the case of the two dialogues by Alfonso de Valdés and the anonymous *Peregrinaciones de Pedro de Urdemalas* (ca. 1557); censorious and diagnostic if his purpose was moralistic, as in the case of Pedro de Luján’s *Coloquitos matrimoniales* (1550); but weak and scarcely evident if his intent were only to convey information, as in the case of Pero Mexía’s *Diálogos o coloquios* (1547) and the numerous dialogues of informative nature. Further, the dialectical starting point and procedure formed the dialogue’s structure of ideas, and the characters who spoke them were usually together by a fantasy. *Coloquio* referred to the form of a genre that was traditionally didactic, moralistic and censorious, and even mordantly satirical, and that could easily include philosophical or miscellaneous comment.
secondary in importance. There were, of course, several notable exceptions, Juan de Valdés' *Diálogo de la lengua*, for example. The independence of the intellectual structure from characters gave the dialogue form that flexibility which made possible its wide and various application to a broad range of subject matter and interests, but it also contributed heavily to the awkward and loose nature of many of the productions offered to the public a manera de diálogo, as a kind of entertaining sugar-coating to a pedagogical pill.\footnote{In the half-century preceding the writing of the *Coloquio* (the period in which Cervantes grew up and in which his mind and outlook formed and his literary tastes matured) the prose dialogue acquired this special use in the hands of lay and ecclesiastical moralists. It is interesting to note the explanation and defense of the use of the dialogue form by the Dominican Fray Francisco Mexía in 1555, for this use of the dialogue form for an obvious pedagogical and moralistic end is exactly the "exemplary" nature of the dialogue which Cervantes rather humoristically manipulated in devising a set of virtuous dog characterizations that were also a criticism of immorality and deception. Fray Francisco Mexía is describing the expository style of the dialogue, which he calls "manera casera y manual [My only alteration of the text has been to add accent marks]. . . . por ser succinta que toca a caso, y está en el punto en cualquiera género de causa que tomare el orador entre manos. . . . Esta manera de plática cierra a dos por tres con su adversario, y dando toque franco muchas veces se retira con tan lindo portento, which is, if carefully considered, insufficient and gratuitous for explaining his thesis) by which Cervantes means to make his fantasy seem more likely or real (cesostmil). These very limitations produce that effect of "openness" because the novel-dialogue is so completely self-inclosed in its own dimensions or perspectives. This was an innovation on the part of Cervantes, who was giving an original form to a long-established genre.} The main artistic faults of the Spanish dialogues were due to the author's unwillingness to do more for his work than provide a dialogue frame for his exposition or to his failure to perceive that the successful dialogue was a result of the fusion of ideas and character. The unique nature of Cervantes' *Coloquio* in relation to this extensive literature of dialogues, with its wide variety of techniques and character types, from historical persons to fantastical creatures, is that the skeletal structure of ideas has been developed into the unfolding of characterization.

The novelistic nature of the *Coloquio* does not mainly depend upon the narrative, the adventures of Berganza, but upon the characterizations of the dogs; and, as a means to this end, the dialogue form that sustains the pressure and tensions of the severe limitations which Cervantes imposed upon the conversation is more important than the autobiographical series of adventures.\footnote{In his notes on the *Coloquio*, Carlos Blanco Aguiaña, following A. Castro, emphasizes the importance of dialogue (not the dialogue form, as such) for understanding Cervantes' novelistic purpose: "la novela es el diálogo, con todas sus divagaciones y tangentes, y la vida de Berganza, aunque central, es sólo una de sus partes (352)" ("Cervantes y la picaresca, notas sobre dos tipos de realismo," *NRFH*, XI [1957], 313-42). Blanco Aguiña concludes that the dogs' conversation remains "open" and "inconclusive" at its close, as a consequence of Cervantes' many-sided, complex, and optimistic comprehension of reality. But he has not taken into consideration those exact limitations upon the conversation (aside from the general idea of portento, which is, if carefully considered, insufficient and gratuitous for explaining his thesis) by which Cervantes means to make his fantasy seem more likely or real (cesostmil). These very limitations produce that effect of "openness" because the novel-dialogue is so completely self-inclosed in its own dimensions or perspectives. This was an innovation on the part of Cervantes, who was giving an original form to a long-established genre. Blanco Aguiña errs if he believes that Cervantes introduced a technical innovation when he used the direct method of dialogue (p. 384, n. 42).} The colloquy consists entirely of the dogs' discourse; its case is not that of the *Quijote*, where the narrative is exterior to and complements the dialogue for the unfolding of character. We're it not for its limitations of form, which are intrinsic to the dialogue as a literary genre, the discourse of the dogs would differ less from that of the conversations between Don Quijote and Sancho. One work is a novel; the other, a novel-dialogue. In the *Quijote* the dialogue springs and grows from the being of the character who speaks, and it is through their discourse that Don Quijote and Sancho and some of the other very vivid characters are developed. This dialogic
art, free and unconventional, belongs properly to the novel and not to the theater, in which the dialogue must conform to the exigencies of the action and which was a barrier rather than an aid to Cervantes' artistry. The limitations to the discourse in a dialogue are due not to its action or to its character but to the expository structure of ideas; and this is true of even the more artistic dialogues, like those based on Lucianesque models.

A novel-dialogue, the colloquy of the dogs is a combination of dialectic and characterization, and its limitations to the discourse are due to the nature of its characters. This ingenious combination, the truly novelistic aspect of the colloquy, would be overlooked by the zealous critics of the early years of the present century in their efforts to trace the historical sources of each of the episodes. But among recent critics Joaquín Casalduero and Pedro Lain Entralgo have paid close attention to the development of themes within the series of episodes. However complete and self-contained the episodes may be in themselves, they do not constitute a narrative either severally or as a whole. By themselves they are but vignettes or character sketches, and they acquire narrative significance only as they are related to Berganza's life and add to their moral and critical meaning as they contribute to his life's education. The Coloquio, rather than a tale of a servant serving many masters, is, in fact, a story of apprenticeship in life, a pedagogy in action. It is a disillusioned, a tried and taught Berganza who tells the story of his experiences from a pup to his present service at the hospital. Had Cervantes been more interested in relating adventures or even incidents from his own experience, he might easily have expanded the work to include any number of them, and the restrictions he has placed upon the conversation of the dogs would have been unnecessary and meaningless. The decisive feature of Cervantes' innovation is the orderly alignment first, and then the progressive displacement of a series of limitations to the conversing of the dogs, a procedure unlike that of any other dialogue with which the Coloquio could conceivably be compared. Berganza's narrative and Cipión's commentary coincide in the single motive toward the ideal of the delightful tale. As in the Quijote, the constructive instinct of Cervantes has here worked by a method of advancing and receding periods, in which the suspense of the central theme is developed by a series of interruptions that subject

11 Casalduero's brilliant synthesis of the two novels (see n. 4 above) is the result of a systematic analysis of the psychological and ethical content which correspondingly uncovers a new depth in their aesthetic qualities. Lain Entralgo's essay, "Coloquio de los perros, soliloquio de Cervantes," first published in Santa Cruz (U. de Valladolid), II, No. 5 (1947), is available in three other publications, Vestigios (Madrid, 1948), La aventura de leer (Madrid, 1956), and, from which I quote below, Mis páginas preferidas, Bibl. Románica Hispánica (Madrid, 1958), pp. 47–72.

12 The complexity of Cervantine narration provides at least two planes of action: first, the past action of Berganza's experiences, and, second, his present interpretation of them, which is developed through the dialectical interchanges with Cipión. But, as neither one of these is given to us as concluded in terms of characterization, their inconclusiveness provides a "problematical" third level of action within the present action of the dialogue itself in which the reader is invited to intervene imaginatively (interpret) in order to conclude the exemplary (pedagogic) nature of the whole. L. J. Woodward develops this point and the theme of tropelia in "El casamiento engafioso y el Coloquio de los perros," BHS. XXXVI (1959), 80–87.

13 William C. Atkinson has ignored the importance of dialogue, or discourse, in the narrative art of Cervantes, and hence fails to see the true originality of the colloquy, denying that it is a "short story" because it lacks a fable ("Cervantes, El Panciano, and the Novelas ejemplares," HR, XVI [1948], 189–208). The fable is not there, of course, in the traditional sense; the fable consists of an artificio of dog characterizations. In the fable of talking dogs Cervantes found a unique form for creation through dialogue alone, and his accomplishment, one that would be within the reach only of the highest artistic powers, should be understood as that of having transformed the prose dialogue from an expository form to a narrative one.
CERVANTES' "COLOQUIO DE LOS PERROS"

II

The dogs' first utterances of surprise and wonder at the unnatural gift of speech that has been bestowed upon them are a continuation, an unexpected development, of the detailed rationalizations of Campuzano and the incredulity and reservations of Peralta that form the framework of the dialogue. Campuzano has wondered many times if what he heard in a state of wakefulness was not in fact a dream, for, although he wrote what the dogs said, he could not have invented (imagined) their discourse. And Peralta, after the first exclamation of disbelief, and somewhat tempered by these sincere reasonings, agrees to read the Coloquio as a work of art. At this point, then, the reader is invited to take up the problematical product of Campuzano's experience as an aesthetic reality. The conversation will be authentic in the realm of human imagination. But it is exactly this realm that becomes problematical again the moment the dogs begin to speak. For the dogs, who were themselves real in the life of Valladolid, now have come to imaginary life in the limited sphere of rational human speech. Their problematical existence in the rational world of man is the dialectical situation of their discourse. As they speak, they acquire rational reality in an imaginary world of man; and the structure of ideas, the dialectic, expands to delimit, to incarnate in speech the dog whose being (character) will be authentic in the human world of reason as fantasy alone. They speak rationally, yet never otherwise than dogs might conceivably speak; that is, their judgment and sense of reality permit only a dog's vision of the world and a dog's version of human experience. But (ironically and even grotesquely) their moral sense is greatly superior to that of most of the human beings in Berganza's story. Their speech is a gift that may be taken away at any moment, and so they prepare to speak all night and decide that this night Berganza will tell the story of his life. But no sooner does he begin the account than another problem arises and an intercalated digression ensues: How to converse? And this is followed by others and their ensuing digressions: How to tell a tale artistically? How to develop the episodes, by a reasoned order, or spontaneously? How to talk of life in general without gossiping or moralizing unnecessarily? And, as each of these is discussed, solved, or dismissed, Berganza's account moves ahead to its climax, the Cañizares episode, which is followed by another discussion on their problematical and unnatural gift of speech.

The consequence of this series of problems is the composite of problematical juxtapositions that comprises the novelistic-dialectical basis of the work, for the narrative has been sustained throughout on problematical dog-man relations from the time it is given to Peralta to read until he hands it back to Campuzano. And because of this, it is distinguishable from other fantasies in which animals speak, Aesop's Fables, The Golden Ass, and the Lucianesque dialogues, as well as the literature of dreams and flights of the seventeenth century. The colloquy is as fantastical as any one of these works, but only because its unreality is everywhere fixed to a rational plan and a rational criticism of the imaginary event ("milagro," "portento"). Cervantes was not interested in writing a story of metamorphic episodes; such a procedure would have offended his sense of artistic realism, and the extent of his originality in this form of a rational colloquy of dogs is
proportional to his departure from the devices of Apuleius and Lucian and his insistence upon developing the fantasy of dogs who think and talk (and who in doing so become a problem to themselves) from a rational and critical introspection on the part of the dogs themselves. Here, then, as in the Quijote, Cervantes has been most original when his imagination has been forced by his critical and ironical sense to turn back upon itself, and then invents through analysis and identification with itself. Each of the problems confronted by the dogs puts to test the genuineness of their talk and subjects the imaginary artifice to rational scrutiny; and for this reason the climax of Berganza's narrative is also the point of major suspense and the point of crisis in the fantasy.

The first adventure the dog recalls (his experiences in the Sevillian Matadero) opened his eyes to the thievery, violence, and immorality which was openly the normal condition of the social world; and the specific incident of the basket taught him the price of remaining true to his convictions when he allowed the girl to take the meat from the basket, since respectful of beauty, he would not touch her with his snout. His master's anger would have done away with him then, but he fled and escaped this first threat to his life finding a new livelihood with the shepherds, whose primitive existence belied the idyllic fallacies of pastoral literature. Here he dedicated himself earnestly to the humble but honorable livelihood of a shepherd dog. And here he underwent the first grave disillusion of his life: the dishonest shepherds killed and ate the sheep intrusted to their care and protection. And he who, worn and tired, conscientiously tracked the nonexistent wolves, who bore the unjust punishment for laziness, was dismayed and outraged by the deceit. "No había lobos; menguaba el rebaño; quisiera yo descubrillo; hallábame mudo; todo lo cual me traía lleno de admiración y de congoja" (p. 232).

In the next episode the pleasant period spent with the children of the Sevillian merchant came to a sudden end with an evil turn of fortune. In adverse circumstances his moral fiber weakened. A watchdog enchained and dependent upon the whim of the Negro girl for a bare bone or two, he was to learn that a remorseful conscience is a suffering worse than hunger. At night when she came down to let in the Negro doorboy, she offered him the unaccustomed treat of meat or cheese which she had stolen from the kitchen. He accepted the bribes and did not bark or give an alarm. "Algunos días me estragaron la conciencia las dádivas de la negra, pareciéndome que sin ellas se me apretaran las ijadas y daria de mastín en galgo; pero, en efecto, llevado de mi buen natural, quise responder a lo que a mi amo debía, pues tiraba sus gajes y comía su pan..." (p. 253). He not only refused the bribes but attacked the girl; in the ensuing battle of strength, his moral fiber strengthened even as she starved him, but in the end her evilness prevailed, and he fled once more in order to escape death.

In the service of the vain and greedy alguacil he observed the familiar life of professional thieves who surrounded Monipodio and in his master the depravity and deception by which cowardice passed itself off as bravery. When he was ordered to attack an escaping thief whom he knew to be the alguacil, he cut him down viciously with the vengeful lunge of an outraged and pent-up sense of righteousness. In the service of the drummer he observed the malice and abject lack of scruples of those who entertained a public no less malicious for its gullibility.
The evil nature of the witch Cañizares was a revelation crueler for its implications. The hideous witch tells him, the right-minded and virtuous dog, that he is the son of another witch, la Montiela, and that some day, with the fulfilment of an obscure prophecy,\textsuperscript{14} he is to recover his human form. Here Campuzano’s dream-fantasy reaches its climax and the point of crisis as it threatens to break out of the bounds of rational probability, its aesthetic basis. The witch speaks to him, and he understands. The imputations that her disclosures cast upon his own good nature outrage reality as well as the propriety of his origins. “Cada cosa destas que la vieja me decía en alabanza de la que decía ser mi madre era una lanzada que me atravesaba el corazón, y quisiera arremeter a ella y hacerla pedazos entre los dientes” (p. 299). Curiously, it is Cañizares, a human being, who with her grotesque disclosures lifts Berganza’s narrative out of the realm of reality into the realm of the preposterous and irrational. The witch herself, a warped mixture of superstition and sound sense, of hypocrisy and piety, is a problematical being. She provides a critical explanation of herself, an introspective and even doctrinal explanation of her perverse nature and her evil practices. The high point of the fantasy is this, that a dog has served as the object, the recipient of the witch’s confession and her self-justification. She opens her heart to him (“¿Eres tú, hijo Montiel, ... con lágrimas en los ojos se vino a mí ...,” p. 287), her corrupting and sorrowing, evil heart; reveals the intimate secrets of her being to the outraged dog she implicates, who listens incredulous, astounded and alarmed, “... seguilla, combatido de mil varios pensamientos y admirado de lo que había oído y de lo que esperaba ver” (p. 304). In her trance, she said, she would learn what should befall him before he recovered his human form. Fear incited him to drag her out to the courtyard where he deliberated upon her revelations. The following morning she awakened from her trance and realizing at once that the dog had betrayed her she rushed upon him in fury; he defended himself and dragged her through the courtyard, “ella daba voces, que la librasen de los dientes de aquel maligno espíritu ... la vieja gruñía; yo apretaba los dientes ...” (pp. 307–8). He was driven out of the town as a demonic spirit.

Cipión, who has not broken the silence that complements the long account, now reduces the enigmatic and marvelous content of the episode (for his own caninity and the authenticity of the conversation itself are implicated by the witch’s disclosures) to its critical and rational significance: mentira, disparate, embelecos, apariencias del demonio (“hallucinations”), cuentos de viejas (“superstitions”), re-establishing Berganza’s narrative and the conversation on the dialectical situation of the first exchanges, “y si a nosotros nos parece ahora que tenemos algún entendimiento y razón, pues hablamos siendo verdaderamente perros, o estando en su figura, ya hemos dicho que éste es caso portentoso y jamás visto, y que aunque le tocamos con las manos, no le habemos de dar crédito, hasta tanto que el suceso dól nos muestre lo que conviene que creamos” (pp. 309–10). Berganza accepts the explanation and continues and completes the narrative along the plane which leads back to Campuzano’s problematical dreaming.

In the final episodes of his narrative the loquacious Berganza confines himself to a brief descriptive account of masters and facts, but counterbalancing this deficiency are his hurried and excited asser-

\textsuperscript{14} Pamela Waley (see n. 4) suggests (p. 211) the line from the Magnificat (Luke 1:52), “Deposuit potentem de sede, et exaltavit humilis,” as a more likely source for la Camacha’s prophecy than Aeneid 6. 853 (Amezúa, El casamiento engañoso ..., pp. 620–22).
tions of how much more he has to say, of how much he must leave untold as the final hour of the night runs out. In Valladolid, after the near-fatal wound received in the make-believe of an entremés, he sought retirement from the severe moral demands to which a life of action and adventure subjected his virtuous nature, surrendering his freedom in exchange for security and keep in the service of Mahudes and joining Cipión at the hospital. "Cansóme aquel ejercicio, no por ser trabajo, sino porque veía en él cosas que juntamente pedían enmienda y castigo; y como a mí estaba más el sentimiento que el remediallo, acorde de no verlo, y así, me acogí a sagrado, como hacen aquellos que dejan los vicios cuando no pueden ejercitarlos, aunque más vale tarde que nunca" (pp. 328-29). Like the four inmates of the hospital, whose illusions and laments he overhears, he has been overcome by life’s misfortunes, but unlike them he retains a moral and practical sense by which to judge his past efforts and through which he learns the proper position for himself in the world of men and canines. In all, a story in which fortune and misfortune, good and evil masters, charity, ingratitude and punishment, deception and injustice, have turned his sensibility and conscientiousness—mi buen natural—to a sad and disillusioned, but still optimistic and trusting, still curious outlook on life.

The didactic content of Berganza’s narrative is complemented by Cipión’s observations and criticism. In Berganza’s volubility and Cipión’s restraint, the polarity of a traditional ejemplo is discernible through the elaborate novel-dialectic structure. But, while the moralizations themselves are of a very traditional kind and their purpose the ordinary one, that is, to instruct by entertaining, Cervantes’ inventive sense of irony has exacted from them an added purpose that is wholly artistic and that converts them into novelistic devices. Here, also, Cervantes exploited in his own way the didactic resources of the prose dialogue. A dogs’ conversation on human life would necessarily have called attention to itself as a satirical treatment of contemporary persons and as an occasion for ill-intentioned talk, murmuración. And Cervantes did more than anticipate the imputation by having the dogs discuss it as one of the problems of their dialogue; he handled it as another device for developing the story and characterizations. The need for airing the problem of murmuración arose, also, of course, from the exemplary nature of the novels which Cervantes assigned to them in the prologue: "si bien lo miras no hay alguna de quien no se puede sacar algún ejemplo provechoso." The final position of the Coloquio within the series emphasizes its moralistic and didactic as well as its synoptic nature, but it would also bear out the inference that here Cervantes had faced the question of an exemplary work of

---

16 See Amezúa, El casamiento engañoso ... , pp. 108, 204, for a discussion of the satirical meaning of perros, ladrar and morder, and reprehender.

17 Consider, e.g., how the antithetical elements in the following passage, the present predicament of dogs who converse about human beings, the satire on hypocritical preachers (Amezúa, n. 15, above), the word play, and the awareness that the problematicity of their existence in the world of man does not exempt them from gossip and censure, are all contained humorously in the character, i.e., speech, of the dog: "¡ciénón.—¿Al murmurar llamas filosofar? ¡Así va ello! Canoniza, canoniza, Berganza, a la maldita plaga de la murmuración, y dale el nombre que quísiere; que ella dará a nosotros el de cinicos, que quiere decir perros murmuradores; y por tu vida que calles ya y sigas tu historia" (p. 251).

18 Casalduero, pp. 214-15. See also the very informative discussion by Walter Pabst, Novellentheorie und Novellendichtung, zur Geschichte ihrer Antinomie in den romanischen Literaturen (Hamburg, 1953), pp. 115 ff.
imagination directly, and, because he did so directly, the question and its solution were more difficult. Considering the complexity of Cervantine means and ends, his method in the moralistic exchanges between the dogs may be described as the partial displacement of the dialogue’s expository structure of ideas by characterizations, and his purpose as this: *to bring a novel into focus within a didactic form.*  

The dogs’ discussion on satire and malicious talk originates from the dialectical situation in which the unlikely discourse is to be restrained and delimited by moral and artistic considerations. Because they are problematical beings with an unnatural gift of speech, they should consider the moral and artistic effect of censure, and the discussion itself holds the question of *murmuración* in suspense by an ironical play between what is hinted at, what is actually said, and what is left unsaid. This playful tension is inherent in Cervantes’ manner of satire, which is almost never direct, biased, or destructive, but which is rendered obtuse and dispersed by an ironical complexity of intent and meaning. The building-up and release of this tension as part of the didactic structure of the colloquy is another of Cervantes’ means of approaching and solving the problem of an exemplary narrative. As the colloquy develops, and as the characterizations of the dogs unfold, the problems of satire and censure are solved or dissolved by Berganza’s greater attention to the manner of telling the story of his life and the propriety of his remarks. “Aprovechéándote vas, Berganza, de mi aviso; murmura, pica y pasa, y sea tu intención limpia, aunque la lengua no lo parezca” (p. 226). “Esto sí, Berganza, quiero que pase por filosofía, porque son razones que consisten en buena verdad ...” (p. 253).

Berganza’s life, then, may be considered as a pedagogy developed through dialogue, but it is a tale of defeated goodness, of natural innocence thwarted in its humble efforts. His ideal was to serve his masters honorably and loyally; the perverse nature of the human order and the fatality of fortune have disillusioned him so that he has withdrawn to the security of the hospital. By itself his account would be a gloomy and pessimistic disclosure of human corruption, self-interest, malice, and hypocrisy.  

As Blanco Aguinaga points out (p. 331), Berganza’s disillusionment is not to be taken as a *desengaño* of the pessimistic sort to be found in the *Guzmán de Alfarache*, i.e., “la picareca.” To a certain extent, Berganza’s disillusionment and his retreat from active life are a parody of the picaro’s *desengaño*, as are, also, his dogmatic moralizations on life on the basis of his gloomy experiences. Parker (see n. 4 above), and Lám Entralgo, who are concerned basically with the ethical content of the novel-dialectue.

---

18 I use the word “focus” in an exact sense. Characterizations in the novel are usually developed through dialogue and actions (consider how Don Quijote’s character, or Alonso Quijano’s, is committed in his “present” and “real” acts); but Berganza’s characterization is developed, principally, through action remembered, and Cipión’s through commentaries. The present action of the dogs is their speaking. The single present action of the colloquy is the unreal one of talking dogs. The talking dogs do not exist in “reality”; they exist in the imagination and thus are isolated exemplarily (didactically, artistically) from the world they talk about. Their characterization is to be done in the single dimension of speech; not only are they the dogs of an already established virtuous nature, but they must also behave as such as they now attempt to discourse rationally like human beings. “El divino don de la habla” exacts from them a behavior extraneous to their doggish nature. What they say and how they say it will characterize them (give them a human dimension, also) irretrievably. The suspense and play is part of the fable that unfolds their free and yet-to-be-determined “personalities.” The present action of speech, the ethical significance of this character situation, brings to a focus, that is to say, produces the illusion of nearness of that which is distant or not near—the narrative movement and the moral contrasts of Berganza’s past adventures. This feature, I suggest, almost indefinable within the complexity of Cervantine irony, is what makes possible the depth of symbolical significance that the *Coloquio* presents to its interpreters like Cipión (see n. 4 above), and Lám Entralgo, who are concerned basically with the ethical content of the novel-dialectue.
wiser dog and seems to speak from a deep and settled wisdom that has filtered through experience. His comments add up to a generalized interpretation of life on the one hand and a precise criticism of Berganza's account on the other, offering knowledge of life (or as Lain Entralgo suggests, conciencia) as Berganza's account offers life itself. Through Cipión, Berganza comes to learn the final Cervantine lesson of his experience, the nobility of resignation and the strength of wisdom. Thus, the colloquy develops by an account of life and experience, its criticism and evaluation, and this polarity is at once the dialectical structure of its dialogue and the interchanges that reveal personality.

Berganza is a dog with an ideal sense of loyalty and service. His characterization is developed from this sense of faithfulness and from the basic instinct for good that is the source of his canine virtue. But Berganza has his faults, too; that is to say, he is also human. His really crucial faults cannot be attributed to a doggish nature. On one occasion he allowed his hunger to overpower his sense of responsibility and service (the Negro girl's bribes); on another, his appetite for a morsel of bacon produced a dire situation for the luckless bretón (hunger and appetite, a classic picaresque theme, is counterpointed here by the dog's desire to earn his living and keep). His violence toward human beings, it must be admitted, was righteous and just, as the reason for it was in each case the ill-will and thievery of humanity. In his ebullient lightheartedness, he is obviously prone to digress (añadir colas) and to gossip. He takes too seriously certain debatable facts of his life (the witch episode). He lacks the healthy skepticism of Cipión, and he gives too much importance to secondary details (notwithstanding, of course, the delight they give the reader). At the other extreme, he took himself too seriously on at least one occasion (his single, most serious Cervantine infraction against la discreción) when he barked out at the Corregidor. Berganza is aware, of course, as a model Cervantine character, that there is a point of happy moderation, but in the over-all development of the colloquy it is Cipión (the prototype, in Cervantes' humorous way, of all discreet, discerning and critical hearers, and thus the frame and censor, the indirect object of the narrative) who must bring him back to a succinct realization of it. We have, then, a pair of dog characters delineated according to the ideas and estimations that human beings have of "ideal," "rational" dogs (docility, service, faithfulness, friendship, vigilance) but, also, a critical and implacable evaluation of human injustice and deceit based on the righteous and ideal vision of what human life should be as implanted by human beings in a dog's mind, and there reflected for all men to see and to think on. This reciprocity between dog-character, Cipión-Berganza, and man-character, Peralta-Campuzano, is the outcome of the dialectical situation of the dogs who found themselves suddenly as the problematical beings of man's introspection in the solitary hours of night.

Dialectic and characterization focus the abundant and varied narrative material into the clear and sharp outlines of a delightful and exemplary tale. And by these very dimensions the distance from Berganza's narrative, for all its realism, to the room in which Peralta reads and

---

20 Lain Entralgo (p. 63) classifies Cipión's comments into three kinds: sentencias, consejos and interpretaciones. I have not attempted to enlarge upon his study of the contrasting dog characters. The autobiographical interpretation which he develops in the direction of a doctrinal self-justification is built on what I have termed above the pedagogy aspect of the Cologuio.
Campuzano sleeps, is great. But the fantasy of dogs who converse like men is meant to be authentic in the realm of the imagination. That the fantasy is a reasonable one only makes (for the skeptic) the way easier, not shorter. On whatever grounds of verisimilitude the conversation may be accepted, the dogs with their cares and feelings are isolated and detached from the world that Berganza recreates. The artificio of dogs talking brings us within the immediate presence of the dogs, but this nearness is an illusion. The simple complexity of Cervantine narration draws us through the characterizations of the dogs into the unusual situation of life critically and realistically presented through a fantasy and, in doing so, removes, detaches and isolates us from that very reality which is depicted there so ingenuously that we accept it, the creation (invención) not as the illusion that it is, but as life itself. Novel and dialogue lose their separate identities as genre or form as we approach the full understanding of Cervantes’ irony and inventiveness. The novel-dialogue is no longer a casual combination of two established forms but this singular creation, this originality in narration self-inclosed within its own artistic form and aesthetic significance.

The conversation of Cervantes’ canines is a retreat from the world of men in which they are engaged and a retiring into the solitude of the night hours on the part of the “author” who “overhears” the dogs.21 Solitude and introspective reflex of the “author” Campuzano are the conditions for the secret and secure intimacy in which the dogs converse. It is this solitude and detachment which permits them to discuss openly and unhinderedly the social world of man, and the reader (who reads with Peralta) shares this detachment with them as he reads. This participation in the work of art which is the act of reading (and that Cervantes represents in Peralta’s reading of the manuscript on a separate level of reality22) is ultimately, then, the exemplary nature of art itself, that allows us an insight into life, an aesthetic comprehension of life, on the sole condition that we suspend our actual participation in life. The exemplary art is, then, a means in itself and an end to itself. It is an illusion, the supreme irony of art which seeks to imitate, to fix, and to give form to life or reality, “an unheard of and unnatural thing,” but without it neither reality nor life is grasped.

The deliberate calm, the anticlimactic note, of the final scene of the collection of twelve novels underscores this exemplary effect of art. Campuzano has slept as Peralta has read. As they rise and leave the room, they (and the reader who closes the volume) resume the course of their lives. “—Vamos al Espolón a recrear los ojos del cuerpo, pues ya he recreado los del entendimiento. —Vamos—dijo el Alférez. Y con esto se fueron” (p. 340).

There is another aspect to this isolation of the novel-dialogue within El casamiento engañoso which has not been pointed out. Cipión opens the dialogue, saying, “Berganza amigo, dejemos esta noche el Hospital en guarda de la confianza y retirémonos a esta soledad...” (p. 209). The novel-dialogue is, then, also in the nature of a soledad, as it is of a “portento,” “milagro,” “sueño,” and “disparate” (see Casalduero, p. 195). And as a soledad it would reflect that condition of its “author” Campuzano who overheard the dogs one night, “estando a escuras y desvelado, pensando en mis pasados sucesos y presentes desgracias” (pp. 202–3).