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Narrative Complexity in the Talking-Dog Stories of Cervantes, Hoffmann, Gogol, Bulgakov, and Kafka

Ivan Schneider

A Thesis in the Field of Foreign Literature, Language, and Culture

for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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Abstract

With the intent of developing a method for classifying talking-dog stories of critical interest, this thesis evaluates the extent, degree, and type of narrative complexity within the talking-dog stories of five canonical authors in world literature: “The Dogs’ Colloquy” by Miguel de Cervantes, “A Report on the Latest Adventures of the Dog Berganza” by E.T.A. Hoffmann, “Diary of a Madman” by Nikolai Gogol, *Heart of a Dog* by Mikhail Bulgakov, and “Researches of a Dog” by Franz Kafka.

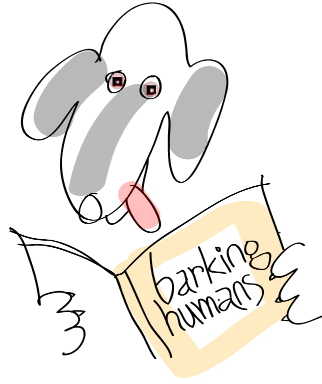
As the animal most accessible to human experience both inside and outside of the home, the dog has a long history of possessing the power of speech within literature and popular entertainment. Although most talking-dog stories are considered trite and banal, the works under consideration are treated as worthy subjects for serious commentary in the copious critical literature surrounding each author.

Using Gérard Genette’s *Narrative Discourse* as a framework, each of the works considered is evaluated for distinctive features of narrative time, narrative mood, and narrative voice. Correspondences are also sought between the narrative structure of the talking-dog stories and the authors’ other works.

Although there is no evidence that talking-dog stories are more complex than other stories by the same author, the research reveals a bidirectional relationship between an author’s introduction of a talking dog into a story and the desire to employ unusual narrative forms. Giving a dog the power to speak often requires additional explanatory apparatus; while at the same time, innovation in narrative structure, such as shifting

narrative voice to various characters, makes readily available the possibility of a talking animal. In addition, each work uses the talking-dog motif to illuminate contemporary philosophical thought regarding the differences separating humans from animals. This fundamental humanistic question is answered in terms of morality for Cervantes, mythic natural powers for Hoffmann, adherence to social structures for Gogol, membership in scientific taxonomies for Bulgakov, and the ability to adapt to modernity for Kafka.

These observations demonstrate that talking-dog stories can go well beyond simple comic relief to provide commentary on issues such as moral behavior, musical aesthetics, the writer's art, the limits of science, and the approach of modernity. That a dog speaks in fiction is no longer noteworthy in itself; our critical attention instead gravitates to those talking dogs contained in stories with something noteworthy to say about their perspective on the humanities.


barking
humans

Dedication

Dedicated to wonderful memories with Kelly, Kaley, and Porter.

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the family and friends who helped me to create the time and space that made writing a thesis possible. I would especially like to recognize Benton Jones for his timely motivational guidance, Nadija Mujagić for always making me feel right at home during my Boston visits, Jennifer Simonic and Spencer Welton for their kind encouragement and welcoming home, and Naomi Stiffelman for her loving emotional support.

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The frontispiece was commissioned from world-class illustrator and mother Tamara Schneider and her team.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Theodore Ziolkowski reacts to the presence of a talking dog in Kafka's "Investigations of a Dog" by conducting a masterful historical summary of the motif, describing examples from classical antiquity, from the European literary tradition, and in modern fiction of Europe and the Americas. In doing so, he identifies a diverse set of talking dogs that he categorizes as following the motif and conventional example of the "philosophical dog," the "outside observer … making cynical observations on the foibles of human nature."[1] Ziolkowski concludes that the "philosophical dog is still being used for the purposes of cynical social comment that has been conventional since Lucian," even if the original form has been transformed through "inversions" and "deformations."[2] Alice Kuzniar acknowledges Ziolkowski's "philosophical" label, making the further observation that "it is most often about language and communication that the canine philosopher broods."[3]

Yet considering that the definition of "philosophy" has changed significantly over the range of examples considered from antiquity to the present, the designation of "philosophical" is too imprecise to be sufficiently productive in explaining the talking-

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[1] Theodore Ziolkowski, *Varieties of Literary Thematics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983) 114.

[2] Ziolkowski 122.

[3] Alice A. Kuzniar, *Melancholia's Dog* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) 57.

dog motif. In some cases, such as with Gogol's gossiping little dogs, the "philosophical" label applies not at all. Even when the dog has a philosophical bent, as in Kafka's dog story, the element of "cynical social comment" is absent for an animal that knows and speaks nothing of human affairs other than in an existential sense. While the dogs of Cervantes and Hoffmann do provide contemporary social commentary about humans, such commentary is hardly unique to the canine species within the context of the collections in which the respective stories appear; to wit, Cervantes' Berganza is no less a picaresque figure than the young thieves in *Rinconete and Cortadillo*, and Hoffmann's reprise of Berganza is no more of a philosopher or social commentator than Hoffmann's Ritter Gluck or Johannes Kreisler. To the extent that a talking dog espouses a philosophy, it is often to the same extent as any human character invented by the author.

Similarly, any expectation based on the etymology of the Greek word "cynic," or "dog-like," that a talking canine will necessarily espouse a cynical outlook does not hold up in practice. William Desmond makes the distinction between modern cynicism, which is a pessimistic, nihilistic worldview in which "greedy, materialistic, manipulative and hypocritical" people "act only out of self-interest [with] no public good or universal standard of morality,"[4] and ancient Cynicism, which leavens pessimism about human motivation with optimism regarding human nature. Unlike modern cynicism, ancient Cynicism offers an answer in the virtues of "frugality, simplification [and] renunciation," espousing a "philosophy of radical individual freedom… won at the cost of a hard, ascetic lifestyle and a shameless flouting of social conventions."[5] With these more

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[4] William D. Desmond, *Cynics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) 2.

[5] Desmond 3.

precise definitions in mind, we can question the presence of either modern cynicism or ancient Cynicism in the corpus of talking-dog literature. While some works in the talking-dog canon align with Desmond's definitions – as with the cynical Sharik in Bulgakov's *Heart of a Dog*[6] or the Cynic-minded conclusion of Jean Dutourd's *A Dog's Head* – other examples are more problematic. For example, the dogs of Cervantes and Hoffmann both offer scathing criticism of human society, but these condemnations are qualified by the presence of exemplary characters held up as worthy of admiration and emulation. While this hint of optimism partially suggests a Cynical worldview, the Renaissance and Romantic-era dogs reacted to the opinions native to their own times rather than to the terms of an ancient debate. The ancient Cynics may have taken their name and symbol from the dog, but it does not follow that future authors were constrained in their representation of talking dogs by the philosophy that bears the dog's name. Dogs may be accurately depicted as having privileged access to how other people live, thus giving their imagined utterances narrative interest; yet not all truth-tellers are cynical. These limitations circumscribe the usefulness of "cynical" as well as "philosophical" as descriptive of the talking dog.

Another possible explanatory label for the phenomenon of the talking dog is magic realism, including the marvelous and the fantastic. However, the term "magic realism," coined in the mid-1920s, only marginally applies to Kafka, who sits at the cusp of the inception of the genre, and has less relevance to earlier authors. Maggie Ann Bowers observes: "[Kafka] is well known as a primary influence on magical realist

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[6] Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog* (New York: Grove Press, 1968).

writers, but he is not usually considered to be a magic realist writer himself."[7] More generally, talking dogs are problematic examples of magical realism because they're conventional, even staid, representations of magic. Bowers writes of the "inherent transgressive and subversive qualities" of magical realism;[8] its inclusion in a text "provokes the reader to reflect on what they are willing to believe and on their own assumptions about reality,"[9] which in turn "provides a means to attack the assumptions of the dominant culture and particularly the notion of scientifically and logically determined truth."[10] Yet it is difficult to claim both that the works exist squarely within the historical tradition of the dominant culture, per Ziolkowski, and that they simultaneously shock the reader into questioning that dominant culture. Instead, the overwhelming familiarity of the device robs it of its inherent transgressive potential. While examples can be found of talking dogs that shock sensibilities and cross boundaries – such as the cohabitating canine in Rosalyn Drexler's *The Cosmopolitan Girl*[11] – such transgression is by no means a defining trait of the genre.

Talking dogs have been considered obliquely at best by those investigating the role of the dog in literature. For example, Alice Kuzniar suggests that because dogs are unable to voice their thoughts, they are highly evocative of the melancholic condition, and so writers' cynomorphic urges are therefore considered "compensatory for both the

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[7] Maggie Ann Bowers, *Magic(al) Realism* (New York: Routledge, 2004) 26.

[8] Bowers 67.

[9] Bowers 79.

[10] Bowers 69.

[11] Rosalyn Drexler, *The Cosmopolitan Girl* (New York: Lippincott, 1975).

animal's silence and human incomprehension." Still, Kuzniar relegates most attempts at the talking-dog story to "banality and insipidness."[12] Kuzniar writes: "The majority of works in the popular cynomorphic genre … banally reduce what could transpire in a dog's mind to fixation on a bone, anticipation of the next walk, or preoccupation with scents on the roadside."[13] She does allow for the distinction between Ziolkowski's "philosophic tradition" and the "popular cynomorphic," but her main focus remains on the realistic, non-speaking canines within fiction and art, including from the talking-dog corpus only Kafka's "melancholic hound"[14] as an example supporting her broader argument. In doing so, she accepts the "philosophical" label for talking dogs without questioning its underpinnings.

Considering the definitional challenge involved with separating literary talking dogs from their simple-minded counterparts, the task then is to come up with a rule of thumb that can distinguish between the talking dogs of critical interest from the more banal variety. Ziolkowski has identified the best-of-breed among talking-dog works, with detailed analyses of stories by Lucian, Bonaventure des Périers, Cervantes, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Nikolai Gogol, Jacinto Benavente y Martínez, Franz Kafka, Mikhail Bulgakov, Clifford Simak, Rosalyn Drexler, Elsa Morante and Carlo della Corte. To Ziolkowski's list of talking dogs one might add S.Y. Agnon's *Only Yesterday*, Jean Dutourd's *A Dog's Head*, Octave Mirbeau's *Dingo*, Patrice Nganang's *Dog Days*, Luis Rafael Sánchez's *Indiscretions of a Gringo Dog*, and Miguel de Unamuno's *Niebla*. For

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[12] Kuzniar 29.

[13] Kuzniar 187n.

[14] Kuzniar 22.

the purpose of developing a workable theoretical construct, in this thesis I shall cite evidence primarily from the talking-dog works of Cervantes, Hoffmann, Gogol, Kafka, and Bulgakov. The conclusions of the research should then be applicable in a broad sense to the other works mentioned.

The origin of the research question comes from the simple observation that of the five central talking-dog stories, three were originally published as part of collections: Cervantes's *Exemplary Stories*, Hoffmann's *Fantasy Pieces in Callot's Manner*, and Gogol's *Arabesques.* In each case, the talking-dog story relates to other stories within the collection on a thematic, structural, and narrative level. Similarly, within the critical literature and in the publishing history of the story, Kafka's posthumously-published "Investigations of a Dog" has been grouped with his other animal stories – "A Report to an Academy," "The Burrow," "Jackals and Arabs," and "Josephine the Singer or The Mouse People." Bulgakov's short novel *Heart of a Dog* is an exception, as it was published independently of his other works. Nevertheless, it invites parallels to *The Fatal Eggs* and *The Master and Margarita*, both of which prominently feature animals transformed by science or magic.

While membership in a collection is not in itself a marker of specific interest, the coincidence hints at the importance of the relationship between talking-dog works and the contexts in which they are received by the reader. Works in a single collection share a single narrative frame, or in Gérard Genette's terminology, they are metadiegetic narratives being told from the same baseline diegetic level, that of the author narrating a set of stories. With Genette's framework in mind, we can seek out other narrative constructs present in the talking-dog works under consideration. Indeed, for the writers

considered, each talking-dog story contains an innovative combination of techniques including frame stories, flashbacks, foreshadowing and extra-textual references to a level outstripping the complexity of the author's other contemporary works. The presence of the talking dog correlates with a marked increase in narrative complexity, and it is this narrative complexity itself that defines a noteworthy talking-dog novel more than "philosophical," "cynical," or any other attribute derived from the actual content of what the dog says.

To be certain, the relationship between talking dogs and narrative complexity is neither exclusive nor causal, as there are numerous examples of talking dogs in texts with simple narrative structures, as well as novels having immense complexity in which there are no talking dogs. In addition, complex narrative structures can be found in talking animal stories from the same authors under consideration, ranging from E.T.A. Hoffmann's talking cat Kater Murr[15] to the talking ape in Kafka's "Report to an Academy."[16] Nevertheless, the talking-dog stories under consideration stand apart for their unique combination of reliance on traditional precedent, experimentation in narrative technique, and innovation in transforming classical narrative structures into new forms.

This paper relies upon, but is not restricted to, a structuralist analysis of the selected works. Jonathan Culler explains the project of structuralism (via Barthes and Todorov) as "a poetics which would stand to literature as linguistics stands to language

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[15] E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr: Together with a Fragmentary Biography of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler on Random Sheets of Waste Paper* (New York: Penguin, 1999).

[16] Franz Kafka, *Kafka's Selected Stories* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

and which therefore would not seek to explain what individual works mean but would attempt to make explicit the system of figure and conventions that enable works to have the forms and meanings they do."[17]

Therefore, structuralism per se would initially appear to have little to say about talking dogs. That a character in a novel is a dog rather than a human, or that a canine character has the power of speech, is invisible to any narratological analysis limited to describing structural phenomena such as temporal flashbacks or changes in perspective. When a character in a novel relates something that happened in that character's past, or when the narrative shifts perspectives between external narrators and characters in the story, or when a character relates a story told by another character in the novel, these are all narrative devices that neither preclude nor demand the presence of a talking animal. There is no explicit narrative category restricted to focalization with animals. The barrier between story and narrative is a one-way mirror, the contents of the story shielded from analysis of structure even as the analysis of story pivots on that same structure.

Yet the presence of a talking animal practically demands the use of some kind of narrative device to explain the ability of the reader to peer inside of an animal consciousness. William Nelles identifies the most common approaches for introducing animal voices, "in which the animal's narrating is explained by an outer frame featuring an unreliable narrator or naturalizing circumstances."[18] Nelles also describes a useful

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[17] Jonathan Culler, Foreword, *Narrative Discourse*, by Gerard Genette, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980) 8.

[18] William Nelles, "Beyond the Bird's Eye: Animal Focalization," *Narrative* 9.2 (2001):193.

"continuum of approaches developed for representing animal consciousness,"[19] with the continuum located between the poles of what we may call the "nominal" and the "rigorous":

> At one extreme the narrator's subjectivity is *nominally* located within an animal filter, but skews incongruously from that premise through details inconsistent with cultural discourses about that animal. At the other extreme the narrating limits itself *rigorously* within the animal's natural and/or conventional sphere of interest and reference.[20] (*italics mine*)

As we shall see in the following chapters, the works considered fall largely on the nominal end of the continuum. For example, although Cervantes's dogs exhibit "stereotypically canine"[21] behaviors, those behaviors are incorporated as dog-like markers within a narrative that more closely follows the patterns of human consciousness. Bulgakov's talking dog moves toward the rigorous end of the continuum, but does so only briefly prior to the dog's transformation. The talking-dog stories of Cervantes and Bulgakov also illustrate, respectively, the "unreliable narrator" and "naturalizing circumstances" mentioned earlier. As such, Nelles adequately describes the narrative apparatus sufficient to convey the idea that an animal speaks. However, our concern is not mere sufficiency of narrative apparatus, but rather excess of narrative apparatus. The talking-dog stories under consideration are those that employ narrative devices above and beyond what would be necessary to explain why the animal speaks.

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[19] Nelles 189.

[20] Nelles 192.

[21] Nelles 189.

Exploring and explaining this excess of narrative complexity coincident with talking dogs is the core intent of the thesis.

While Genette's formulation of structuralism was neither the first nor the last word on the topic, it possesses an organic completeness and conceptual beauty that stems from its conception of narrative as being an extension of verbal forms. Genette writes:

> Since any narrative, even one as extensive and complex as the *Recherche du temps perdu*, is a linguistic production undertaking to tell of one or several events, it is perhaps legitimate to treat it as the development—monstrous, if you will—given to a *verbal* form, in the grammatical sense of the term: the expansion of a verb. […] This perhaps authorizes us to organize, or at any rate to formulate, the problems of analyzing narrative discourse according to categories borrowed from the grammar of verbs […]"[22]

By contrast, Mieke Bal's *Narratology* provides a theory of narrative that is, in many respects, more robust and complete than Genette's theory, in that her method of parsing narrative is not constrained by any analogy to linguistic production. Bal's approach, being more "normalized" (in the terminology of computer databases) with well-defined relationships between text, fabula and actor,[23] would be more appropriate were one to catalog the function of every sentence in a narrative text for programmatic analysis by a computer. For the purposes of our analysis, Bal's framework would be adequate in assessing and describing the narrative features of the works considered. Yet Genette's approach, while lacking the exactitude and precision of Bal's, has the virtue of tripartite simplicity. With Genette, narrative effects can be classified in terms of narrative time, narrative mood, and narrative voice, and such concepts are familiar from a

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[22] Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980) 30-31.

[23] Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative,* 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) 5.

linguistic perspective. With an immediate aim of assessing the level of narrative complexity of the works considered relative to other contemporary works by the same author, having a limited number of measuring sticks becomes a virtue.

The thesis contains, for each of the five talking-dog stories considered: a summary of the work; a literature review including comments on narrative structure and the role of the dog(s) in the story; an enumeration of narrative devices of note within the story and where appropriate, within the collection in which the story appears; and finally, an exploration of the relationship between narrative complexity and the talking dog relative to the distinctive features of the work.

The conclusion reassesses the factors that set apart a talking-dog story of critical interest; summarizes the two-way relationship between narrative complexity and the presence of a talking animal; and uncovers the common themes within the respective works. Themes that persist throughout most or all of the stories considered include musical elements, the idea of "incompleteness," and the representation of the writer's creative art. The interplay between form and content reveals that neither the talking dogs nor the narrative devices exist in isolation within the text, as they are laden with implications that go far beyond the works' formal characteristics.

Chapter II

Cervantes' Billiards

Genette summarizes the *Odyssey* as an extended amplification of the statement, "Ulysses comes home to Ithaca."[24] Similarly, we might condense Cervantes' "The Dogs' Colloquy" into the headline: "Talking dogs reject witches' account of human birth mother." The source of the account is Cañizares, the mother in question Montiela, and both are pupils of the witch Camacha. All three witches were purportedly present at the birth of the dogs, with Camacha acting as midwife. Camacha tells Montiela "how she had changed her children into dogs because of some complaint she had against her," adding a cryptic prophecy of when the dogs would return to their "natural form."[25] Cañizares relates this story to the dog Berganza, whom she believes to be Montiela's child. Berganza then tells this story to Scipio, on an evening when both dogs had mysteriously gained the power of speech. They agree to tell each other their life stories on successive nights, starting with Berganza, and he tells Scipio his life story along with digressions on various topics, culminating with his encounter with Cañizares. They evaluate and ultimately reject Cañizares' story as lies, deception and wickedness (239). At the end, the dogs have jobs patrolling the grounds of the hospital where Campuzano undergoes his

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[24] Genette 30.

[25] Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Exemplary Stories*, trans. C.A. Jones (London: Penguin Books, 1972) 230. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the chapter.

treatment. Throughout, Scipio interjects with his own reactions and admonitions, and the story ends at daybreak, Scipio's personal history untold.

"The Dogs' Colloquy" is written in dialogue form. This format is not explained within the story itself, but rather within the previous story in the *Exemplary Stories* collection, "The Deceitful Marriage." In that story, the solider Campuzano relates to his friend, Licentiate Peralta, the story of how he ended up in the hospital receiving the "sweat treatment" for his fourteen blistery buboes, which are symptoms of venereal disease. While in the hospital, he overheard the conversation between Berganza and Scipio, which he transcribed as a dialogue and shared with his friend.

Despite, or perhaps because of the subject matter involving deception leading to venereal disease, Cervantes explains the title of *Exemplary Stories* in the "Prologue" with his claim that "there is not one of them that does not afford a useful example."[26] He writes:

> My intention has been to set up in the public square of our country a billiard table where everyone may come to amuse himself without harm to body or soul; for decent and pleasing pastimes are profitable rather than harmful. One is not always in church or engaged in prayer, one is not always occupied with business matters, however important they may be. There is a time for recreation, when the tired mind seeks repose.[27]

If *Exemplary Stories* is a recreational pastime, its final story presents the most challenging of riddles. That "The Dogs' Colloquy" is more complex than other contemporary works is a feature widely noted in the critical literature. For example, Allan

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[26] Cervantes, *The Portable Cervantes*, trans. Samuel Putman (New York: Penguin, 1976) 707.

[27] *The Portable Cervantes* 707.

K. Forcione describes the “riotous disorder in [Cervantes’] narrative form”[28] as one of many effects that “in their complexity go beyond those of any picaresque narration or Lucianic dialogue in Spanish literature.”[29]

The originality of the work stems from its departure from generic norms. L.A. Murillo identifies “the containment of a narrative substance within a dialogue form, *novella y coloquio*” as “the one feature that explains both the components and the method of this Cervantine alchemy.”[30] The “truly novelistic aspect”[31] of the work, he writes, was Cervantes’ addition of the rich characterizations of the dogs to the contemporary dialectic form of the colloquy. As a genre, the colloquy was “traditionally didactic, moralistic and censorious, and even mordantly satirical, and that could easily include philosophical or miscellaneous comment.”[32]

Just as Cervantes transformed the genres of pastoral and chivalric romance in his other works, “The Dogs’ Colloquy” represents the author’s own novelistic synthesis of the genres of the exemplary novel, the colloquy, and as outlined by Edward Aylward, the picaresque as well.[33] Aylward suggests that Cervantes may have depicted the author’s

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[28] Alban K. Forcione, *Cervantes and the Mystery of Lawlessness: A Study of El Casamiento Engañoso y El Coloquio de los Perros* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984) 13.

[29] Forcione 179.

[30] L.A. Murillo, “Cervantes’ *Coloquio de los Perros*, a Novel-Dialogue,” *Modern Philology* 58.3 (Feb., 1961): 175.

[31] Murillo 178.

[32] Murillo 175.

[33] Edward Aylward, “The Peculiar Arrangement of *El Casamiento engañoso* and *El coloquio de los perros,*” *A Companion to Cervantes’s Novelas Ejemplares*, ed. Stephen F. Boyd (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Tamesis, 2005) 237.

debate with his contemporary literary theorists about such transformations of genre through the depiction of the relationship between Berganza and Scipio:

> [Ruth El Saffar points out] that Campuzano represents the author while his friend Peralta assumes the role of the reader. Taken together, these two characters represent the two parts of the creative process […] I would suggest that the second dog's role in the *Coloquio* is to give concrete form to the haunting voice of literary theorists who constrain the writer's creative instincts by trying to force him to work in accordance with established literary precepts.[34]

With this formulation, Cervantes' experimental novelization of generic forms also includes the critical reaction against such experimentation. As a listener to Campuzano's story, which in the telling follows a traditional literary style, Licentiate Peralta is encouraging and provides sympathetic interjections throughout, only taking issue with the introduction of the fantastic element of the talking dogs at the very end. By contrast, Scipio is a far more active dissenter, taking issue to the form and structure of Berganza's narrative throughout. Scipio cuts episodes short, he reins in digressions, and he even urges Berganza to reveal the story of Cañizares, which is the climactic mystery of the novel, well before Berganza as storyteller deems it appropriate. Scipio, it appears, would have Berganza tell his story in the clipped manner used at the start of this chapter, the condensed headline instead of a richly-ornamented narrative slowly unveiled.

This contrast between the digression-laden storytelling technique of "The Dogs' Colloquy" and the literary account of "The Deceitful Marriage" is commented on by Peter N. Dunn, who identifies a symmetrical tension between the two works:

> …the orally delivered story of the marriage is highly literary in its style, tightly organized around internal symmetries, and ends

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[34] Aylward 256.

> epigrammatically...The oral story is an exemplary demonstration of the literary art of the novella. The *Coloquio's* written text, on the other hand, transcribes a conversation which, although it is directed by the familiar trope of life as journey, escapes from the speaker's control at every turn.[35]

Cervantes' novelistic experimentations with genre in these stories include the use of several complex approaches to narrative, and the most distinctive approaches involve what Genette defines as "narrative voice," including the narrative levels described by William Nelles in the introduction. Nelles cites "The Dogs' Colloquy" as an example of embedding with a frame story,[36] and this technique is repeated recursively in the story itself. Steven Hutchinson, comparing Cervantes's text to the chains of attribution in Islamic scholarship, outlines the nested discursive levels contained within the story as it telescopes from Cervantes' novel to Camacha's divination.[37] The other *Exemplary Stories* have no comparable usage of narrative levels.

Another aspect of narrative voice in Genette is the function of the narrator, and Berganza cycles through all of them. In addition to the default narrative function, Berganza interrupts his life story with a directing function to comment on its organization; a communication function eliciting reactions from the narratee; a testimonial function to confirm his personal involvement; and an ideological function such as when he offers general commentary about types of people and occupations.

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[35] Peter N. Dunn, "Shaping Experience: Narrative Strategies in Cervantes," *MLN* 109.2 (Mar., 1994): 199.

[36] Nelles 193.

[37] Steven Hutchinson, "Counterfeit Chains of Discourse: A Comparison of Citation in Cervantes' Casamiento / Coloquio and in Islamic Hadith," *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America* 8.2 (1981): 145.

These interruptions follow a pattern, as do the individual episodes that comprise Berganza's life story—excepting the encounter with Cañizares, which must be treated separately. Each episode has similar types of interruptions, whether Scipio providing interpretive commentary or Berganza making general statements about the types of people involved, and each has similar patterns of shifts in narrative time between scenes, pauses, summaries and ellipses. The episodes typically start and end with a scene told in singulative frequency, i.e. the event being described happened only once. The middle part of the episode switches into a repeating, or iterative, frequency to describe not a specific event, but rather a way of life and set of habits. For example, when Berganza says that "in the silence and solitude of my siestas, I would reflect among other things that what I had heard about the life of shepherds could not be true" (201), he describes a single train of thought as being a recurrent activity, the dog in his mind repeatedly examining the evidence, pondering the implications, and coming to an inevitable conclusion time after time. It is in the midst of these descriptions of repeating frequency that Berganza shifts function as a narrator, moving from the narrative mood of describing events into the ideological function of interpreting them. In these digressions, he holds forth on the nature of different types of masters, not dissimilar to the witty observations of "The Glass Graduate." Each adventure yields not just a story illustrating the social class and profession that Berganza served, but also the summation of the dog's measured and repeated reflections regarding those professions as an outsider. These reflections are punctuated by an ellipsis to speed the narrative to the concluding episode, through which Berganza escapes or leaves the situation for whatever logical reason, returning again to singulative frequency.

The Cañizares episode inverts the sequence of singulative-repeating-singulative. The witch starts by describing how Camacha "would freeze the clouds when she wanted to, and blot out the face of the sun with them; and when she felt like it, she would make the stormiest sky clear" (229), employing the repeating frequency in narrative time in describing the witches' respective powers and capabilities. It is only at Montiela's pregnancy that the story switches into the singulative, and remains in that mode only through the recounting of the prophecy, and briefly after, in recounting Montiela's death. Otherwise, the narrative returns to the repeating mode in describing the nature of the devil, the effects of the ointment, the authorship of sin, and Cañizares' journey to redemption. This inversion further sets apart the Cañizares episode as a central pivot to the entire story at both structural and thematic levels.

In total, these narrative effects set "The Dogs' Colloquy" and "The Deceitful Marriage" apart from other stories in the collection. The other stories in the collection are narrated by and feature humans speaking about human activities and are largely contained within self-contained metadiagetic levels. Even "The Little Gypsy Girl," which recounts the title character's story of birth for the end of the work, proceeds in a traditional temporal sequence from start to finish, as with the other stories in the collection. It is the accumulation of narrative complexity that sets "The Dogs' Colloquy" apart, and the talking dogs underscore and amplify this complexity.

However, when it comes to explaining the question of why dogs were included in the story, Aylward makes a general statement that places dogs under the category of the mere absurd:

> If there is some artistic purpose behind Cervantes's elaborate plan to fuse the Casamiento with the Coloquio, it is to demonstrate that

> a skillful author—as Campuzano in this case certainly is—will be able to create an interesting and plausible story out of virtually any subject-matter, even something as absurd as a conversation between two dogs.[38]

Yet Cervantes was not a fabulist, and only sparingly introduced into his stories those elements that could not be explained through rational means. Otis H. Green writes that "Cervantes makes principal use, not of the supernatural, but of the surprising and the apparently inexplicable,"[39] and notes just two exceptions: Don Quixote's "oneiric" adventiure in the Cave of Montesinos, and the talking dogs of "The Dogs' Colloquy." Similarly, Peter N. Dunn categorizes the talking dogs as "Campuzano's dreamwork, a dog's eye view of a world riddled with deceit and brutality."[40]

Based on Cervantes' stated objective for *Exemplary Stories*, we might look at the recreational aspect to uncover the function of the dogs. In the "billiard table" of the work, the dogs may represent billiard balls that can find a home in any pocket, touch any other ball, and otherwise have the run of the table, as did Berganza throughout the societal levels of the city. Unlike other animals, dogs can be welcomed into homes in different social strata, as field workers, guards, or companions. No other animal, whether octopus, bird, giraffe, or cat, has as extensive a range of social acceptance in the human family as does the dog.

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[38] Aylward 258.

[39] Otis H. Green, "Scholarship in the Renaissance: Reports presented at the Annual Meeting, January 26, 1963," *Renaissance News* 16.3 (Autumn, 1963): 249.

[40] Peter N. Dunn, "The Play of Desire: *El amante liberal* and *El casamiento engañoso y El coloquio de los perros,*" *Companion to Cervantes's Novelas Ejemplares* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Tamesis, 2005) 98.

Illustrating this status, the dog is a recurring motif throughout *Exemplary Stories*. In “The Little Gypsy Girl,” two dogs in the gypsy camp grab the poet by the leg and wound him (59); in “Riconete and Cortadillo,” the ringleader of the thieves’ guild Monipodio carries with him “a sword with the ‘little-dog’ mark (98); “The Glass Graduate” describes poets as “modern young puppies bark[ing] at the hoary old mastiffs” (133); and “The Jealous Extremaduran” sequesters his young bride in a house with no male animals, and “nor was the bark of a dog ever heard there; they were all of the female sex” (153). These common elements, evocations and thematic linkages between “The Dogs’ Colloquy” and other stories contribute to the stylistic unity of the collection, while also forming an impression that the dogs are and have been an integral part of society as described in the novels.

Permitting the dogs to speak in a human voice afforded Cervantes with comic and satirical potential stemming from the poetic representation of canine thought. Cervantes imbues the dogs with a writer’s sensibility, such that they draw upon metaphors based on their own experiences as animals, much as a writer draws upon experiences with other humans. A dog, being an animal, would be more likely to compare a human to other animals than to characterize humans in terms of other humans, as humans tend to do. Accordingly, in Berganza’s story here are instances of humans acting like animals, such as the shepherds pretending to be wolves (204); humans treating others like animals, such as the constable using women “as a net or hook to make their catches for them” (217); humans with animal-like attributes, such as Cañizares’ "stomach which was like a sheepskin" and her "udders of wrinkled, dried up cows" (236); and humans described as animals, such as the Moors said to be “treasure-chest, moth, magpie and weasel” where

money is concerned (242). Berganza himself is transformed by the drummer into a horse (226), an animal which Berganza notes at the beginning of the story has a lesser reputation for understanding than either dog or elephant (195-196). Even the narrative is given a zoomorphic representation through Scipio's plea that Berganza tell the story "quickly, without adding tails to it, and making it look like an octopus" (212). Paul Carranza explains this phenomenon of interspecies identity confusion in reference to the Aesopic tradition, observing that "[t]he novella is replete with humans who act as if they were animals," representing "transgressions against identity."[41]

Cervantes' dogs form an integral part of the fabric of *Exemplary Stories*, and as such, they appear to be more than simply an absurdity designed to test the limits of what an able storyteller can convince a reader to be true. Cervantes was experimenting with novelistic innovations based on generic forms, and in doing so, not only synthesized the picaresque with the colloquy and the exemplary tale, but also incorporated the fable from antiquity. Yet these are not dogs out of folklore acting in the way that dogs are supposed to act, as do lions or mice in such tales. Instead, they think like humans, speak like humans, and live very human lives. Cervantes imparted a sense of psychological realism into the dogs' manner of expression, making them human enough to be useful components of an exemplary tale, while remaining suitable subjects for readers' recreation.

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[41] Paul Carranza, "Cipión, Berganza, and the Aesopic Tradition," *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America* 23.1 (2003): 154.

Chapter III

Hoffmann's Symphony

While walking through a park on the way home from a smoke-filled tavern, E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Traveling Romantic" comes across a talking dog, none other than Berganza from "The Dogs' Colloquy." They form a friendship, and in the ensuing conversation, the Traveling Romantic assumes the roles of Scipio as a conversation partner, of Campuzano recording the encounter in his diary, and even of Licentiate Peralta, when in Berganza's estimation he hints briefly at being "one of those who hold everything untrue until they have physical proof of it."[42] Berganza relates four major episodes in his life: first, his wrenching departure from the hospital in "The Dogs' Colloquy" and subsequent encounter with a witches' coven; second, his musical education with the composer Kreisler; third, his exposure to contemporary society as the companion of the musically-talented young Julia, the daughter of a prominent salon hostess who ends up marrying a lewd philistine; and finally, his stint in the theater, which instead of providing a story gives Berganza the occasion to vent his displeasure with the state of the theatrical arts. The entire story from the perspective of the Traveling Romantic is presented within *Fantasy Pieces* as "A Report on the Latest Adventures of the Dog Berganza."

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[42] E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Fantasy Pieces in Callot's Manner: Pages from the Diary of a Traveling Romantic* (Schenectady: Union College Press, 1996) 76. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the chapter.

Although the degree of narrative complexity in "Berganza" is substantial, it is difficult to make a clear case that it exceeds the narrative complexity of other stories within the collection. *Fantasy Pieces in Callot's Manner* poses complexities of narrative at every turn, as it includes other fictional and non-fictional characters as part of discovered letters and diaries, and characters describing dream-like reveries in which even the embodiments of musical notes and sunflowers possess a voice. Narrative complexity is one of Hoffmann's most characteristic devices. Within his literary laboratory, "Berganza" sits as a different specimen of experimental narrative rather than, as was the case with Cervantes' *Exemplary Novels*, an exceptionally complex piece among relatively straightforward stories.

Hoffmann foregoes the specific device used by Cervantes in which the dogs' dialogue was overheard by a third party, collapsing the four main characters of "The Deceitful Marriage" and "The Dogs' Colloquy" into two characters. Yet Hoffmann has a more elaborate frame story for the entire collection, the "Pages from the Diary of A Traveling Romantic." Hilda Meldrum Brown writes that "Hoffmann's development of the well-established German tradition of frame narrative takes the form to new heights."[43] *Fantasy Pieces* was Hoffmann's first collection, originally published in four volumes and marking the start of an experimental narrative style that would continue to develop through Hoffmann's later works. Within the same published volume as "Berganza" we find "The Mesmerist," which starts with a "family story" that turns out to have been an essay discovered in the papers of one of the story's characters (153). Then,

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[43] Hilda Meldrum Brown, *E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Serapiontic Principle: Critique and Creativity* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006) 119.

in the third volume of *Fantasy Pieces*, "The Golden Pot" ends in the Twelfth Vigil with a theretofore unannounced narrator interposed between the reader and The Salamander Lindhorst (222). Brown writes: "In the *Fantasiestücke* there are already signs of Hoffmann's leanings towards the frame narrative… […] in late works written after the *Die Serapionsbruder…*he would develop new strategies of internal analysis to replace the more disjoined format of the frame narrative."[44] As an early example of the experimental style, "Berganza" holds an exceptional and pivotal role in Hoffmann studies, with threads that reach into other *Fantasy Pieces* and into later works of Hoffmann.

Befitting Hoffmann's musical instincts, "Berganza" has a particularly symphonic quality. Motifs are introduced in tantalizing glimpses, and then repeated through repetition and exposition later in the work. For example, after the encounter with the witches' coven, Berganza has an annual compulsion to act like a cultured human: "I want to walk on my hind legs, tuck in my tail, wear perfume, speak French, and eat sherbet while everyone shakes my paw and calls me "*mon cher Baron*" or "*mon petit Comte!*" and no one notices anything doglike about me" (77). The abrupt shift in tone, from the perils of the supernatural to those of the modern world, is announced by the introduction of this surprising motif. Hoffmann hints at these motifs, whether the salon or society women or the state of the theater, well before he illustrates them through storytelling. From a narratological standpoint, these introductions of motifs can be interpreted as prolepses, a device of narrative order defined as "any narrative maneuver that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later."[45] It is this feature that

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[44] Meldrum Brown 7.

[45] Genette 40.

most distinguishes “Berganza” from other stories in the collection from a narratological standpoint.

On a thematic level, the obvious point of differentiation for “Berganza” is that it features a talking dog. Hoffmann signals one of the reasons for the device of the dog when Berganza notes that he can “lie unobserved beneath the stove and watch human nature reveal itself to me without shame or shyness” (86). “Berganza” uncovers how artistic efforts are received by the public, whether in the salon or in the theater, offering a single consistent perspective that can report on these worlds as a silent yet intelligent observer. Berganza’s observations of society round out the perspectives on artistic creation visible in other *Fantasy Pieces,* including an encounter with a composer (“Ritter Gluck”*),* the letters of a composer (“Kreisleriana”), and a diary entry that describes an opera performance (“Don Juan”).

The revival of Cervantes’ dog in particular allowed Hoffmann to respond to the trends of both Neoclassicist and Enlightenment thinking with a dizzying Romantic reply. German Romanticism embraced nature as a palliative to the rapidly-mechanizing industrial age, rejecting the aesthetic of hierarchical classification. The spread of Enlightenment thinking was a turning point in the idea of the animal. Previously, Cartesian thought conceived of animals as soulless machines, and by extension, the 18th-century classification project of natural historian Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, “drained the animal of its experience and secrets,” further contributing to a conception of animals as mechanical parts of an industrializing society.[46] Against this

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[46] Steve Baker. *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity and Representation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) 12.

idea of the animal, the Traveling Romantic reassures Berganza: “I dare not divide and classify Nature narrow-mindedly” (76). Hoffmann later amplifies this theme in *The Serapion Brothers*, in which the hermit Serapion “reveals his contempt for the empiricist, sense-based, mechanical theories of perception that were associated with Enlightenment philosophy.”[47]

As a Romantic, Hoffmann was also reacting to the Neoclassicist movement and its paradigms of Greek and Roman classical models. By contrast, Hoffmann drew upon the German Romantic movement pioneered by Goethe and Schiller imitated and celebrated the “expressive powers” and “mixed narrative with lyrical flights” of the medieval literary romance.[48] Yet the choice of Cervantes as source material was a bold one for Hoffmann, who drew from neither the common neoclassical influences nor canonical medieval romances, but rather from Cervantes’ parodic and novelistic synthesis of multiple genres in “The Dogs’ Colloquy.” Hoffmann made a powerful statement as to which canon he was paying tribute—that of the novelistic innovator rather than the standard-bearers of genre.

Hoffmann presents Berganza as a strong proponent of a specific strain of Romanticism. Much as there were rival wings of the European Enlightenment, as indicated by Jonathan Israel’s conception of a “moderate mainstream” seeking synthesis between classical and modern thought contrasted to a “Radical Enlightenment” seeking

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[47] Meldrum Brown 40.

[48] Warren Breckman, *European Romanticism: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008) 1.

to sweep away existing structures,[49] there were multiple conceptions of Romanticism being considered by Hoffmann's contemporaries. Berganza comments on the vision of German Romanticism presented by Mme. de Staël, of whom Warren Breckman writes: "…much of Europe learned about Romanticism through Mme de Staël, whose political campaign against Napoleon had motivated her to portray German Romanticism as a progressive, liberal movement."[50]

Through his human speaker, the Traveling Romantic, Hoffmann reflects the perception of Mme de Staël as a leading voice for the Romanticism, even while using the voice of Berganza to criticize sharply the way in which her ideas were understood in contemporary society. Although the Traveling Romantic reacts to the mention of de Staël's Corinne with praise for the "lovely poetess Corinne…the lovely myrtle tree…whose branches spread so wide that the perfumes of the South waft over us as we rest in its shade" (98), Berganza takes a less charitable interpretation of how de Staël's vision of Romanticism was received. Berganza's vision of Romanticism is an artistic liberation that runs deeper than the "superficialities" of the women devotees of Corinne. Berganza says of his mistress:

> From the time she read [de Staël's *Corinne*], she went about baring more of her chest and arms than was seemly for a women of her age. She bejeweled herself with elegant chains, antique cameos, and rings. She also spent many hours having her hair dressed with expensive oils and braided in delicate hairdos to imitate this or that ancient empress (99).

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[49] Ann Thomson, *Bodies of Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 16.

[50] Breckman 29.

Berganza's mistress, by imitating an ancient empress, belies her attachment to Neoclassicism, and Berganza's critique of *Corinne* evokes an alternate vision of Romanticism that prioritizes the preeminence of artistic liberation going through the mysterious realm of the sublime accessible only via music. Hoffmann's musical aesthetics emphasized "the status of music as a privileged medium that transcends the constraints of everyday language, and the listener's responsibility to understand the composer."[51] The mechanization of nature was antithetical to the privileged and even spiritual medium of music.

Hoffmann's other talking-animal story in *Fantasy Pieces* explores this theme further with a portrayal of a philistine, "The Epistle of Milo, an Educated Ape, to his Lady Friend Pipi in North America." Peter Bruning points out that Hoffmann draws upon "mechanical theories of his time…to show the philistine as a mechanically drilled animal,"[52] this antipathy fueled by a "conviction that the artist is lonely in a hostile world."[53] Unlike Berganza, who rejects the salon's "pretended image of humanity" (77) unless compelled to transform his tastes through the witches' curse, Milo embraces the "captivity" of his education among humans. The characteristic of the ape is being able to imitate humans, and Hoffmann applies this characteristic to imitating original artists. With his exposure to humans and training through a professor of aesthetics, Milo turns into a dilettante "busy with all sorts of art: some painting, some sculpture" (268-269); and becomes the parody of a musician, using his simian physiology to cover an extended

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[51] Keith Chapin, "Lost in Quotation: The Nuances Behind E.T.A. Hoffmann's Programmatic Statements," *19th-Century Music* 30.1 (2006): 47.

[52] Bruning, 119.

[53] Bruning 111.

range of octaves; a singer with "a knack for expelling hundreds of notes in a single breath" (270); and even a composer according to his own tastes, judging other composers as "inferior drudges whose only reason for existence is to serve us *virtuosi* by providing works that enable us to demonstrate our virtuosity" (271). In this way, Milo parodies what Berganza describes as the "nest full of children … [that] have to sing and play and paint and recite verses, regardless of whether they have the slightest intelligence or talent for it," who later deign to pass judgment on true poetic or musical "genius" (79).

Hoffmann's later talking-animal novel features *Kater Murr*, a "conceited pseudo-poet."[54] In it, the cat writes his narrative on the back of pages containing an autobiography of his master, the musician Johannes Kreisler. The two sets of pages get mixed up, often to humorous effect. Although we will not go into depth with the talking-cat motif in this thesis, it suffices to say that in its narrative structure and readability it was "Hoffmann at the height of his powers,"[55] according to Jeremy Adler, who describes *Kater Murr*:

> The book effectively reinvents reading. As we turn the page, we confront alternating fragments, to be hurled inexorably from one narrator to another, by turn delighted and bewildered, teased and enthralled. Just as we become familiar with a story, it breaks off at a dramatic climax, whereupon confusion and momentary tedium set in as we accustom ourselves to the other tale, which again stops just when we have become absorbed. By its repeated shocks the narrative buffets us between two worlds.[56]

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[54] Bruning, 117.

[55] Jeremy Adler, Introduction, *Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr*, by E.T.A. Hoffmann vii.

[56] Adler xxii.

"Berganza" provided an early blueprint for a model of narrative Hoffmann would later hone to perfection.

Fantasy Pieces originally appeared in four volumes. The first volume contained previously-published pieces, and was published contemporaneously around Easter 1814 with the second volume, containing "Berganza" and "The Mesmerist."[57] As such, "Berganza," completed March 1813,[58] was the first fully-conceived story written with *Fantasy Pieces* in mind as a collection. Thus, "Berganza" was an integral part of the introduction to the writer's presentation of himself to the reading public. His earlier pieces were written using Johannes Kreisler as his pen name,[59] and it was the positive reception of those pieces that spurred enough interest in his work to entice him to sign his work under the name E.T.A. Hoffmann.

Although the "Berganza" example does not provide strong support for the overall thesis in terms of whether it has narrative complexity exceeding other stories in the collection, it nevertheless represents an important milestone for Hoffmann and a strong statement of aesthetic intent that would find fuller voice in his later work.

Patricia Stanley describes how *Fantasy Pieces* follow Friedrich Schlegel's concept of the arabesque with "a flow of ideas and perceptions that trigger and succeed each other without connective (authorial or narrational) explanation."[60] Stanley describes

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[57] Hayse writes in the introduction to *Fantasy Pieces* that the first volume appeared in February 1814 (xi), but then a few pages later, writes that the first two installments appeared at Easter, 1814 (xvi) – which was in April 1814.

[58] Hoffmann 307.

[59] Hoffmann xv.

[60] Patricia Stanley, "Hoffmann's 'Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier' in Light of Friedrich Schlegel's Theory of the Arabesque," *German Studies Review* 8.3 (Oct., 1985): 405.

the method by which which Hoffmann employed the arabesque in “Berganza” as “a serpentine shifting of thematic materials, that is, a rapid alternation of one theme with several others.”[61]

The effect of such writing is to promote reader participation,[62] making the interpretative demands upon the reader an intentional device of the author. In *Fantasy Pieces*, the narrative complexity acted as a filter barring the way to those with unrefined artistic sensibilities, the philistines who would abandon the effort to penetrate the text. Abigail Chantler writes:

> The ironic tone which pervades many sections of the text originates in the disingenuousness of Hoffmann’s expressed admiration for the musical philistines, which only the true artists amongst his readers were intended to appreciate. Through the cultivation of this ironic tone, he not only tacitly emphasized the necessity for the reader to take an active interpretative role in order to understand his intended meaning, but excluded the philistines amongst his readers, who would fail to adopt such a role, from an insight into their superficiality and thus from a proper appreciation of music as a metaphysical medium.[63]

Considering this application of narrative complexity, we might reevaluate “Berganza” as to what degree the dog’s pronouncements were intended as sincere aesthetic statements or ironic reversals of the same. According to Keith Chapin, who cites the dog Berganza as a prime example, “Hoffmann… refracted his views into the mouths

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[61] Stanley 406-407.

[62] Stanley 407.

[63] Abigail Chantler, *E. T. A. Hoffmann’s Musical Aesthetics* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006) 42.

of a variety of speakers and thereby paid tribute to the variety of possible viewpoints on an issue."[64]

Therefore, we have to question the degree to which Hoffmann wanted the reader to agree or disagree with Berganza's more outlandish propositions, considered individually. We might consider Berganza's view of educated women as a statement with calculated shock value, moderated both by an element of ironic reversal and by the presence of a more-sympathetic Traveling Romantic. The philistine woman would take offense at the surface insult of the talking dog, even as the artistic woman might peer through the layers of ironic reversal to intuit a more nuanced statement within.

Irony is a delicate instrument, and even Hoffmann himself remained unsure how "Berganza" would be received. In a July 1813 letter to his publisher Carl Freidrich Kunz, Hoffmann emphasized that the story be published precisely as intended: "I am very curious how the Dog [Berganza] is going to come off; for I assume, relying firmly on your discretion, that there will be no changes made aside from those I made myself."[65] As it turns out, he may have strayed too far. In September 1814, prior to the publication of the third volume, Hoffmann wrote to Kunz about how the second volume had been received by in his new home of Berlin: "Through the *Fantasy Pieces* I have become quite well known here and, I might also say, notorious; *Berganza* had some controversial

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[64] Keith Chapin. "Lost in Quotation: The Nuances Behind E.T.A. Hoffmann's Programmatic Statements," *19th-Century Music* 30.1 (2006): 53.

[65] E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Selected Letters of E. T. A. Hoffmann*, ed. and trans. Johanna C. Sahlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977) 203.

aspects, which incensed the ladies, whereas the *Magnetiseur* [Mesmerist] turned out completely to their liking."[66]

Hoffmann's aesthetics called for active adulation and appreciation of genius, and his musical writings posited the composer as having contact with a transcendent realm through music, which is only comprehensible to the sensitive poetic listener through great effort, inaccessible to the philistine. In *Fantasy Pieces*, we can see the transposition of this musical aesthetic into the realm of writing and storytelling, with Hoffmann challenging his readers to follow his narrative perambulations in the same way that active listeners were expected to exalt the geniuses of musical composition.

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[66] E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Selected Letters* 238.

Chapter IV

Gogol's Ornamentation

Gogol's *Arabesques* contains three short stories, each with considerable narrative complexity. "The Portrait" not only tells a story within a frame story, but that inner story prominently features a literal frame for a painting, creating convergence between the narrative structure and the content of the work. "Nevsky Prospect" sets the scene with an extended description of the road throughout the day, and then follows the parallel fates of Lieutenant Pigorov and the artist Piskarev in a manner that invites comparison.

"Diary of a Madman" stands apart primarily in its use of the diary genre, the only appearance of the device in all of Gogol's writing.[67] Through the diary form, the diarist "dominates the story as no other Gogolian hero does," the content becoming "psychological, rather than social or moral, in focus, almost unique in Gogol's work."[68] It is also the only consistent first-person narration in Gogol's fiction.[69] Although, as with Hoffmann, the talking-dog story does not provide a clear-cut example of narrative complexity exceeding all others in the collection, the narrative devices in "Diary of a Madman" are unique both within *Arabesques* and Gogol's entire body of work.

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[67] Dina Khapaeva, "Unfinished Experiments on the Reader," *Russian Studies in Literature* 46.2 (Spring 2010): 76.

[68] Richard F. Gustafson, "The Suffering Usurper: Gogol's Diary of a Madman," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 9.3 (Autumn, 1965): 268.

[69] Robert Maguire, *Exploring Gogol* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1994) 50.

Waszink describes the workings of the diary novel, in which "the fictional hero is both the writer and the reader of his own diary entries,"[70] and how "a lapse of time is suggested between the moment the described event takes place and the moment of writing."[71] We are to imagine that at the end of his workday copying documents, and then later at the asylum, the diarist carefully records his imagined experiences and thoughts. Furthermore, his copyist's hand writes out the dog's letters interspersed with his own exegesis and a madman's marginalia. In terms of literary genre, the diary form is usually a document written for one's future self; but this diary contains letters purportedly written from one dog to another. The monologue contains one side of a dialogue. Maguire interprets this diary as "a dialogic monologue,"[72] with the letters invented as a way for the intensely isolated Poprishchin to converse with himself. He writes:

> The diary form has served Poprishchin well, enabling him to conceal his thoughts and actions (since diaries are intensely private documents), yet to reveal them with impunity, since he does not write for an audience. (Gogol never tells us how this document fell into his hands, or how it acquired a title that was obviously not supplied by Poprishchin himself.) It has also given him a way of creating other version of himself, with which he can talk and interact.[73]

By refracting his own personality, Poprishchin gives voice to his inner desires. The first letter offers the sentiment: "It seems to me that to share one's ideas, one's

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[70] Paul M. Waszink, "The King Knocks: Writers and Readers in Gogol's Diary of a Madman," *Russian Literature* 41 (1997): 62.

[71] Waszink 63.

[72] Maguire 53.

[73] Maguire 66.

feelings, and one's impressions with others is one of the greatest blessings on earth."[74] Maguire identifies this as one of "the clichés of the philistine"[75] shared by Poprishchin and the dog Madgie, yet at the same time it also contributes to the pathos of the story, that the diarist is so isolated that he must project his need to be heard onto an animal desperate for contact with the outside world. Just as Fido is anxious about receiving Madgie's next letter, Poprishchin too seeks input from the outside world despite his inability to connect with others, perusing the papers and going to the theater whenever he has a coin in his pocket.[76]

The presentation of the madman's diary is done without forewarning or explanation within the context of the collection. This is unlike Hoffmann's *Fantasy Pieces,* which encapsulates stories within discovered manuscripts assembled as the "Notes from a Diary of a Traveling Romantic" sent to the author; or with a the frame story such as "The Deceitful Marriage," which Cervantes used to introduce and explain the existence of "The Dogs' Colloquy."

The work nevertheless appeared within a larger frame in *Arabesques*, the 1835 collection in which it originally appeared. *Arabesques* includes thirteen essays, two novel fragments (omitted from the English translation),[77] and three short stories including "Diary of a Madman." *Arabesques* is far from being what Gogol claims in the "Preface"

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[74] Nikolai Gogol, *The Complete Tales of Nikolai Gogol*, ed. Leonard J. Kent (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985) 247.

[75] Maguire 53.

[76] Gogol 244.

[77] Melissa Frazier, *Frames of the Imagination: Gogol's Arabesques and the Romantic Question of Genre* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000) 3.

to be random oddities collected and apologetically presented to the reading public, and Melissa Frazier writes that "textual evidence suggests all the articles were composed in the years 1829-33 and most probably with *Arabesques* in mind."[78] By this, reasons Frazier, the genre of *Arabesques* intentionally followed Friedrich Schlegel's artistic concept of "*Kunstchaos*, an artistic and artificial disorder."[79]

In Romantic aesthetics, the arabesque reinterprets an ornamental tradition in Islamic art as a poetic genre "marked by either heterogeneity, fragmentariness, or both."[80] The original meaning of the arabesque was that of "a specific genre of painting deriving from the Islamic prohibition of representative art, and so a primarily abstract design or ornament where flora and sometimes the outlines of fauna are employed to create an involved pattern of interlaced lines."[81] Goethe, in a 1789 article, generalized the concept for European readers as an ornamental frame "turned both inwards and outwards, integrating the central painting with itself and out with the wall."[82] Later, the idea was reinvented by Friedrich Schlegel as the instantiation of an ideal genre. Frazier writes: "The novel, the letter, the dialogue and the aphorism share a certain heterogeneity and fragmentariness, and that Schlegel seeks a real poetic genre with these particular qualities is because of the imaginary genre which is his ultimate goal."[83] Gogol's *Arabesques* was

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[78] Frazier 23-24.

[79] Frazier 24.

[80] Frazier 8.

[81] Melissa Frazier, "Space and Genre in Gogol's Arabeski," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 43.3 (Autumn, 1999): 458

[82] Frazier, "Space and Genre" 457.

[83] Frazier, *Frames of the Imagination* 7.

constructed with this heterogeneity and fragmentariness in mind, Frazier argues, and we can certainly identify both qualities in the collection as a whole and on the level of individual works.

From a narratological perspective, the most distinctive elements of "Diary of a Madman" are the explorations of narrative time through the diary and letter formats. Although the diary form breaks up the narrative into single days, the stories told within those days contain analepses, prolepses and other digressions. The first entry begins with a prolepsis ("Today an extraordinary event occurred."[84]) as if it is going to tell a straightforward singulative account, but then it quickly shifts into iterative descriptions of recurring events, such as that of the "sour face" of the section chief, the parsimony of the cashier, and the general characteristics of civil servants. This is the writing style of the madman—an inability to persist in a single method of storytelling without focusing and expanding upon various elements of the story in an observational vein. These observations frame the story of his real-world comings and goings in the manner of an arabesque frame around a painting. The digressions represent the arabesque ornamentation surrounding the singulative depictions of action such as getting out of bed, getting dressed, spying a woman and her dog, or following a dog and its owner to their home. Within the level of the story, the narrative itself exemplifies the art of the arabesque, the iterative framing the singulative, the ornamentation enhancing the story.

Although the diary form conditions the reader to expect a daily report, it is soon evident that Poprishchin writes only in manic bursts, his first two entries of October followed by five entries during one week in November, three entries in December, and

[84] Gogol 239.

the remaining entries positioned outside of accepted definitions of date and time. In the first edition, the story was labeled as "Scraps from the Notes of a Madman,"[85] which indicates that we are perusing a fragment of a larger diary that exists outside of the frame of the story. In according with the fragmentariness of the arabesque, the diary is incomplete. These ellipses of narrative duration contrast with Poprishchin's frozen moments, those observational arabesques surrounding a single narrated event. Poprishchin stands outside the shop, listening to Madgie and Fido in the rain, and his inner monologue freezes the brief, imagined exchange so that he can summon forth references to other talking animals and his impressions of what he sees. From month to month and day to day, the text alternates between vivid moments and temporal gaps.

Gogol's dogs lack the worldliness of Berganza and Scipio, adventuring only from one room of the house to the next, promenading in the city streets only with their owners. No doubt, they would be counted among the "insipid, puny parasites without any heroic character" that were "heartily despised" by the Traveling Romantic.[86] Indeed, Madgie knows "nothing worse than giving dogs little balls of bread,"[87] which puts her in direct opposition to Hoffmann's Berganza, who graciously accepts an uneaten roll from the Traveling Romantic as a token of friendship.[88]

Even if dogs can write, they cannot provide food for the soul. With "Diary of a Madman," Gogol has transformed the talking dog into a writing dog. Instead of brave

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[85] Waszink 82.

[86] Hoffmann 66.

[87] Gogol 247

[88] Hoffmann 68.

survivors in a harsh world, Gogol's dogs are letter-writers on "trifles," household intrigues, and food. As such, Gogol's dogs invert the talking-dog genre as pioneered by Cervantes and Hoffmann, themselves parodies and syntheses of existing genres. Yet on the level of structure, these talking dogs function similarly. Gogol's Madgie provides a glimpse into the workings of a household, just as did the Berganzas of Cervantes and Hoffmann. All three authors use the dog as a way to avoid shifting the narrative mood to an externally-focalized, third-person narrator. By doing so, the complex narrative devices draw attention to the means by which stories are transmitted, a canine vector acting as a substitute for a detached authorial voice.

Poprishchin reads the dogs' letters and finds them written correctly, but uneven in style and hopelessly doggish. He interjects: "I demand food – such as nourishes and delights my soul; and instead I get these trifles." Dina Khapaeva suggests this outburst represents "an abrupt change of style and lexicon…and most important, a theme of literary polemic, which appears nowhere else in the diary since it is, like the literary style, profoundly alien to Poprishchin's idiom and thought processes."[89] The talking dogs can write, but while they are masters of the technical craft of placing words and sentences on a page to form letters as a chemist might mix potions, they lack the spirit of humanity, individuality and mystery that Poprishchin craves.

Just as the two little dogs contrast with the two Berganzas, the routine-clad, status-obsessed, furtive diarist Poprischin represents an opposite number to the Traveling Romantic. Hoffmann's narrator is a poetic spirit with a finely developed artistic sensibility, and a prolific, faithful correspondent to his eager editor. They both attend the

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[89] Khapaeva 77.

theater, but where the Traveling Romantic takes in Don Juan, for Poprishchin it is the Russian fool "Filatka," vaudeville, and comedians, [90] the type of entertainment that Gogol describes in *Nevsky Prospect* as something that "greatly offends [the] fastidious taste" of middle-class officers.[91]

Yet even within Poprishchin there exists the spark of a higher artistic sensibility within his madness; or considering the restrictive circumstances of his life spent sharpening quills instead of using them to write, perhaps the repression of this latent artistic sensibility lies at the heart of his madness. "Diary of a Madman" depicts a frustrated writer without an audience, seeking to achieve through invented status what he cannot achieve through words. He ends his story in an insane asylum tormented by a Grand Inquisitor, but even under extreme duress, he writes his final diary entry, retaining the possibility for transcendence through self-expression.

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[90] Gogol 244.

[91] Gogol 227.

Chapter V

Bulgakov's Creation

In early 1925, Mikhail Bulgakov wrote *Heart of a Dog*, the story of Sharik, a homeless, injured and hungry dog taken in by an upper-class gentleman, Professor Preobrazhenski. After nursing it back to health, Preobrazhenski transplants human testes and human pituitary glands onto the dog. Sharik then transforms into Sharikov, a creature with a human body structure, doglike tendencies, and a nasty disposition stemming from the origin of his human parts taken from the body of a criminal. Sharikov is issued documents, joins the workers' movement and turns on his creator. Bulgakov was told by his editors that the work was unpublishable for its political content,[92] and the secret police confiscated it in May 1926.[93] While the textual history of the work supports the common interpretation of the work as political satire, Diana L. Burgin argues for its tragic significance, writing that "to interpret *Heart of a* Dog solely as a political parable is to oversimplify the novel."[94] In addition, focusing exclusively on the political aspect of *Heart of a Dog* also obscures its distinctive narratological features. *Heart of a Dog* transforms the narrative mood and voice in parallel with the transformations in the dog. Each chapter is slightly different than the last, as the narration shifts voice from an

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[92] Mikhail Bulgakov, *Diaboliad and Other Stories*, Trans. Hugh Aplin (Richmond, Surrey: London House, 2010) 140.

[93] Bulgakov, *Diaboliad* 118.

[94] Diana L. Burgin, "Bulgakov's Early Tragedy of the Scientist-Creator: An Interpretation of *The Heart of a Dog,*" *Slavic and East European Journal* 22.4 (1978): 494.

intradiagetic oral narrative to an extradiagetic narration, even as the mood shifts from internal focalization through Sharik to external focalization on Preobrazhenski. There are traces of these techniques in "The Fatal Eggs," which briefly features a talking frog, and an even richer narrative apparatus in *The Master and Margarita* and its talking cat.

Burgin describes the omniscient narrator in *Heart of a Dog* as "the outer, frame narrative into which the two personal accounts [of Sharik and Bormental] and are interpolated in sequential order."[95] Yet *Heart of a Dog* does not have a clearly demarcated frame story as with Cervantes' *The Deceitful Marriage* or Gogol's use of the dogs' letters in "Diary of a Madman." Furthermore, in each chapter, the narrator observes varying distances to its human and canine subjects. We can examine the narration at a greater level of precision by revisiting these effects while making a clearer distinction between "mood" and "voice," which Genette differentiates as "the question *who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective?* and the very different question *who is the narrator?*—or, more simply, the question *who sees?* and the question *who speaks?*"[96]

In the first chapter, the narrative mood has an internal focalization through Sharik interspersed with the narrator's comments externally focalized; and the narrative voice alternates between homodiegetic, where the dog narrator is present in the story he tells, and heterodiegetic, with a narrator standing outside of the story.[97]

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[95] Burgin 495.

[96] Gennette 186.

[97] Genette 245.

Sharik as a narrator has more knowledge than the dog's perspective would reasonably explain, such as the pay scale of a typist[98] or the fact that Preobrazhenski's name and patronymic is Philip Philippovich (6). Susanne Fusso describes the blending of voices, where the dog's "seemingly first-person narrative is contaminated by the voice of an omniscient third-person narrator"[99] such that "the opening narration is actually in one voice, but a voice that shifts between an objective presentation and an *imitation* of a dog's-eye view—a kind of ventriloquism."[100] Alternatively, we might instead treat the knowledgeable dog as an indicator of the extent to which dogs in the story know the world of humans. Whether for comic effect or as an illustration of the possibility of transformation between sentient beings, Bulgakov's dogs possess depth of knowledge of human affairs, with the ability to know your secrets with a single sniff. We might interpret this ability as part of the story itself rather than as a feature of the narrative structure, i.e. a metadiegetic metalepsis interrupting a character's consciousness with a narrator's omniscience.

At the start of the second chapter of *Heart of a Dog*, the narrative voice uses the second-person pronoun while taking a dog's-eye view: "There is absolutely no necessity to learn how to read; meat smells a mile off, anyway. Nevertheless, if you live in Moscow and have a brain in your head, you'll pick up reading willy-nilly, and without attending any courses" (11). With these doggish indicators, the narrator here seems to be a dog instructing the reader on survival skills as a dog, and yet it is not Sharik, whose

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[98] Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog* 3. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the chapter.

[99] Susanne Fusso, "Failures of Transformation in *Sobač'e Serdce*," *Slavic and East European Journal* 33.3 (1989): 389.

[100] Fusso 390.

story the narrator then relates: "Sharik first began to learn by color" (11). Compared to the internal focalization of the dog's thoughts in the first chapter, in the second chapter the narrator interposes greater distance between the reader and the dog, using phrases such as with "Sharik wondered with astonishment" (12) and "That's something, that's really something, thought the dog" (13). The narrator still provides glimpses of the dog's psychology, continuing to present him in the act of responding to and thinking about external stimuli, but the narrative distance has increased from the first chapter, with the narrator taking over the story. The narrator still provides more information about the dog than the humans, as we are limited to observation of human actions and speech rather than insight into their inner thoughts, as we are permitted with Sharik. At this point, it is only the dog into which we gain an omniscient perspective.

The third chapter continues with the dog's-eye view, for example, with the identification of Bormental as "the stunningly handsome bitten one" (31), and the encyclopedic descriptions of the food and smells in the house. The narrator identifies with the dog without being Sharik himself, and the dog's-eye view penetrates even unto dreams:

> His words fell upon the sleepy dog like a dull subterranean hum. The owl with stupid yellow eyes leaped out at him in his dream; then the vile physiognomy of the cook in the dirty white cap; then Philip Philippovich's dashing mustache; then a sleepy sled creaked and vanished, while the ravaged piece of roast beef, swimming in juice, was being digested in the canine stomach.
>
> He could earn lots of money at meetings, the dog dreamed mistily. A first-rate business mind (37).

This passage aptly illustrates the variation of narrative mood within the chapter. The omniscient narrator peers even into the dog's subconscious and stomach, and within the focalization of the dog, Sharik has the ability, even prior to the transformation, to

assess the commercial potential of Preobrazhenski's speech, much as he was able to determine his social standing in the first chapter. We are still focalized through the dog, which demonstrates knowledge not only of a person's present social standing as in the first chapter, but also of their future prospects in future human endeavors.

Chapter four extends this narrative approach until the point at which the dog goes dreaming into sedation (50), which marks the end of Sharik's doggish voice until the end of the novel. Yet even in the midst of the operation, the narrator vacillates between Bormental's human name and the dog's descriptive label for him (italics mine): "The instrument flashed in *the bitten one's* hands as if he were a sleight-of-hand artist" (52). Once the operation is complete, the narrator uses "Bormental" thenceforth, the dog's perspective no longer visible. The focalization on the dog has ended until the epilogue.

Bormental's annotated notes form the content of chapter five, and in a fashion reminiscent of Gogol, are provided in diary form that moves from pedestrian entries into frenzied emotional outbursts. Bulgakov was not the first to use the literary device of the laboratory report, but "before Bulgakov the report was rarely, if ever, used to produce comic effects."[101] The notes include indications of blots, inserted sheets, cross-outs, and other editorial comments such as: "evidently written by mistake in excitement" (58). Burgin likens the inkblots to the marred nature of Preobrazhenski's creation: "Just as inkblots mar the written report of Sharikov's coming to life, so does some kind of existential blot darken the genesis of this creator, putting the flawlessness of his creation in doubt."[102]

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[101] Ellendea Proffer, *Bulgakov: Life and Work* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1984) 128.

[102] Burgin 500.

Yet we are not in a Hoffmann story, where the reader is given some kind of explanation as to how the narrator was able to discover the written document at hand, as with the “Kreisleriana” and similar works. Instead, we are reading the case notes of Sharik’s operation which we can infer are burnt by Bormental in the last chapter: “Ivan Arnoldovich, she said, was squatting on his haunches before the fireplace in the office and feeding a blue copybook into the fire with his own hands – one of those books that were used for keeping records of case histories of the professor’s patients!” (118) Thus, the reader stands outside of the frame of the story, with the ability not only to peer into the mind of a dreaming dog, but also to read burnt documents. The variety of narrative approaches display a heterogeneity and fragmentariness reminiscent of the arabesque, and Bulgakov employs this artistic effect without drawing explicit attention to it by making it visible through a frame story.

Following the laboratory notes, chapter six briefly continues the theme of storytelling through written documents by recounting a series of notes on the door, and then a news item written by Shvonder. With the introduction of the transformed Sharikov, we no longer have access to the inner thoughts of the dog, who is now able to vocalize as well as any human character. Instead, it is now Preobrazhenski whose thoughts are revealed. The narrator indicates that Sharikov’s balalaika song and the news item are “creating a loathsome hodgepodge in Philip Philippovich’s head” (67); we can now see what the professor sees when he closes his eyes, and we perceive his inner thoughts about Sharikov’s galoshes (68). The shift is noteworthy in that previously, it was only Sharik’s thoughts that were echoed by the narrator. Now, we have a narrator that tells a story focalized through Preobrazhenski, using back-and-forth dialogue to

portray Sharikov from his words and actions. The voice has shifted to a heterodiegetic narrator speaking at an extradiegetic level.

Most of chapter seven resembles the dialogue and stage directions of a play, with scarce interior monologue. However, the narrative does signal that we are still in the realm of the human by providing an omniscient view into Preobrazhenski's thoughts with regard to Sharikov's recommended reading:

> A picture suddenly flashed through his mind: an uninhabited island, a palm tree, a man in an animal skin and cap. "I'll have to get him Robinson …" (89)

In chapter eight, Sharikov receives his papers and insists on being called by his full name and patronymic Polygraph Polygraphovich, "with complete justice," the narrator adds (95). The legal equality between the humans and the dog-man is emphasized by the narrator's choice of words to describe how the characters speak. Both Sharikov (96) and Preobrazhenski are described as having "barked" speech, and throughout the chapter, the professor and his assistant thunder and exclaim with great passion and emotion. Not only is the dog equal before the law to the human figures, but they exhibit equally animalistic tendencies.

The final chapter depicts rage and violence from all sides. Bormental has a violent quarrel with Shvonder (108), while Philip Phillipovich growls and shakes his fists (109). When Sharikov returns having slaughtered many of Moscow's stray cats (109), Bormental grabs him by the throat to demand an apology. Then, Sharikov threatens to purge the woman who spurns him, which precipitates Bormental's threat of gun violence (114). Sharikov returns with a gun, and is overpowered in the struggle. The narrator remains at an extradiegetic level within the apartment, and at the end of the chapter, the

focalization shifts away from Preobrazhenski to the view from the neighbors across the yard and the testimony of the housekeeper Zina (118).

In the epilogue, following the Professor's presentation of the reverted Sharik to the investigating police to clear his name, the narration reprises the dog's voice of chapters three and four, returning to the mind of the dog even as Preobrazhenski plunges his hands into a jar of brains (122-123). From this analysis, Bulgakov has taken us far beyond a simple talking-dog story where the voice of the dog is maintained throughout the work.

Rather than limit his palette to a single approach to narrative, Bulgakov combined his talents as a dramatist and novelist; he provides glimpses into the minds of both Sharik and Preobrazhenski through interior monologue, recounts the observations of Bormental through the notebooks, presents the opinions of the housing committee through dialogue, and uses external narration to comment on the entire scene, including the view of the house from the neighbors. The close association between character and narrative style opens up the possibility for a range of interpretations that incorporate the narrative structure into the reading.

Heart of a Dog has been interpreted as representing the Russian people under Bolshevism,[103] the rejection of Russia's historical literary inheritance, [104] the Russian populace beset by hunger, [105] the range of points of view on a scientific debate,[106] or the

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[103] Fusso 386-7.

[104] Fusso 387.

[105] Ronald D. LeBlanc, "Feeding a Poor Dog a Bone: The Quest for Nourishment in Bulgakov's *Sobach'e serdtse*" *The Russian Review* 52 (Jan. 1993): 67.

disorder stemming from uprooting the paternalist hierarchy.[107] Whatever Bulgakov's intention in writing the novella, the question remains as to why he used for these purposes a talking dog. We can suggest an answer for that question through a brief review of dog imagery in other Bulgakov works.

In *Heart of a Dog*, the homeless, hungry dog Sharik struggles with life-threatening injury in the Moscow winter, paralleling Bulgakov's own struggle to find food and shelter in 1921 Moscow. Bulgakov described the peril of these difficult times: "It was very clear and simple, a lottery-ticket was lying in front of me with the inscription: death."[108] Much of the same language is echoed by the narrator of *Heart of a Dog* when Sharik is taken into the care of Professor Preobrazhenski: "It was quite clear. The dog had pulled out the best dog-ticket" (40)

The image of the mangy dog also appears in one of Bulgakov's early feuilletons, "Inflammation of the Brain," in which the overworked and underpaid autobiographical narrator, a writer, asks his editor for money: "'You promised to give me some money today,' I said, and suddenly I saw in the mirror that I looked like a dog under a tram."[109] Another autobiographical story from *Notes on the Cuff* casts the narrator as a dog: "I'm no longer head of the literary section. I'm no longer head of the theater section. I'm a

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[106] Yvonne Howell, "Eugenics, Rejuvenation, and Bulgakov's Journey into the Heart of Dogness," *Slavic Review* 65.3 (2006): 550.

[107] Erica Fudge, "At the Heart of the Home: An Animal Reading of Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Heart of a Dog*," *Humanimalia* 1.1 (Sept., 2009): 16.

[108] Proffer 52.

[109] Proffer 91-92.

homeless dog in an attic."[110] (Or, in another translation: "I am a bastard cur in a garret."[111])

Heart of a Dog was written immediately following "The Fatal Eggs," featuring a scientist-hero experimenting on animals using proprietary techniques. Professor Persikov, an expert on amphibious or scaleless reptiles, discovers a "red ray" that has an excitation effect upon cellular matter, for example, by spawning monstrous frogs. After word gets out about the results of these tests, the red ray is commandeered by a government official, Faight, to use upon chicken eggs to rebuild the poultry industry after a mysterious pestilence outbreak. Due to a shipping mix-up compounded by Faight's scientific ignorance, the ray is used not upon chicken eggs, but upon snake and ostrich eggs that had been intended for Persikov. The resulting monstrosities ravage the countryside and head toward Moscow, unstoppable by armed forces but ultimately thwarted by a snap of cold weather.

At the point of discovery of the red ray, "The Fatal Eggs" briefly features a frog that talks with its eyes:

> … a frog, half-strangled and stricken with terror and pain, was crucified on a cork base, while its transparent, micaceous entrails had been drawn out of its bloodied stomach into a microscope.
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> […]
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> The frog shifted its head ponderously, and its dimming eyes said clearly: 'Bastards, that's what you are…'[112]

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[110] Proffer 43.

[111] Mikhail Bulgakov, *Notes on the Cuff & Other Stories* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1991) 18.

[112] Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Fatal Eggs* (London: Hesperus Press, 2003) 9.

Heart of a Dog takes the frog's comment as a starting point for a narrative that moves from inside the mind of a dog to inside the mind of a human scientist, reflecting the post-Darwinian "end of separation of man from beast"[113] that had by this time occurred in the scientific world. Drawing upon an image Bulgakov had used in his autobiographical works, *Heart of a Dog* was the culmination of his *Diaboliad*-era aesthetic, only to be surpassed by *The Master and Margarita*, his unquestioned magnum opus and the product of over 13 years of revisions. *Heart of a Dog* beautifully renders the permeability between species with brilliant comic timing and sharp political commentary. Sharik makes the work accessible through the classical device of the animal who is allowed (in Sharik's case, begrudgingly so) to observe humanity both from the street and the apartment, and Sharik's transformation to Sharikov is paralleled and amplified by transformations in the narrative voice and mood, achieving an artistic effect unique within Bulgakov's body of work.

[113] Erica Fudge, *Animal* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002) 19.

Chapter VI

Kafka's Walking Dogs

Eric Williams describes *Researches of a Hound* as having "cryptic complexity which seems to systematically defy the logic of interpretative discourse."[114] Similarly, Peter Stine describes Kafka's animal stories as "writings whose mark of integrity is their resistance to interpretation... the prize embodiment of human truths that evade the grasp of analysis."[115] Offering an explanatory model based on Kafka's Zionist leanings, Iris Bruce positions *Researches of a Hound* as a satire on rabbinic commentary:

> Kafka's discourse possesses many features which resemble midrashic discourse. [Researches] is far from being a linear and analytical text; the narrative is highly associative and contains many narrative breaks which are filled in by anecdotal commentary which resembles aggadic anecdotes as found in the Talmud and other rabbinic texts. The anecdotes which Kafka has inserted into the narrative have the function of humorously deflecting the otherwise devastating satire of the social text.[116]

Another interpretation is suggested by Stanley Corngold, who with a Gnostic reading of Kafka locates within the story a pattern he calls "chiastic recursion," in which "each new term, consisting of elements syntactically and conceptually parallel to those of a previous term, arises by means of an inversion of these elements." As such, he

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[114] Eric Williams, "Of Cinema, Food, and Desire: Franz Kafka's 'Investigations of a Dog,'" *College Literature* 34.4 (2007): 100.

[115] Peter Stine, "Franz Kafka and Animals," *Contemporary Literature* 22.1 (Winter, 1981): 42.

[116] Iris Bruce, "Aggadah Raises Its Paw Against Halakha: Kafka's Zionist Critique in Forschungen eines Hundes" *Journal of the Kafka Society of America* 16.1 (June 1992): 6.

observes, "the object of the investigations (Dogdom) turned swiftly into 'investigation' as an object of scrutiny in itself."[117]

Given these widespread assessments of the challenging structure of the work, the extant critical response tends to sift through its complexity to examine specific elements, such as the significance of the seven musical dogs or the identity of the air dogs; or to uncover thematic aspects such as music and silence, or food and hunger.

Yet the structure of the narrative itself also bears further exploration using the tools of narrative theory. The most distinctive narratological feature of the work is narrative time. Genette describes three features of narrative time: narrative order, with analepses and prolepses shifting between points in time; narrative frequency, indicating in a single statement whether an event occurred once or multiple times; and narrative speed, indicating the length of time that the narrator dwells on a particular moment.

Researches of a Hound was, according to Williams, "the only story [Kafka] wrote in which all the significant phases of the protagonist's development, from early childhood and pubescence to old age, are fashioned into a life-narrative."[118] The story hints at a life narrative, but does not confine itself to a sequential retelling of events, nor does it provide a wealth of specifics, as with Cervantes and Hoffmann. Instead, the researching hound relates the history of his perceptions of events more than the events themselves. Each phase of his life is interspersed with impressions that the narrator had about those experiences, and bracketed by ruminations on what he was thinking at times prior, during, and after their occurrence. From a narrative standpoint, the interjections during

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[117] Stanley Corngold, *Lambent Traces* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004) 121-122.

[118] Williams 100.

the storytelling have the effect of slowing down narrative time, with extended pauses halting the action of the story so that the narrator can communicate at length his specific thoughts at the time of the event. These temporal perspectives become further parsed using counterfactual suppositions, which cast doubt on the importance and validity of the perspective recounted. The counterfactuals convey a sense of uncertainty, with declarative statements immediately retracted with statements that hedge the original.

This indeterminacy is visible from the first line: "How my life has changed, and how, at heart, it has not!"[119] James Rolleston places great importance in first sentences in Kafka: "Everything seems different about these sentences, notably tense and narrative perspective. But what they both do is point decisively toward the future."[120] However, the first line of "Researches of a Dog" inverts this forward-looking tendency, by signaling an invitation to look backward, seeking similarities and differences between the past and present moments. Here, the first line invites the reader to establish dualities between the narrator at present and in the past, and between change and stasis.

More dualities, those between contemporary impressions and retrospective revisions, recur throughout the text. The dog summons up remembrances that are immediately qualified, e.g. "a slight uneasiness would come over me…sometimes even among my closest friends; no, not sometimes, but actually quite often" (132); he searches for the right turn of phrase, e.g. "my admittedly unhappy—or to express the matter more carefully, not very happy—disposition" (132), and he couches statements about his

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[119] Franz Kafka, *Kafka's Selected Stories*, trans. Stanley Corngold (New York: Norton, 2007) 132. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the chapter.

[120] James Rolleston, "Kafka's Time Machines," *Franz Kafka (1883-1983): His Craft and Thought*, ed. Roman Struc and J.C. Yardley (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986) 34.

present condition as being conditional on past events, even if those past events have been only tentatively established, e.g. "Without these periods of rest and recovery, how could I ever have reached the age I now enjoy?" (132).

Characterizing Kafka's introspection, Peter Stine writes that "the present is perpetually invaded by a dizzy recapitulation of those discarded 'selves' receding into oblivion."[121] *Researches* merges the retelling of past events with these recapitulations, layered by how the narrator interprets these recapitulations. The analepses recount past events, but the narrative never entirely leaves the present. We are constantly reminded that we are in the presence of a storyteller, revising, generalizing and interpreting as he goes. Kafka's dog performs the writer's art of revision.

The dog's reminiscences predominantly employ iterative frequency, a feature of narrative time whereby a repeating event or habitual activity is described using a single statement. For example, after the encounter with the musical dogs, he says: "I ran around telling my story and asking questions, making accusations and doing research" (138). We do not know to whom he told the story or how many times he told it, but rather that it was a repeated, or iterative, event, each instance having an undefined number of occurrences. Similarly, the dog describes the actions of the "poor, meager, mute beings" in habitual terms, "how they pass each other by in so alienated a way" (133), rather than with specific instances of encounters with those beings.

Even singular occurrences are abstracted into iterative forms, which are then interpreted as a class of phenomena rather than as a single incident. For example, in describing his encounter with the musical dogs, the narrative's first prolonged occurrence

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[121] Stine 59.

of a singulative episode, the dog prefaces his story by denoting it as just one of a series of similar episodes. Meeting the musical dogs is "something extraordinary [that] happened," and this is immediately recast as being "nothing extraordinary—since then I have often enough seen such things, and even more remarkable ones" (134). The narrator further disclaims its singularity: "As I said, the entire incident does not contain anything out of the ordinary, in the course of a long life you will encounter many things that would be even more astonishing if taken out of context and seen through the eyes of a child" (137).

The childlike perception is emphasized from the beginning, as the entire encounter is encapsulated as stemming from "one of those blessed, inexplicable states of excitement that everyone probably experiences as a child" (133). Although qualified by the modifier "probably," this comment suggests universality in the dog's experience. The narrator's intent seems less to tell a story in the traditional sense than to explain a universal paradigm through his own example, i.e. when a child in a state of excitement invests an ordinary event with extraordinary meaning, doing so may trigger the emergence of that child's innate nature. The specifics of the incident itself are unimportant relative to that universal paradigm.

Later anecdotes amplify this singular event in the dog's life. For example, a linear, time-oriented narrative would have mentioned the air dogs prior to the musical dogs. However, Kafka's canine narrator instead uses the rumored existence of the air dogs as a means to circle back around the episode of the musical dogs, providing further examples of his thinking before and after that singular event of his youth. When the narrator first heard of the air dogs, he thought at the time that the tellers were attempting "to exploit excessively the unbiased mind of a young dog" (144). Then, after the

encounter with the musical dogs, he says that "from that point on I considered anything possible, no prejudices limited my conceptual powers" (144). Before the encounter he considers himself without bias of mind, while after the encounter he claims to be without prejudice. With age comes bias, the narrator seems to suggest, but it is a bias based on experience and investigations rather than prejudice.

The encounter with the hunting dog is the only dialogue in the story involving the narrator as one of the participants, and only the second quoted dialogue of any kind. Earlier, the dog quotes a dialogue between sages on the topic of fasting (156), but even this dialogue is told only in part, with the first sage's pronouncement reported in transposed speech. The answer of the second sage, posed as a question ("Well, isn't fasting, after all, forbidden?"), is the first quoted utterance directly attributed to another being. With the strange dog in the woods, we are thrust into the back-and-forth play of dialogue familiar in literature as we have not seen throughout the twists of the interior monologue, and the device is at once wrenching, refreshing and surprising. Also, it is just the second singulative episode in the story. Like the first, the episode transforms the narrator, who says: "I bear the consequences even today" (160).

Alison Turner observes that music is the connecting thread between these singulative episodes, and that "one experience happens at the moment of greatest hope in the dog's life, the other at the moment of greatest despair."[122] Turner describes the meaning of the music: "The 'inner music' which plays so important a part in Kafka's

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[122] Alison Turner, "Kafka's Two Worlds of Music," *Monatshefte* 55.5 (Oct., 1963): 270.

works symbolizes the creative ecstasy of the writer, who possessed by his genius, succeeds momentarily in transcending the normal limitations of existence."[123]

The symbol of the writer's ecstasy suggests additional contrasts between the two episodes: One experience has dogs failing to respond to another dog, while the other has the only example of a spoken dialogue within the story. The impossibility of dialogue with the wraithlike, unresponsive singing dogs put the narrator on a path that led him to his own isolated experiments, while the dialogic interaction with the hunting dog leads him back into the community of dogdom.

From this, we can surmise that it is the process of dialogue that informs the writer's creativity, much more than the passive, one-way communication of the darkened theater. Williams provides ample evidence that the episode of the musical dogs takes place in a silent movie theater with live musicians. He summarizes the critical literature regarding other interpretations of the scene, which has been explained as Yiddish theater, a circus act, a variety show, a troupe of trained dogs, and as a metaphorical construct referring to Jewish mysticism or other allegorical constructs.[124] Yet the theater was a growing presence in 1920s Prague, and not entirely benign by Kafka's standards, as he explains in a conversation reported by Gustav Janouch:

> 'Of course it is a marvelous toy. But I cannot bear it, because perhaps I am too 'optical' by nature. I am an Eye-man. But the cinema disturbs one's vision. The speed of the movements and the rapid change of images force men to look continually from one to another. Sight does not master the pictures, it is the pictures which master one's sight. They flood one's consciousness. The cinema involves putting the eye into uniform, when before it was naked.'

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[123] Turner 275.

[124] Williams 103-104.

> 'That is a terrible statement,' I said. 'The eye is the window of the soul, a Czech proverb says.'
>
> Kafka nodded.
>
> 'Films are iron shutters.'[125]

The narrative complexity of *Researches of a Hound* demonstrates the full power of literature to achieve effects that cannot be captured on film. The art of film tends toward straightforward, linear events with unadorned dialogue, whereas the novel, as Kafka ably demonstrates with his talking dog, follows human consciousness off-piste. Kafka's associative discourse defies the capabilities of film, allowing the eye to maintain its freedom from enclosure, a freedom highly valued at the closing of the story. The "cryptic complexity" of *Researches* is a thumb in the shuttered eye of the new media of film and a powerful statement about the artistic potential of the novel.

As for why Kafka chose to use a dog for this challenging narrative story, two complementary explanations suggest themselves. First, the historical use of talking dogs in complex narratives, particularly in E.T.A. Hoffmann and Gogol, may have acted as a known precedent for Kafka. Second, the imagery of the dog had strong connotations for Kafka. Dietmar Goltschnigg enumerates several appearances of dogs in Kafka, including the death of Josef K. "like a dog," the father's denunciations of Kafka's friends as "dogs" and fleas" as mentioned in "Letter to My Father," and the doggish tendencies of "A

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[125] Gustav Janouch, *Conversations with Kafka: Notes and Reminiscences* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1953) 89.

Crossbreed."[126] To this list, we can add "Blumfeld, an Elderly Bachelor," which includes a discussion of the relative merits and difficulties of dog ownership.[127]

In addition, the conjunction between talking dogs and narrative complexity can, particularly in this case, be considered mimetic in a sense, with the style of the dog's speech being an imitation of an actual dog's physical movements. A hound searching for something does not always make a beeline for the object in question. Instead, it traverses the terrain back and forth, questing for a scent that may grow stronger or weaker with each pass, depending on wind and other factors. Part of the joke of the story may be that the dog's inner thoughts mimic its outer motions, whether it be searching for a downed bird or gnawing on a marrow-filled bone. That a dog's outwardly animalistic behaviors mask a Talmudic sensibility conveys a humorous effect that could not be thus achieved using any other animal while still allowing for recognition of the device by the reader. Of all the talking-dog authors explored thus far, Kafka alone took the imaginative step of eschewing the human-mediated talking dog to reveal the possibility of an untold inner life for dogs. The dog and the narrative complexity both represent essential parts of the satire.

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[126] Dietmar Goltschnigg, "The Miserable End of Josef K.," *Turn-of-the-Century Vienna and Its Legacy: Essays in Honor of Donald G. Daviau*, ed. Jeffrey B. Berlin, Jorun B. Johns, and Richard H. Lawson ([S.l.] : Edition Atelier, 1993) 255.

[127] Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995) 183.

Chapter VII

Conclusion: The Music of the Pack

In the preceding chapters, I have examined the narrative complexity of selected talking-dog stories relative to the authors' other works and described the combination of effects using narrative time, narrative voice and narrative mood. I have also examined the role of the dog within each story and examined concordances with other animals in the authors' respective works.

The intent of this thesis has been to come up with a method of identifying the salient features that set apart talking-dog stories of critical interest from the banal variety. The works considered, as minor works of renowned authors with widespread critical acclaim in world literature, are of critical interest by definition. Thus, this has not been a comprehensive survey of the talking-dog story with evaluations and assessments of major works by minor authors. Rather, the approach has been to identify and highlight that which is *novel* about the talking-dog stories of canonical authors; that is, how the talking dog and its historical antecedents have borrowed and transformed elements from prior genres, and reworked them into contexts conversant with contemporary events and literary styles. Such an approach led to the observation regarding the presence of narrative complexity in each of the stories, and indeed, the textual evidence shows that the talking-dog stories employ narrative devices at a level of complexity that matches and often exceeds the narrative complexity of the author's stories from the same time period. This is not as strong a statement as I would have liked to make regarding this correlation,

but the absence of metrics for assessing the degree of narrative complexity make it difficult to make a more definitive pronouncement.

We can expect to see a more rigorous examination of such phenomena in the future, as we are on the cusp of a revolution in the "digital humanities."[128] One can imagine an effort to annotate texts based on the classification schemata of Genette, Barthes, Bal and other narratologists, using a hypertext markup language that identifies structuralist features in the text such as analepses, prolepses and frame narratives using a common data dictionary of narratological features. The same text could be layered with multiple schemata, and even multiple markups using the same schema based on how a reader/coder interprets the text. In the way that Barthes unpacks "Sarrasine" in *S/Z* and Genette examines portions of *À la recherche du temps perdu* in *Narrative Discourse*, a broader project might involve large numbers of narratological analysts creating metatext notation for a corpus of works in the humanities. With such an approach, it might be possible to index the relative narrative complexity of a large number of works in a consistent manner, using data analysis tools to make explicit any correlation between, say, talking animals and narrative complexity, across a broader range of authors and texts at a higher level of statistical confidence. In the meantime, the anecdotal approach taken here will have to suffice.

In summarizing the relationship between narrative complexity and the talking dog, we come across a "chicken-and-egg" problem; that is, which comes first, the narrative complexity or the talking dog? Does the use of a talking dog within the context

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[128] David Zax, "Visualizing Historical Data, And The Rise Of 'Digital Humanities,'" *Fast Company* 9 Jun. 2011 <http://www.fastcompany.com/1758538/the-rise-of-digital-humanities>.

of novelistic literature necessitate the introduction of complex narrative devices, which the most experimentally-minded authors accentuate through even greater complexity? Or does experimentation with narrative complexity somehow summon up from antiquity the motif of the talking dog? We shall explore both of these possibilities in turn.

The first possibility is that the introduction of talking animals requires additional narrative apparatus by necessity. Whether it's an intradiagetic or extradiagetic narrator, it takes a human intermediary to bridge the communication between animal and human, and the narrative complexity becomes a means to an end.

The time-honored role of talking dogs in fiction places them as silent observers of private spaces. As a parodic device, the animal as silent observer has a lineage going back to *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius, about which Mikhail Bakhtin writes: "The position of an ass is a particularly convenient one for observing the secrets of everyday life. The presence of an ass embarrasses no one, all open up completely."[129] The same can be said of the dog in post-agrarian societies, as we see in the talking-dog stories of Cervantes, Hoffmann, Gogol, and Bulgakov, which use the dogs' status as work animals, household pets, or research subjects to provide readers with access to private lives. The ability of a dog to cross boundaries allowed Cervantes to revisit a wider range of social classes, professions, and people in the *Exemplary Novels*, it gave Hoffmann's Berganza entrée into the salon, it gave Gogol's madman a glimpse of the life of his beloved, and it enabled a street dog to witness the struggle between the proletariat and the upper class. Even Kafka's story follows this model in a sense, as the researching hound believed that

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[129] Bakhtin 122.

it had invaded the privacy of the musical dogs during their "entirely private" meeting (137).

We may also consider the talking dog as a representation of the writer, either as an autobiographical stand-in or through their depictions of the creative act of writing itself. On a thematic level, the talking-dog stories seem to comment on various aspects of the writer's creative art, from the elevation of poetic genius in Hoffmann to its counterpart in madness in Gogol; from the freedom and isolation that comes from being a solitary writer/investigator in Kafka to the desire for two-way dialogue through language and communication in Cervantes; and through the perils of creativity insofar as it affects other creatures in Bulgakov.

On a biographical plane, we can also consider such things as correspondences between the writers' lives and those of the dog. The Cervantes talking-dog story exhibits similarities between the lives of Berganza and Cervantes' father. Rodrigo de Cervantes moved with his family several times during fifteen years of "vagabondage";[130] he worked as a barber-surgeon in Alcala de Henares during a time when competition for work was intense;[131] and he is thought to have taken a job in hospital administration.[132] This parallels the life of Berganza through multiple masters, his portent about the excess of medical students, and his eventual job accompanying the guard making the rounds outside of a hospital. Campuzano's written recounting of the dogs' dialogue could then

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[130] McCrory 30.

[131] McCrory 27.

[132] McCrory 32.

therefore represent the oral tradition overheard during Cervantes's own upbringing, transformed in his imagination into talking dogs.

Kafka conceived as "Researches of a Hound" as a deconstructed autobiography, as described in a 1922 letter published in the 1954 *Dearest Father* collection:

> Hence plan for autobiographical investigations. Not biography but investigation and detection of the smallest possible component parts. Out of these I will then construct myself, as one whose house is unsafe wants to build a safe one next to it, if possible out of the material of the old one.[133]

Given that Cervantes and Kafka wrote their talking-dog stories later in life, we would be more likely to expect autobiographical parallels to appear in their later retrospective works. Even so, Bulgakov compared himself as a dog in his autobiographical works, as noted earlier; and Gogol's *Arabesques* contained autobiographical elements, as described by Fusso:

> *Arabesques* is itself a chronicle of Gogol's indecision in the early 1830s over what was to be his proper field of activity, scholarship or art. By the time it was published, Gogol was no longer wavering between history and art: he had embraced art decisively. [134]

Hoffmann, too, placed autobiographical elements in his "Berganza." The author had "a guilty, or least embarrassed and despairing, adulterous infatuation" with his voice student, Julia Marc, [135] and his unhappiness with the circumstances of her marriage to a merchant was retold through the eyes—and teeth—of Berganza.

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[133] Corngold 2.

[134] Susanne Fusso, "The Landscape of Arabesques," *Essays on Gogol: Logos and the Russian Word*, ed. Susanne Fusso and Priscilla Meyer (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1992) 124.

[135] McGlathery 3.

To employ a talking dog as an autobiographical stand-in, a symbol of creativity, or a silent observer is to begin the writing project from the standpoint of a symbol. If the impetus to write starts with a talking dog in mind, the choice of narrative structure becomes secondary, a technical matter to be grasped with the writer's full range of powers. To avoid having to use the trite formula of the talking dog, the authors of critical interest would seek, in Ziolkowski's formulation, "inversions of the conventional form."[136] To do otherwise would be to become generic rather than novelistic, imitation rather than homage.

Alternatively, we might suppose that the act of introducing narrative complexity into a text calls forth the suggestion of talking animals, rather than the reverse. That is to say, a novelist that experiments with narrative by shifting between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic voices within intradiagetic and extradiagetic levels, or with variable focalizations through internal characters and external narrators, will perhaps inevitably come across the idea of focalizing through an animal or using an animal narrator. Although most authors will reject this temptation on the grounds that animals neither speak nor write, some will take up the narrative challenge despite the weight of historical precedent, and a few will succeed at creating something truly novel.

If we recall the definition of the arabesque as having heterogeneity and fragmentariness, what can be more heterogeneous than a non-human character? In addition to the non-human voice, we can identify fragmentary aspects and incompleteness for each of the talking-dog stories considered: Scipio never gets the chance to tell his story; Hoffmann's Berganza ends his encounter with the Traveling

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[136] Ziolkowski 121.

Romantic on a highly enigmatic note; Gogol's diary contains fragments and scraps from selected days; Bulgakov's story is told with ellipses between chapters told from divergent narrative perspectives; and Kafka's dog story ends suddenly and elliptically. Just as heterogeneity suggests non-human voices, the act of including non-human voices ordinarily inaccessible to us suggests fragmentariness. Just because we are provided with a glimpse of animality does not entitle us to completeness in our ability to hear their thoughts. Our fascination with animals, according to Erica Fudge, stems from the human desire to communicate with animals, combined with "fear of being recognized by them through contact," which would uncover our own animality through kinship. [137] The literary representation of animal speech through fragments feeds our desire to communicate with animals, even as the fragmentariness denies the possibility of doing so.

What we hear as animal sounds can be interpreted either as a form of communication made literal through an approximation of speech, or as a form of music, turning barks, grunts and howls into expressive, non-verbal instruments and vocals. For humans, the closest approximation to animality is through musical expression, which "resonates between the registers of a sophisticated artistic form and a simple display of sentiment and emotion,"[138] writes Akira Mizuta Lippit.

The music motif can be found throughout all of the works considered to varying degrees, most obviously with Hoffmann. If Hoffmann aimed to write his stories in a

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[137] Fudge, *Animal* 7.

[138] Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) 148.

manner analogous to the way composers write music, it would follow that he would employ innovative narrative devices and multiple voices in different "registers" (i.e. species) as the literary equivalent to counterpoint and polyphony. This fusion between music and literature is present in Hoffmann's Serapiontic Principle, which according to Hilda Meldrum Brown considers "two major ways in which music can achieve its potential as *the* most expressive of all art forms: the first…is in the hybrid form of opera, the second in the form of church music […] Both forms, significantly, involve the interdependence of music and words (or texts)."[139] Narrative complexity in Hoffmann, in this estimation, stems from his attempt to reach a higher plane of existence through poetic literature inspired by music and approaching the musical ideal, which is a realm that animals in the Romantic conception inhabit through their very nature.

Cervantes' Berganza knows the musical scales and contrasts the stories of musical shepherds with the reality of their savagery, and we can also detect a musical approach to the narrative within the work itself and in the collection. Aylward cites Joaquín Casalduero's description of "a fugue-like movement in the *Coloquio*," and also relates Alban K. Forcione's definition of fugal technique made in reference to *Exemplary Novels* as "one which 'enunciates a dominant theme and restates it continually in innumerable episodic variations, all of which are held together by a recurrent narrative rhythm and a carefully patterned repetition of symbolic imagery.'"[140]

With Gogol's dogs, music is notable for its absence—these are dogs as philistines, motivated by smell and taste rather than sight and sound. Yet the original title of the work

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[139] Meldrum Brown 72.

[140] Aylward 239.

was "Diary of a Mad Musician,"[141] which tantalizingly suggests that Gogol might have made a stronger contrast between the philistine dogs and a Kreisler-like figure stalking them from Nevsky Prospect to the Zherkov Buildings. Even in its current form, the story is part of a literary arabesque that both suggests the arabesque as a musical form and provides a definition of the power of music. Gogol personifies music in the essay with which *Arabesques* begins, "Sculpture, Painting and Music":

> She is exhausting and rebellious; but beneath the endless dark vaults of the cathedral, where thousands of genuflecting pilgrims are found, she, powerfully and rapturously, attempts to induce harmonious movement; she reveals their innermost thoughts, which combine with spinning, eddying grief, and leaves behind her a protracted silence and lingering sound trembling in the depths of the sharp-pointed tower.[142]

Tellingly, it is "Diary of a Madman" which reveals the innermost thoughts of its diarist. Poprishchin is caught in a vortex of powerless grief and, ultimately, he is silenced with his institutionalization at end of the diary, which also marks the end of *Arabesques* in its original printing. The first piece in the collection prefigures the last, and it is Gogol's musical metaphor that defines the fate of the madman.

In Bulgakov, the main musical motif is the contrast between the high culture of the opera-singing Professor Preobrazhenski and the low culture of the balalaika-playing Sharikov. However, this example operates on the level of the story rather than that of the narrative structure. The musical elements in Kafka's dog story would probably also fall under this rubric, with music a dimension of the animal motif rather than a motivating factor for the narrative structure. Lippit writes:

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[141] Robert A. Maguire, *Exploring Gogol* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994) 49.

[142] Gogol, *Arabesques* 28.

> Music, or the artifice of animal sound, appears in Kafka's texts as an ambiguous representative—somewhere between technique and noise—that marks the shift from words to sounds, intellect to affect, and human to animal being. As a literary motif, animal noises indicate a place of communication beyond the limits of language.[143]

While Lippit's observations enrich our understanding of the interplay between music and the animal within Kafka's texts, they do not directly support the idea that the narrative complexity of "Researches of a Hound" was an imitation of a musical form that suggested or demanded the presence of a talking animal. However, for both Kafka and Bulgakov, a case can be made that their impulse toward narrative complexity drove their respective works as much as their specific placement of a talking animal.

For the works considered, it is unanswerable as to which is the dominant direction for this correlation—whether concepts of the arabesque or musical structures motivated narrative complexity, which in turn summoned forth the motif of the talking dog; or whether the desire to incorporate a talking dog in a story required the author to build a sufficiently complex narrative structure to accommodate the animal.

With this in mind, we can discern the dogs of critical interest using the benchmark of whether there is a bidirectional relationship between the presence of the talking dog and the motivation for narrative complexity within a story. Absent this bidirectional relationship, we may see talking dogs of the generic or bizarre variety, neither of which have the critical interest to hold the attention of generations to follow. Alternatively, as part of the trend toward environmental criticism we can expect to see authors continuing to use the talking animal for the purposes of elevating the status of animals in human

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[143] Lippit 149.

eyes, using imagined speech to speak for the voiceless. We can certainly assess this trend as part of an emerging genre, and yet it is a bounded genre limited to the extent that it repeats existing narrative forms, set apart from the boundless form of the novel.

The strongest talking-dog stories, as with those considered in this thesis, allow us to make a case both ways, where the talking dog has been incorporated into the story in an original way through the narrative apparatus, and where the narrative complexity makes a talking dog an organic part of the story. It is the presence of both of these elements that makes talking dogs sing.

Yet even this formulation is too simplistic, as a complete work of art must also engage with the philosophical and intellectual questions of the age. A work that merely closes the loop between form and content remains a gimmick until invested with broader meaning. We can find such meaning in each of the five talking-dog stories, with each author using the talking dog to reflect the idea of the animal in contemporary philosophical thought.

The concept of the humanities itself is based upon the idea of the human, and thus one of the central philosophical questions of the humanities is the definition of its central term, typically in opposition to the non-human animal. The historical definitions range from Aristotle's formulation of "man as political and rational"[144] to the definition of "human" in Charles Winick's 1956 *Dictionary of Anthropology* including physical

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[144] H. Peter Steeves, "The Familiar Other and Feral Selves: Life at the Human/Animal Boundary," *The Animal/Human Boundary: Historical Perspectives,* ed. Angela N. H. Creager and William Chester Jordan (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2002) 231.

characteristics such as brain size along with nonphysical characteristics including "educability, toolmaking know-how, symbolic expression, and cultural achievements."[145]

Yet these definitions have repeatedly proven to be problematic, with exceptions standing in the way of a clear and accurate definition. Even "the last boundary standing between man and beast,"[146] the capacity for language, is being attributed to animals based on their ability to communicate specific messages and warnings to each other, with the music of animal song regarded by some as "a good candidate for being a true animal language."[147] Even if obliquely, talking-dog stories wrestle with this fundamental question of the humanities, and each of the authors considered approached the topic in a different way.

Descartes' *Discourse on Method* formulated animals as soulless machines lacking reason and language.[148] Although "The Dogs' Colloquy" predates Descartes, Cervantes nevertheless anticipates the Cartesian demarcation of humanity. Berganza and Scipio agree that the miracle of their speech goes beyond the speech itself, but that "not only are we speaking but we are speaking coherently, as if we were capable of reason, when in fact we are so devoid of it that the difference between the brute beast and man is that man is a rational animal, and the brute irrational." The comic irony of Scipio's statement is heightened by the subsequent brutality of the "rational" humans whom Berganza serves.

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[145] Steeves 234.

[146] Temple Grandin and Catherine Johnson, *Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2005) 272.

[147] Grandin 279.

[148] Gary Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and its Discontents: the moral status of animals in the history of Western philosophy* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005) 132.

When Cervantes uses the talking dogs to probe the boundaries of humanity, he is classifying certain humans as beastly animals rather than suggesting that animals have human intelligence. It is a miracle—or witchcraft—that enables the dogs to talk, and this same power enabled the dogs to have the perception, wisdom and memory to amass the stories shared. As seen in the episode with the shepherds killing the sheep, Berganza possessed the reasoning capacity to uncover the scheme before gaining the power of speech, unlike the other dogs presumably untouched by witchcraft or miraculous portents. The miracle started with reason itself, and language followed on the night of the colloquy.

Like Cervantes, Hoffmann's talking dog had more of an artistic than a scientific function. As outlined in "Jacques Callot," the non-human has a pivotal role within *Fantasy Pieces*. Hoffmann concisely states why and how Callot used animal imagery in his sketches: "Irony, which mocks mankind's wretched endeavors by juxtaposing the human and the animal, resides only in a profound intellect. To serious, penetrating viewers of Callot's grotesque man-beast figures, irony reveals all the secret meanings that lie hidden beneath the veil of farce."[149] Hoffmann escalates the artist making such juxtapositions as "a profound intellect," while flattering and encouraging the reader to become a "serious, penetrating viewer" of the sketch. As discussed earlier, this is Hoffmann's challenge to the reader.

Thus, the juxtaposition of human and animal was done in the service of Romantic irony rather than as a practical exercise in zoology. Hoffmann's *Weltanschauung* separates human and non-human, with the animal bridging the worlds of the fantastic and

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[149] Hoffmann 3.

that of the real. In describing the characteristic of irony in "Jacques Callot," Hoffmann conflates the non-human terms "animal," "beast," and "devil" through the examples of the man-beasts pantomiming human activities in *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*. Through these associations, the depiction of the animal carries mythic qualities, perhaps best characterized as a form of Orientalism directed at animals.

In the preface to *Fantasy Pieces,* Jean Paul criticized Hoffmann's exaltation of the musician by commenting upon the universality of music: "Music is actually the most universal art and folk-art, and everyone at least sings, as church-goers and beggars illustrate. Music is the only art that crosses over to the animal realm."[150] This was intended as a criticism "for the distance between author and public that [Hoffmann's] brand of irony created,"[151] and with that criticism, Jean Paul counters Hoffmann's mythic conception of animals with a more prosaic approach. The conflict parallels the eroding definitional distinction between humans and animals in 19th century thought, concomitant with the classification of nature and the industrialization of society.[152]

Keith Tester writes that the shift toward urbanization in the 19th century marked the end of the symbolic relation between humans and animals.[153] As cities absorbed populations from the countryside, human relationships with animals became both detached in terms of animals as raw materials, and more personal in terms of pets. Steve

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[150] Chapin 57.

[151] Chapin 56.

[152] Baker 12.

[153] Keith Tester, *Animals and Society: The Humanity of Animal Rights* (London: Routledge, 1999) 18.

Baker describes John Berger's view of the institution of the "pet" as "the living epitome of the animal reduced, the animal drained: mere 'mementos from the outside world.'"[154]

In Gogol, the talking dogs are pets that have absorbed the class consciousness of their owners. While still exhibiting doggish behavior, Madgie has a preference for "grouse and gravy or the roast wing of a chicken,"[155] and separates herself from the lower-class Poklan in the kitchen. Gogol sets the lapdogs in opposition to the Great Dane just as Hoffmann's Traveling Romantic contrasts the mastiff Berganza with the insipid lapdogs; the difference being that Gogol shows the viewpoint of the lapdogs.

Within the bounds of the city, the general maintains control over nature through his "memento," but even at his window there lurks a more powerful avatar of nature, the "terrifying Great Dane" in Madgie's account, who appears in the window, "such a country bumpkin," who "if he were to stand on his hind legs, which I expect the clod could not do, he would be a whole head taller than my Sophie's papa, who is fairly tall and fat too."[156] Madgie's dismissive and insulting tone belies the danger of an animal towering even over the most powerful human in the story save the Czar. Even as Gogol's madman fancies himself an outsider King with power over the society that rejects him, he transposes a similar relation to the Great Dane looming over Madgie's household. The memento of nature has the power to mock its larger counterpart, but not even the memento's master can control it.

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[154] Baker 13.

[155] Gogol 248.

[156] Gogol 249.

The conception of the animal changed irrevocably with *The Origin of Species* in 1859. Darwin viewed evolutionary continuity as "a sufficient basis for concluding that the only barrier to fully developed language in animals is the degree of brain function."[157] From this, the conception of a talking animal went from being the province of a madman in an 1835 Gogol story to the subject of a 1925 Bulgakov science-fiction novel. Rather than attribute the idea of a talking dog to a miracle or witchcraft, to mythic qualities, or to insanity, Bulgakov posited a non-human animal that could process language, infer meanings from signs, and intuit social cues. His medical training not only gave the story verisimilitude in the operation scenes and in the style of the laboratory notes, but the various characters themselves may have represented points of view in a contemporary debate on human behavior. Yvonne Howell writes:

> …*Heart of a Dog* is Bulgakov's response to one of the most exciting, intellectually stimulating, and politically complicated issues of his day: He devises a plot that centers around a eugenic experiment; he places his main protagonists at different points of the contemporary spectrum of biosocial thought, and he deploys four narrative points of view, each of which embodies voices that were important in the nature-nurture dialogue of his time.[158]

Parallel to Bulgakov's exploration of how animals might be transformed into humans, we can interpret Kafka's 1922 "Researches of a Dog" as exploring the question of how animals have adapted to modernity. Yet in Kafka, it is not an overt force that transforms a single dog into a new being, but rather, perhaps, the inexorable effects of evolution. Evolution works through mutation, one generation acquiring a trait that confers an advantage in survival. Although the detachment of the researching dog may

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[157] Steiner 193.

[158] Howell 549.

have placed the researcher himself into an evolutionary dead end, we might see the inquisitive animal as being in the vanguard of a new type of dog, requiring different kind of survival skills than had been necessary in the past.

If we consider, per Eric Williams' interpretation, that the walking dogs were apparitions on the cinema screen, then the episode in question becomes the dog's encounter with technology. Similarly, if we interpret the flying dogs as lapdogs, they too become a symbol of modernity and industrialization, the descendants of the pet dogs in Gogol. In a post-industrial society, watering the ground is no longer sufficient for ensuring the ready availability of food, despite the accumulated wisdom of dogdom.

The researcher realizes that he is not a scientist: "Faced with even the easiest science test administered by a genuine scientist, I would do very poorly."[159] Yet he knows enough to seek answers through science. The elegiac ending has the dog clinging to a possession of freedom, with the ability to recognize it as freedom but lacking the power to retain it as more than a "stunted growth."[160] In the industrial age, evolution favors the malleable walking dogs and the tame air dogs over the hounds of the field embracing their freedom. Language and freedom, even if it may have once marked an animal as human, may not be enough during the transition to modernity, and this is the tragedy of Kafka's researching dog.

Continuing to the present, writers have continued to engage with questions of the relationship between animals and humans using the device of the talking dog. The greatest talking-dog stories break new ground both thematically and formally, but even

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[159] Kafka 160.

[160] Kafka 161.

the imitative examples tend to grapple with important questions about the limits of humanity and the fate of animals. The potential for the form will not be exhausted as long as evolution, industrialization and technology continue to redefine the human-canine interface. The continued relevance of the talking dog illustrates its symbolic power above what might be considered at first glance a trivial, or even banal, device. We have not heard the last of the talking dog, and the best dogs may be yet to come.

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