

## CERVANTES, FREUD, AND PSYCHOANALYTIC NARRATIVE THEORY

No one in Freud's family knew how he came to have such a good knowledge of Spanish. The mystery was disclosed in a letter he wrote to Martha on the occasion of his coming across an old friend, Silberstein, whom he had not seen for three years. He was Freud's bosom friend in schooldays and they spent together every hour they were not in school.

Ernest Jones wrote this in his biography of Freud.<sup>1</sup> The letter to Martha Bernays, Freud's fiancée, dated 4 February 1884, reads:

We learned Spanish together, had our own mythology and secret names, which we took from some dialogue of the great Cervantes. Once in our Spanish primer we found a humorous-philosophical conversation between two dogs which lie peacefully at the door of a hospital, and appropriated their names; in writing as well as in conversation he was known as Berganza, I as Cipion. How often have I written: *Querido Berganza!* and signed myself *Tu fidel Cipio, pero en el Hospital de Sevilla [sic passim]*. Together we founded a strange scholarly society, the 'Academia Castellana' (AC), compiled a great mass of humorous work which must still exist somewhere among my old papers.<sup>2</sup>

Some seventy of Freud's letters to Silberstein, half of them wholly or partly in Spanish, have survived and are described in papers by Heinz Stanesco of Bucharest in 1965, 1967, and 1971.<sup>3</sup> Acting as adviser and mentor to his friend in matters regarding his career and his love life (as Freud explains to Martha in the letter just quoted), he often played Cipión to Silberstein's Berganza.

The limited amount of published comment on this curious circumstance is mostly concerned with the formative influence of Cervantes on the young Freud, and the *Coloquio de los perros* (*The Dogs' Dialogue*) as a possible source of inspiration for the method of psychoanalysis.<sup>4</sup> This is natural enough, and speculation on these questions is inevitable. Literature played a considerable part in the formation of Freud's theory; why should not the same be true of his clinical practice, in so far as the theory and the practice are separable? He himself noticed the structural resemblance between the German *Novelle* and his own case histories.<sup>5</sup> Could not this *Exemplary Novel* of Cervantes have influenced the formation of his psychoanalytic

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, 3 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), I, 180.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of Sigmund Freud*, ed. by Ernst L. Freud, trans. by Tania and James Stern (New York: Basic Books, 1961), pp. 96-97. Freud recalls his learning Spanish in order to read Cervantes in a letter to Luis López Ballesteros, the translator of Freud's works into that language, dated 7 May 1923 (*Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. by James Strachey, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press & Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953-74), XIX, (1961), 289). Freud's letters to Martha in 1883-84 contain a number of enthusiastic references to his rereading *Don Quixote* around this time.

<sup>3</sup> See John E. Gedo and Ernest S. Wolf, 'Freud's *Novelas ejemplares*', *Psychological Issues*, 34-35 (1976), (Monograph, Vol. IX: *Freud: The Fusion of Science and Humanism*), pp. 87-88. Since this article first went to press, the following have come into my hands: *The Letters of Sigmund Freud to Eduard Silberstein, 1871-1881*, ed. by W. Boehlich, trans. by A. J. Pomerans (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990); and Sigmund Freud, *Cartas de juventud*, ed. and trans. by A. Ackermann Pilári (Barcelona: Gedisa, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> As well as Gedo and Wolf, see S. B. Vranich, 'Sigmund Freud and "The Case History of Berganza": Freud's Psychoanalytic Beginnings', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 63 (1976), 73-82, and Leon Grimberg and Juan Francisco Rodríguez, 'La influencia de Cervantes sobre el futuro creador del psicoanálisis', *Anales cervantinos*, 25-26 (1987-88), 157-74.

<sup>5</sup> See Edward Timms, 'Novelle and Case History: Freud in Pursuit of the Falcon', *London German Studies*, 2 (1983), 115-34.

method many years later? Maybe it did in some degree or other, although how the debt could be measured is not clear. But in any case, that is not my concern here. The relationship between the *Coloquio de los perros* and psychoanalysis can be looked at in another way.

The object of Freud's youthful enthusiasm takes the form of a dialogue containing a narrative. In this, the two dogs Berganza and Cipión (Scipio) have a conversation in which the former recounts his life story to the latter, who listens and comments. There is an evident resemblance here to a session between psychoanalyst and analysand. The *Coloquio* is thus of no small interest when viewed in the light of the debate over the relationship of psychoanalysis and narrative theory.<sup>6</sup>

So I shall be looking at a work by Cervantes, which Freud once read and imitated, and I shall do this largely in the light of ideas later articulated by Freud. This offers every prospect of a deconstructionist field-day. My objective, however, is more simple and preliminary. I shall try to identify major correspondences between the *Coloquio* and Freudian psychoanalysis as dialogue. This does not mean treating Berganza's story as a coherent case history, which it clearly is not. It does mean noting some aspects of it which can be read as 'Freudian'. Above all, it entails looking at the way in which the *Coloquio* utilizes some of the premises and mechanisms of narration, at how these are dramatized, and how they develop and ramify, to issue in a work which is *sui generis* and which, in its fashion, mimics the procedures of narrative and literary creation.

The *Coloquio de los perros* is the last of the twelve *Novelas ejemplares* (1613) and, uniquely in that collection, it is linked with the novella which precedes it, *El casamiento engañoso* (*The Deceitful Marriage*). As most non-Spanish speakers are not familiar with either, a short summary is called for.

The two stories are joined by a third, frame narrative, which is untitled. This begins with the emerging of a convalescent soldier, the ensign<sup>7</sup> Campuzano, from the Hospital of the Resurrection just outside the gate of the city of Valladolid. The hospital (which did actually exist) was one where venereal diseases were treated. He meets an old friend, a scholar, the licentiate Peralta. They go off together and, at Peralta's house, Campuzano tells him the story of his marriage to a woman of the type which Hollywood used to call a gold-digger. But he was little better himself; each partner was a fortune-hunter, out for what he or she could get. They fooled each other temporarily. Then she made off with his valuables, which proved to be fake, and he ended up with a venereal disease. He has been taking the cure for this and is now a sadder and a wiser man.

Campuzano goes on to claim that one night, sweating out his fever in the hospital, he overheard the two hospital guard dogs engaging in lively conversation by his bed.

<sup>6</sup> On the basics of psychoanalytic criticism and narratology, see in particular Elizabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice* (London and New York: Methuen, 1984), and Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs* (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), Chapter 9. Elizabeth Wright defines the function of psychoanalytic criticism as 'investigating the text for the workings of a rhetoric seen as analogous to the mechanisms of the psyche' (p. 6). Since I am trying to expose theoretical ideas within these novellas of Cervantes, it seems appropriate to cite comparable or relevant ones from modern authorities more often than would probably be called for in other types of study.

<sup>7</sup> I adopt the word 'ensign' (Spanish *alférez*) used by C. A. Jones in his translation of the two novellas in Cervantes, *Exemplary Stories* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 181–252. All quotations from the text in English are from this edition. References to the Spanish text of the *Casamiento engañoso* and *Coloquio de los perros* are to Cervantes, *Novelas ejemplares*, ed. by J. B. Avallé-Arce, 3 vols, Clásicos Castalia, 120–22 (Madrid: Castalia, 1985), III.

Predictably, Peralta's reaction is sceptical to the point of irritation, but after some argument he agrees to read the manuscript in which the ensign says he has recorded the conversation. While Peralta reads it, Campuzano sleeps.

Here begins the text of the dogs' dialogue, described in the original as 'Novela y coloquio'. After some preliminary talk about their sudden astonishing endowment with human speech, they agree that Berganza shall tell the story of his life this night, and on the next, if heaven allows, Cipión shall tell his. So Berganza narrates, while his friend listens and from time to time intervenes with comments and criticism and joins in conversation on sundry topics.

Berganza tells of his early life in a slaughterhouse, where he thinks he was born and where he serves one of the toughs who work there. Then he works for shepherds as a sheepdog; after that he is kept in the house of a wealthy merchant; then he becomes a police dog; then he is owned by a soldier, who teaches him tricks. At this point he meets an old woman reputed to be a witch. She keeps him with her for the night and tells him about herself and about himself. She alleges that he was born human, the child of another witch, but that he and his twin brother were turned into puppies at birth. Only when the conditions of an enigmatic prophecy are fulfilled will they revert to human shape. Disgusted by her, Berganza escapes the next morning. He serves several masters after this and has some further adventures, finally joining up with a troupe of actors. Weary and repelled by the human life around him, he joins Cipión at the hospital. Here they not only act as guard dogs but assist the man who is engaged every night in collecting charity for the support of the hospital.

The dogs know that at daybreak they will lose the power of speech, at least until the following night. It seems that Cipión gets to tell his story to Berganza (see Spanish text, p. 238), but the present work ends without taking it in. A brief return to the frame story brings everything, including the whole collection of *Novelas ejemplares*, to a close.

There is no evidence that Freud ever read the *Casamiento engañoso*. The two works were not invariably published in tandem, and it is more likely than not that his 'Spanish primer' contained only the other one, or very likely just a portion of it without the fragmentary frame story. Since he mentions only the *Coloquio*, it would be safer to assume that he did not read the *Casamiento*.

Had Freud read the entire *Casamiento-Coloquio* he would have found even more 'Freudian' possibilities. Campuzano, a recently discharged hospital patient, stands in the same relation to Peralta as Berganza does to Cipión and as both pairs do to analyst and analysand. The dogs' colloquy is best explained as either an elaborated dream or a literary concoction of the ensign's imagination — a product of his fantasy either way. Since it duplicates the Campuzano-Peralta relationship in canine form, it must say something about its author, who has already told his friend about his disastrous marriage. But as there is no clear historical justification for associating the complete work with Freud, I shall centre attention on the *Coloquio de los perros* and move outwards into the rest of the narrative-complex only towards the end.

The title description reads something like an inscription on a monument:

Novela y coloquio que pasó entre Cipión y Berganza, perros del Hospital de la Resurrección, que está en la Ciudad de Valladolid, fuera de la Puerta del Campo, a quien comúnmente llaman los perros de Mahudes (p. 241)

(Tale and Colloquy that took place between 'Scipio' and 'Berganza', dogs belonging to the Hospital of the Resurrection, which is in the city of Valladolid, outside the Puerta del Campo, and commonly known as the dogs of Mahudes.) (p. 193)

The combination of factual veracity (the name and location of the hospital and, according to some authorities, the name of the alms collector Mahudes) with the blatantly unbelievable notion of talking dogs confirms the dubious status of the text within the text, already adumbrated in the conversational preamble. The reader of the *Exemplary Novels* will already have accepted it as fiction, and this is the position towards which Peralta has moved (p. 237). Campuzano for his part has virtually given in, abandoning the claim, but not the pretence, of historicity.

Well he might abandon the claim, given the fantastic nature of his material. The *Coloquio* is based on the particular kind of fiction known as fantasy. In this case the fantasy consists of a change of roles: dogs who talk and reason like men. The metamorphosis implied by this is later actualized as an event that is alleged to have occurred: that the dogs were born human and immediately transformed by witchcraft.

The two talking animals here stem from the tradition of Æsopian fable and Lucianic satire (where the fantasy serves the ends of moral and satirical commentary on human behaviour), rather than belonging to the world of Kafka (where it serves more to give material form to aspects of the psyche). Nevertheless, just as there is no absolute divide between fable and fairytale, neither is there between ancient and modern kinds of fantasy. One of the functions attributed to modern literary fantasy seems entirely appropriate applied to the *Coloquio*. It is to 'interrogate the category of character — that definition of self as a coherent, indivisible and continuous whole which has dominated Western thought for centuries and is celebrated in classic theatre and "realist" art alike'.<sup>8</sup>

Cervantes's two linked novellas contain strong suggestions of 'doubling', which is as much as to say division of personality. Leaving aside Campuzano/Peralta, this is true of the dogs in two different ways. Each of them, as a dog-man, is a divided entity for a start, and as a pair of interlocutors in dialogue, they function in certain respects as one, as I shall show. The bond between them is tightened by the strong though unstated suggestion in the story that they are twin brothers (p. 305). So each one separately and both of them together represent a concept which challenges the unity of self, as, of course, does Freudian psychoanalysis. For example: 'Thus a dreamer in his relation to his dream-wishes can only be compared to an amalgamation of two separate people who are linked by some important common element.'<sup>9</sup> Or, to take another observation relevant to the present context:

The idea of the 'double' [...] can receive fresh meaning from the later stages of the ego's development. A special agency is slowly formed there, which is able to stand over against the rest of the ego, which has the function of observing and criticizing the self and of exercising a censorship within the mind, and which we become aware of as our 'conscience'.<sup>10</sup>

As two speakers in dialogue, Cipión and Berganza, though they talk, reason, and interact like integral human beings, stand for something more akin to primal components of the unitary human individual who talks and tells, listens and judges. They are like parts of ourselves, inseparably involved in narratives which are partly

<sup>8</sup> Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), pp. 82–83. See also Walter H. Sokel, 'Freud and the Magic of Kafka's Writing', in *The World of Franz Kafka*, ed. by J. P. Stern (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980), pp. 145–58.

<sup>9</sup> Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams, Standard Edition*, v, 581, n. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Freud, *The 'Uncanny'*, in *Art and Literature*, Penguin Freud Library, 14 (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 357.

our own and partly those of others.<sup>11</sup> They are involved with each other as intimately as analyst and patient.

The dogs' conversation is conducted in privacy and quiet. The mood is relaxed. The sleep and darkness which surround them are suitably evocative of the unconscious which psychoanalysis seeks to uncover. The effect is enhanced later by Campuzano's sleeping while Peralta reads the text of the *Coloquio* (pp. 238, 321). However, the telling of Berganza's story has two listeners. Cipión is the one addressed and vocally involved, the immediate recipient of the story whose presence and participation influence its shaping. The other is the wakeful Campuzano, functioning here something like a tape recorder.<sup>12</sup> Seemingly quite detached and ignored, he is the vital agent who records and retransmits the narrative, which without him would not have been perpetuated beyond the immediate occasion. Together (note how they constitute another split character) ensign and dog embody the major functions of the 'narratee', and of the analyst, who first listens to and gets involved with what the patient has to say and then writes up the case.

Right at the beginning they weigh the unexpected gift of speech against their natural canine aptitudes. In so doing, they briefly recall their pre-linguistic state. Here there is a differentiation of self and other in terms of species. Cipión distinguishes dogs from men ('es [...] el hombre animal racional, y el bruto, irracional' (p. 242) — 'man is a rational animal, and the brute irrational' (p. 195)); and Berganza singles out the dog as reputedly of higher intelligence than the elephant, the horse, and the ape (pp. 242–43). The two dogs thus enjoy a status lower than humankind and higher than the rest of the animal kingdom. They see in their own kind a potentiality for the discourse of reason which necessarily individuates them.<sup>13</sup>

Although you would never know it from their practical handling of the idiom, Berganza and Cipión are first-time users of language. This is perhaps the first of those features of the *Coloquio* which evoke a simplified idea of the origins and development of narrative. The dogs' situation mimics the presumable pristine conditions in which first came the human ability to communicate verbally, and after that extended communication in narrative form. After they have marvelled at the gift of speech and tried to account for it, talk turns to how they might best use it, time being limited. Out of this comes the decision that Berganza shall relate his life experience to date. In some roughly comparable way, it might be supposed, did the extended narration of personal history evolve out of ordinary talk between people. Casually, rather than with overt dramatism, the dogs rehearse the origin of storytelling.

They regard language not as a snare and a delusion in the way the twentieth century has come to see it but as an instrument to be used responsibly, enjoyed, and

<sup>11</sup> Compare this with Jackson's 'Dialogues of self and other are increasingly acknowledged as being colloquies with the self: any demonic presences are generated from within' (p. 108), and with Gedo and Wolf's 'We may infer that Cipion and Berganza represent complementary halves of an internal dialogue in the mind of Cervantes' (p. 99).

<sup>12</sup> The dogs are aware of Campuzano's proximity but consider that 'en esta sazón más estará para dormir que para ponerse a escuchar a nadie' (pp. 244–45) — ('at the moment he will be more interested in sleeping than in listening to anyone' (p. 197)).

<sup>13</sup> Perhaps there is a faint analogy here with the Lacanian idea of the infantile mirror-stage of human development (see Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience', in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York and London: Norton, 1977), pp. 1–7).

valued for its priceless nature. As various authorities have noted, the *Coloquio* is very much about the use of the human word.<sup>14</sup> In this connexion the dimension most emphasized is the ethical one. Above everything, speaking ill of others is condemned. This aspect of the *Coloquio* is of major importance in other contexts (including the implicit design of countering the method and message of Mateo Alemán's bestselling *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599 and 1604)),<sup>15</sup> but it is not particularly relevant in the present Freudian one. So although one can hardly imagine anyone in Cervantes's time not giving it precedence, I shall pass over it.

Of course, language must also be controlled for reasons other than moral in the highest sense. Here there are connexions with psychoanalysis, if of a somewhat erratic kind. For instance, the brief exchange on using circumlocutions (p. 269) would doubtless interest a Freudian analyst for other reasons than for its value as a statement of accepted social norms. There are also many allusions to problems of controlling the size and direction of the narrative. These are mostly criticisms and warnings by Cipión on the subjects of digression and prolixity.<sup>16</sup> As utterances in the conversation they are clearly not recommendable to the psychoanalyst addressing his patient in the consulting-room. But they are perennial problems of narrative which, sooner or later, the psychoanalyst must cope with in respect of his patient's story.

The autobiography is Berganza's, but Cipión too is much involved in the process of articulating, organizing, and interpreting the discourse (*discours, sjuzet*) which is extracted from the story (*histoire, fabula*) of his life up to this point. His participation transforms the apparently straightforward quasi-picaresque tale into a narrative of greater depth.<sup>17</sup> The whole nature of narration as a two-way communication is illuminated exceptionally. The element of reflection on experience present in the recounting of experience is enhanced in an unusual way. Once enunciated, things happen to the narrative in conversation. It is intercut with comments and ruminations which elaborate, truncate, amend, ramify, and evaluate it, both as to substance and as to form. Not that Cipión's contribution 'improves' it artistically in the sense of producing a more rounded, polished, and perfected whole. On the contrary, it is the messiness of narration which is shown up. The *Coloquio* demonstrates what a difficult, untidy business storytelling really is underneath. A comparison made by Cipión supplies an appropriate image:

<sup>14</sup> For example, Harry Sieber, in his introduction to Cervantes, *Novelas ejemplares*, 2 vols (Madrid: Cátedra, 1980), II, 36–38, and Alban K. Forcione, *Cervantes and the Mystery of Lawlessness* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 187–236.

<sup>15</sup> On this and other principal aspects of the moral dimension in the *Coloquio*, see among recent studies: E. H. Williamson, 'Cervantes as Moralist and Trickster: The Critique of Picaresque Autobiography in *El casamiento engañoso* y *El coloquio de los perros*', in *Essays on Hispanic Themes in Honour of Edward C. Riley*, ed. by Jennifer Lowe and Philip Swanson (Edinburgh: Department of Hispanic Studies, University of Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 104–26, and the same author's 'El juego de la verdad en *El casamiento engañoso* y *El coloquio de los perros*', *Actas del Segundo Coloquio Internacional de la Asociación de Cervantistas, Alcalá de Henares, 1989*, in press. See also my 'La profecía de la bruja', in *Actas del Primer Coloquio Internacional de la Asociación de Cervantistas, Alcalá de Henares, 1988* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1990), pp. 83–94.

<sup>16</sup> For example, on pages 254, 255, 260, 268, 272, 273, 315, 316.

<sup>17</sup> Compare this with Lacan's 'The analyst has something of the scribe about him. But above all he remains the master of the truth of which this discourse is the progress. As I have said, it is he above all who punctuates its dialectic. And here he is apprehended as the judge of the value of this discourse', in 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis', *Écrits*, p. 98, and Gedo and Wolf's 'The responses of Cipión add a deeper layer to the *Novela* which transforms it into something unique and without precedent, the record of a journey of introspection' (p. 99).

*Cipión* — Quiero decir que la sigas de golpe, sin que la hagas que parezca pulpo, según la vas añadiendo colas (p. 268)  
 (*Scipio*: I mean get on quickly, without adding tails to it, and making it look like an octopus.)  
 (p. 212)

Essentially the same problem occurs in psychoanalysis. Freud spoke of putting together his *History of an Infantile Neurosis* (the Wolf Man) in small fragments for the purpose of synthesis, and commented: 'This task, which is not difficult in other respects, finds a natural limit when it is a question of forcing a structure which is itself in many dimensions onto the two-dimensional plane.'<sup>18</sup> As Peter Brooks observes, the analysand's story is never good enough, 'links are missing, chronologies twisted, and the objects of desire are misnamed'. With what Freud unpacked, 'the shape of the individual and his biography become uncontrollable'.<sup>19</sup> Octopus-like, one might say. Not only must the analyst reinterpret, reorganize, and re-evaluate what the patient has already re-presented but, like any reader of literary narrative, he can hope to recover only a primary narrative which is discontinuous and full of holes. Moreover, there are the paralysing effects of self-deconstruction stemming from the unavoidable determinism of the narrative form.<sup>20</sup> These ultimate difficulties, however, though inevitably present, do not transpire obviously in the *Coloquio*.

Although the crucial feature of the psychoanalysis parallel is the part played by Cipión in respect of Berganza's narration, the idea of him as analyst shows weaknesses as well as strengths. On one hand, he listens attentively, he encourages Berganza, he maintains a position of friendly authority, and he sees the importance of the witch episode. On the other, he is — for an analyst — excessively concerned that Berganza should not criticize and complain about others. He interrupts a lot in the early stages and he chides him for 'impertinent digressions', which is hardly conducive to the free association of ideas. And the fact that they are both operating under the constraints of a time limit is not compatible with good psychoanalytic practice. Berganza must finish his story before dawn. Freud would not have recommended that.<sup>21</sup>

It is necessary to remember that the *Dogs' Dialogue* is *not* a psychoanalytic session, any more than reading or listening critically to a story is.<sup>22</sup> For a start, a different kind of listening is involved,<sup>23</sup> and there are other considerations. Missing from the *Coloquio* is the particular object of psychoanalysis: the improvement of the patient's condition. Merely telling a story, 'getting it off one's chest', may well be therapeutic, but opting for psychoanalysis, with all that that entails in respect of mutual attitudes and awareness, not forgetting contractual agreement (money will change hands), is

<sup>18</sup> Freud, *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis, Standard Edition*, xvii, 72.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 227, 278.

<sup>20</sup> See Kenneth J. Gergen and Mary M. Gergen, 'Narrative Form and the Construction of Psychological Science', in *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct*, ed. by Theodore R. Sarbin (New York, Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 1986), pp. 22–44, and Geoffrey H. Hartman, 'Psychoanalysis: The French Connection', in *Psychoanalysis and the Question of the Text*, ed. by Geoffrey H. Hartman (Baltimore, MD, and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 89–103.

<sup>21</sup> It is true that Freud imposed a time limit in the case of the 'Wolf Man' — which promptly brought results — but that was not until treatment had been going on for a very long time.

<sup>22</sup> See Donald R. Spence, *Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis* (New York and London: Norton, 1982).

<sup>23</sup> See Frederick Wyatt, 'The Narrative in Psychoanalysis', in Sarbin, pp. 193–210.

very different. In psychoanalysis, interpretation is a means to an end. In literature it is usually an end in itself.

One circumstance of special interest is the dogs' plan to reverse roles the following night. If still blessed with the power of speech, Cipión will tell his story while Berganza listens (p. 244). He will be the autobiographer–patient in his turn. So each will have been both analyst and analysand in the end. Interpreted literally as analyst and analysand changing places, the idea would certainly be strange. But read as a metaphor for the immersion of the analyst in the analysis, as he exchanges his position of detached receptivity for one of direct involvement through transference and counter-transference, the proposed reversal of roles becomes very suggestive. The relation of analyst to patient, which was thought to be cognitive, becomes performative.<sup>24</sup> This, in its way, is also what happens to the literary critic unavoidably implicated with the language of his text.<sup>25</sup>

Berganza's drama becomes part of Cipión's: their stories merge. This is not implied just by the psychoanalysis parallel; it is directly suggested in the story even before Berganza joins Cipión at the hospital. There is that strong hint of close kinship (that they are twins born of the same mother) which I have already noted. As well as their origins, their destinies are linked in the witch's prophecy (p. 294). Berganza's narrative unites them indissolubly through the events recounted as well as in the circumstances of the recounting.

The overlapping and merging of their two stories adds to the impression of endless narrative in the *Casamiento–Coloquio*. Recalling that the colloquy has been written down by Campuzano and by Cervantes, one might well ask: whose autobiography is it anyway?<sup>26</sup> The notion of overlapping and merging stories, with tellers, actors, and listeners changing places is nothing new for readers of *Don Quixote*, *La Galatea*, and *Persiles y Sigismunda*.

There are, as I have suggested, some unbridgeable differences between the *Coloquio de los perros* and Freud's practice (Cipión is too didactic; there is a time limit on the conversation; telling one's lifestory to a friend is one thing, and telling it to a psychoanalyst is another). Nevertheless, some luminous coincidences remain — luminous, above all, for the light thrown both on the narrative and on the psychoanalytic method. The *Coloquio* is an unusual example of storytelling shown in action as an interpersonal exercise. The narrative discourse of one party is creatively modified by the other, who becomes involved with it in a fashion similar in some important respects (not all) to what goes on between psychoanalyst and analysand. To quote Peter Brooks once more, with Cervantes's *Exemplary Novel* in mind:

A case history is the story of an individual presented to the public for didactic purposes: it is a form of exemplary biography. In the course of his use of the genre, Freud encountered all the problems of narrative design and exposition faced by biographers, historians and novelists, and the issues of fictionality that have haunted literature since Plato. (p. 283)

<sup>24</sup> The words are Culler's, p. 224.

<sup>25</sup> 'The transference is not a one-way imposition on the patient's part, but a two-way interposition involving "parts" of both patient and analyst, including, possibly, reversals of roles' (Murray M. Schwarz, 'Critic, Define Thyself', in Hartman, p. 8). Also, 'The truth of the unconscious emerges in the transference and the counter-transference, as the analyst gets caught up in a repetition of key structures of the patient's unconscious' (Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction* (London, Melbourne, and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 271). See also Stanley A. Leavy, *The Psychoanalytic Dialogue* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 105–17.

<sup>26</sup> Jacques Derrida asks the same question of Freud and the *fort/da* episode in 'Coming into One's Own', trans. by J. Hulbert, in *Psychoanalysis and the Question of the Text*, p. 136.

If a case history is a form of exemplary biography, why should not a fictional exemplary biography resemble a case history, even long before this term was invented? And I mean here a case history with the analyst's participation fully recorded.

I shall now look summarily at Berganza's account of his life for analogies with the rhetoric of psychoanalysis.<sup>27</sup> Right at the start he speaks of that primary drive, the motor of narrative, the 'desire to tell':

Desde que tuve fuerzas para roer un hueso tuve deseo de hablar, para decir cosas que depositaba en la memoria, y allí, de antiguas y muchas, o se enmohecían o se me olvidaban. Empero ahora, que tan sin pensarlo me veo enriquecido de este divino don del habla, pienso gozarme y aprovecharme de él lo más que pudiere, dándome prisa a decir todo aquello que se me acordare, aunque sea atropellada y confusamente. (p. 244)

(Ever since I was strong enough to gnaw a bone I have had the desire to speak, to say many things which were stored up for so long in my memory that they were going mouldy or getting forgotten. However, now that I see myself so unexpectedly endowed with this divine gift of speech, I intend to enjoy it and take advantage of it as much as I can, making haste to say everything I can remember, even if it is all jumbled up and confused.) (p. 196)

One feels Cervantes could almost have written that for Freud.

The dog's story, though unevenly paced, follows a fairly straightforward chronological line. It lacks plot, in the stricter sense of the term, and a definite closure — unless this is taken to be the retirement to the hospital. A sequel is promised, but remains untold. There is a central episode which contains an event upon which the whole narrative hinges. This event is the revelation and prophecy uttered by the witch Cañizares. The revelation, of highly uncertain validity, concerns the birth of Berganza and his brother. The prophecy is that they will regain their true (human) form 'cuando vieren con presta diligencia | derribar los soberbios levantados, | y alzar a los humildes abatidos | por poderosa mano para hacerlo' (p. 294) ('when they see the mighty speedily brought down and the humble exalted by that hand which has power to perform it' (pp. 230–31)). The implications of all this reach back to the narrator's origins, forward to the time and fact of the story's telling (because it would explain their ability to talk), and proleptically farther ahead still into an unknown future.

The structural significance of the event is such that, not surprisingly, it produces a hiccup at the very beginning (p. 245). Berganza holds back something, a piece of information presumably connected with his parentage, to be imparted later. It must be on his mind, because he refers to it again a little later (p. 255). The problem is where to place it in the narrative. 'Tell it now', urges Cipi6n, but Berganza insists on waiting until he reaches the place in his story where he met the witch. The problems of order and significance, cause and effect are as crucial in storytelling as they are in psychoanalysis, although they may have different resolutions. Freud had a comparable experience in connexion with the primal event in the case of the Wolf Man. He felt himself obliged to withhold and defer information that both dated back and referred forward.<sup>28</sup> Meaning is determined by settling the prior question: where does an item belong?

<sup>27</sup> I shall not attempt to analyse some of the striking 'dream' imagery present in the *Coloquio*: such as the nocturnal love-making of the two black slaves at the merchant's house — they give Berganza food to keep him quiet (p. 272) — and the beautiful girl taking a piece of meat out of Berganza's basket and replacing it with an old shoe (p. 248), which reads like pure Buñuel!

<sup>28</sup> See Freud, *History of an Infantile Neurosis*, for example, pp. 38, 60, 68, 80, 84, 121 n.

Berganza's experience with the witch is a traumatic event, if there is one, in his life story. It is a major fragment of a potential case history. The repulsive Cañizares greets him as 'Montiel, my boy' ('hijo' in the Spanish ambiguously signifying also a blood relationship (p. 291)), and tries to kiss him on the mouth. She tells him that he was the human son of the witch Montiela, metamorphosed into a dog by Camacha, the most powerful witch of all (pp. 293–94). This maternity is later rejected by both dogs. It is a thoroughly unwelcome anagnorisis. The mutual recognition of the two dogs as brothers (or possible brothers) goes unacknowledged, probably because of the previous recognition on which it depends. The unconventionality of both recognitions shows up the distance of the *Coloquio* from the classical canon.<sup>29</sup>

Berganza's rejection of the witch-mother may be seen in conjunction with his savage observation on the innate human inclination to do ill and speak ill of others:

El hacer y decir mal lo heredamos de nuestros primeros padres y lo mamamos en la leche. Véase claro en que apenas ha sacado el niño el brazo de las fajas cuando levanta la mano con muestras de querer vengarse de quien, a su parecer, le ofende; y casi la primera palabra articulada que habla es llamar puta a su ama o a su madre. (pp. 262–63)

(We inherit the tendency to do and speak evil from our first parents and absorb it with our mother's milk. You can see this clearly in the fact that the child has barely got his arm out of his swaddling clothes before he raises his hand as if he wanted revenge on the person who he thinks has offended him; and almost the first word he utters is to call his nurse or his mother a whore.)<sup>30</sup> (p. 208)

If Berganza has a problem, it looks as if it is connected with his mother. It would probably not be difficult to postulate an oedipal situation (a certain porter friend of La Montiela's, named Rodríguez, is hinted at as possible father (p. 294)). But further speculation along these lines, though amusing, does not seem warranted.<sup>31</sup>

However, in close association with the witch Cañizares there is something that has an undoubted counterpart in Freudian theory. Both she herself and much of what she has to say are a welter of incompatibles in the rational sense. The distinction between reality and fantasy, in particular, repeatedly disappears. Within the terms of the fiction, her allegation about the birth and metamorphosis of babies/puppies is presented as something which might (just) be real or which might be fantasy. One is reminded of Freud's identification of the 'primal event' (early infantile witnessing of an adult sexual act) in that it turned out to be next to impossible to establish with certainty whether the event really happened or was fantasized later.<sup>32</sup> There is the crucial distinction, of course, that, whereas Freud concluded that in psychoanalytic terms it made no difference to the analysis whether the event really happened or not, it makes a world of difference to the dogs.

<sup>29</sup> On unwelcome recognitions, see Terence Cave, *Recognitions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 414–21. On this one in particular, see R. M. Price, 'Cervantes and the Topic of the "Lost Child Found"' in the *Novelas ejemplares*, *Anales Cervantinos*, 27 (1989), 212–13.

<sup>30</sup> Jones must have found this too shocking for direct translation. He has 'an insult to his nurse or his mother'.

<sup>31</sup> I say this in spite of the following intriguing statement: 'The simultaneous transformation of human into animal and animal into human, functions both as an escape from and a reassertion of the oedipal system, because the animals, in their effort to imitate their supposed superiors, also suffer from oedipalization, particularly the dog, "the Oedipus-animal par excellence"' (Wright, citing G. Deleuze and F. Guattari on Kafka (pp. 169–70)).

<sup>32</sup> Freud, *History of an Infantile Neurosis*, pp. 89–103.

Cañizares recognizes the distinction between fantasy and reality, and good and evil, but they continually coil around each other as she talks. She says of witches' sabbaths:

Nosotras no sabemos cuándo vamos de una o de otra manera, porque todo lo que nos pasa en la fantasía es tan intensamente que no hay diferenciarlo de cuando vamos real y verdaderamente. Algunas experiencias de esto han hecho los señores inquisidores con algunas de nosotras que han tenido presas, y pienso que han hallado ser verdad lo que digo. (p. 296)

(We don't know whether we go in imagination, or in reality, because everything that happens to us in our imagination happens in such an intense way that it can't be distinguished from the times when we go really and truly. The inquisitors have made some experiments on some of us whom they have apprehended, and I think that they have found that what I say is true.) (p. 232)

She believes in the goodness of God while she is held in thrall to the Devil. Berganza wonders how she can understand and talk so much about God and do so much of the Devil's work (pp. 301–02). He even becomes touched with the same ambivalence himself: though known as the 'Wise Dog', he is chased from the town for being possessed by a demon (p. 303). The point of all this is that the dark world which Cañizares knows so intimately and Berganza has glimpsed is the unconscious, where good and evil, reality and fantasy, truth and falsehood merge in primordial antinomy. The norms of morality and reason do not apply here.<sup>33</sup>

The humorously ironic tone of the dogs' conversation is deceptive. It expresses the way they react to the world of men and women, not the way that world is.<sup>34</sup> Its brutality and foolishness is apparent in event after event described by Berganza. There should be no mistake; Cervantes's double novella is a deeply serious work. The problem of evil is arguably the ultimate problem broached in the *Coloquio de los perros*. Alternative solutions to it are proposed in the witch's prophecy (the forcible reversing of the social hierarchy) and in the dogs' decision to devote their lives to helping others and indirectly alleviating suffering (guarding the hospital and working for the alms collector). The first offers a kind of total solution, but not a practical proposition; the second is practical, but very limited and personal. Their action, which is certainly Christian and no doubt therapeutic, is a minuscule step towards changing the world, however. Cipión tries to make sense of the oracle but fails, and the dogs reject it as useless to them. They make sense of, and find the point of their existence by their own actions.<sup>35</sup> But to be aware of it, they must make sense of, and find the point of Berganza's story, which one of them has been telling and both of them interpreting — as we their readers must interpret too. A life, a case

<sup>33</sup> Compare this with Lacan's comment: 'The ambiguity of the hysterical revelation of the past is due not so much to the vacillation of its content between the imaginary and the real, for it is situated in both. Nor is it because it is made up of lies. The reason is that it presents us with the birth of truth in speech, and thereby brings us up against the reality of what is neither true nor false' ('The Function and Field of Speech Theory', p. 47).

<sup>34</sup> Compare this with Freud's observation on humour: 'The main thing is the intention which humour carries out, whether it is acting in relation to the self or other people. It means: "Look! here is the world, which seems so dangerous! It is nothing but a game for children — just worth making a jest about!"' (*Humour*, in *Art and Literature*, pp. 432–33; my italics).

<sup>35</sup> See my 'La profecía de la bruja', pp. 91–92. See also, on the witch's prophecy, Lelia Madrid, *Cervantes y Borges: La inversión de los signos* (Madrid: Pliegos, 1987), pp. 82–85, and Alicia Parodi, 'Los perros del Coloquio y su forma verdadera', *Actas del II Congreso argentino de hispanistas*, ed. by L. Arrigoni de Allamand, 2 vols (Mendoza: Universidad de Cuyo, 1989), II, 239–53. On Cañizares as a generator of discourse, see Carroll B. Johnson, 'Of Witches and Bitches', *Cervantes*, 11 (1991), 7–25.

history, a story: the readers must make sense of them all as narrative in essentially the same way.<sup>36</sup>

The more particular Freudian parallel can be said to end here. However, it is, I think, of interest to trace Berganza's story further within the *Casamiento-Coloquio* when and after it becomes a text.

The shift from oral to written medium marks a sea-change for the narrative. It has a different kind of existence as a text. It is fixed at one end as a signifier by the visible written word, and at the other it is still open until a reader completes the signification. The first reader is the licentiate Peralta, who, like the recipient of any narrative, must sooner or later decide whether what is told is intended primarily as fact or as fiction. Peralta has decided in advance to regard it as fiction. His co-operation is necessary to Campuzano, who is enabled to keep up the pretence (if that is what it is) that his role is that of stenographer rather than inventor of the account. He fortifies his position by choosing the dialogue form, which enhances the role of non-interventionist, 'absent' author, and which is at the other extreme from the I-centred narrative contained in it. As already mentioned, Campuzano goes even farther by absenting himself from the reading of the manuscript and losing himself in sleep.

The *Coloquio*, however, is just one part of a narrative complex or metafiction. It is enclosed inside a fragmentary frame story and paired with the tale of the *Casamiento engañoso*, which has the same narrator and narratee. One effect of this conjunction is that the incredibility of the second story momentarily casts doubt on the veracity of the first (p. 236). Just so does our reception of a particular work tend to be influenced by what we already know about the author or his other work. The frame story itself looks like a mere fragment of a larger untold story, which would presumably have told us more about the friendship of the ensign and the licentiate. The beginnings and ends of all stories are simply points of intersection with other stories. The same goes for case histories.

From the moment when Peralta starts to read, the frame story fits exactly into a frame outside the whole book. While he reads, so do we, and when he comes to the end of the record of the dogs' conversation, so do we. At this precise moment Campuzano wakes up (p. 321). A brief exchange between them confirms the fictional status of the *Coloquio* and they decide to take a walk in the park.

— Vamos — dijo el Alférez.

Y con esto, se fueron. (p. 322)

('Let's go,' said the ensign.

And with that, off they went.) (p. 252)

They simply walk out of the frame. Thus ends the *Casamiento-Coloquio*, and the entire collection of the *Exemplary Novels*.

But that is not really the end either. Outside, there is a series of receding frames of reference which involve us as readers of the *Novels*.<sup>37</sup> I shall mention three.

<sup>36</sup> 'Thus the analysand/analyst relation in the reconstruction of the past images the relation of story to the plotted narrative discourse, and it also, of course, images the relation of text to reader, especially in those problematic narratives where the reader is called upon to participate in the telling and the completion of the narrative in order to make it fully hermeneutic' (Brooks, p. 321).

<sup>37</sup> See Ian Reid, 'Destabilizing Frames for Story', in *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*, ed. by Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), pp. 299–310.

First, there is our ineradicable awareness that, however many levels of reported speech and intermediary narrators and narratees there may be, there is just one author, called Miguel de Cervantes, responsible for the whole bag of tricks. (At any rate, we take that fact on trust, even if we do not 'know' it.) Secondly, there are intertextual allusions within the *Casamiento-Coloquio* to other parts of the *Novelas ejemplares*. There is a reference to the novellas of *La gitanilla* (*The Gypsy Girl*), and another to *Rinconete y Cortadillo*; they are indirect, but unmistakable. There is another one, less obvious, to the prologue.<sup>38</sup> They serve as reminders of the immediate literary context in which the work is situated.

Lastly, there are the allusions to works and genres outside the *Novelas*, allusions which readers in varying degrees will pick up. Explicit mentions, tacit reminiscences, and generic affinities are to be found. They relate to individual works or kinds of works, dating from antiquity to c. 1600, such as Æsop's fables, nonsense stories, Lucianic dialogues, pastoral romances, and picaresque novels, to mention only some of the more prominent.<sup>39</sup> The twentieth-century reader may say, 'Why stop there?', and bring in such names as Conrad, Faulkner, Borges, and Beckett.<sup>40</sup> And, of course, Freud.

It may help to summarize the principal steps in the process I have followed:

- a. Two rational beings start to talk for the first time in their lives.
- b. One narrates the story of his life to the other.
- c. The listener comments on it and together they discuss its contents, manner of telling, meaning, and other matters.
- d. Their joint discourse is overheard by a third party.
- e. He records it as a written text called 'Novela y coloquio de los perros'.
- f. This is read by a fourth party who accepts it as fiction.
- g. This text is paired with another narrative (the *Casamiento engañoso*), told by and about the third party to the fourth party.
- h. Both narratives are contained in a notionally larger story of which only a fragment is told.
- i. The three stories comprise the narrative complex combined under the last two titles in the *Novelas ejemplares* of Cervantes.
- j. The combined stories connect intertextually with certain other items in the same collection.
- k. They also connect with other literary texts and genres from antiquity to the late twentieth century.
- l. They connect with the work of Sigmund Freud.

Cervantes traces a story from its earliest perceptible beginning as an urge to tell, felt by one rational being and directed to another of his own kind. The deepest import of that story springs from below the level of rational consciousness, intimately touches both their lives, and enigmatically relates to the whole human race.

<sup>38</sup> The first two respectively are on pages 306 and 281–82. The third is where Peralta says, 'Vámonos al Espolón a recrear los ojos del cuerpo, pues ya he recreado los del entendimiento' (p. 322) — ('Let's go off to the Espolón and refresh our eyes, for my mind's been well refreshed' (p. 252)). This recalls the statement in Cervantes's prologue that the *Novelas ejemplares* are intended as healthful recreation, like games and public gardens and promenades.

<sup>39</sup> Forcione calls the *Coloquio* 'the most complex hybridization of narrative forms in the *Novelas ejemplares*', and adds to the list the philosophical dialogue, miracle narrative, devotional treatise, sermon, aphorism, and anecdote (p. 17). The key works, it seems to me, are *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius and Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (see 'La profecía de la bruja', pp. 86–87).

<sup>40</sup> Compare with the *Casamiento-Coloquio*, for instance, what Peter Brooks says about Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which 'engages the very motive of narrative in its tale of a completely motivated attempt to recover the story of another within one's own and to retell both in a context that further complicates the relation of actors, tellers and listeners' (p. 238).

Once enunciated, the story ceases to belong to just the teller; the listener is actively involved. Another listener appropriates it and it becomes a part of other stories, other lives. It goes through a change of medium and becomes a written text. From then on it is capable of reproduction and subject to the things that can happen to texts. What grew out of Berganza's surprising conversation with Cipión ends as an integral part of the corpus and history of Western literature. At any rate, that is one way of reading the *Coloquio de los perros*.

Much of Freud's work is inseparable from Western literature too, regardless of the slump in his reputation in the medical world<sup>41</sup> and the effects of deconstruction on his theory (which itself opened the way to deconstruction). A psychoanalytic report is a kind of biography, and biography has a literary history that goes back beyond written literature to oral epic tradition.<sup>42</sup> Freud often mentioned the analogy with novelistic composition. He was also, of course, well aware of the extent to which great writers had sometimes anticipated him. He acknowledged as much when he received the Goethe Prize in 1930, saying of Goethe and psychoanalysis: 'He himself approached it at a number of points, recognized much through his own insight that we have since been able to confirm.'<sup>43</sup>

Freud's method had begun with the idea of the analyst as a kind of archaeologist trying to unearth what was below the conscious level of the patient's memory. But the active involvement of the analyst in the object of the analysis proved to be both unavoidable and necessary. It turned out that only in dialogue were the most significant parts of the past retrievable. Dialogue has also been found to be essential to the art of the novel.<sup>44</sup> Freud's psychoanalytic method coincides with Cervantes's novella (which he happened to have read in his youth) in recognizing the dialogic nature of narrative communication in each case.

How much of the *Coloquio* Freud remembered in later years is a matter of guesswork, though as late as 1928 he recalled his and Silberstein's adoption of the roles of Cipión and Berganza.<sup>45</sup> However, if narrative is a root metaphor, central, as has been argued, to the understanding of human conduct,<sup>46</sup> and if narrative implies dialogue, the coincidence of the *Coloquio de los perros* and Freudian psychoanalysis is not too remote a possibility in itself. Whatever priorities were or were not involved, the *Coloquio* contributes significantly to the mutual illumination of psychoanalysis and literary narrative.

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<sup>41</sup> See Seymour Fisher and Roger P. Greenberg, *The Scientific Credibility of Freud's Theories and Therapy* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), pp. 273–306.

<sup>42</sup> See Spence, p. 179.

<sup>43</sup> Freud, 'Address Delivered in the Goethe House at Frankfurt', in *Art and Literature*, p. 268.

<sup>44</sup> See M. M. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 259–422. A skeletal dialogic structure is perceptible in the earliest Spanish picaresque novels, which preceded *Don Quixote* and the *Exemplary Novels*, notably *Lazarillo de Tormes* and *Guzmán de Alfarache*. *Lazarillo* addresses his autobiography to an unspecified gentleman, and *Guzmán* repeatedly speaks to the reader and to himself as protagonist.

<sup>45</sup> See Gedo and Wolf, p. 93.

<sup>46</sup> See Sarbin, 'The Narrative as a Root Metaphor for Psychology', in *Narrative Psychology*, pp. 3–21.