



Original Research Article

RINCONETE AND CORTADILLO: OUTSIDE OF THE OUTSIDE OF LAW

Judit R. Palencia Gutiérrez, Ph.D¹

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Abstract

In 1908, Freud publishes “Creative Writers and Daydreaming”, an essay based on an informal speech he gave, that focuses on the psychoanalytical relationship between the literary author and his/her work and that establishes an analogy between the writing process and the writer’s unfulfilled dreams. Peter Brooks takes precisely this essay as the starting point for his work on the intersection of psychoanalysis and literature. What is then the relationship between narratology and psychoanalysis? How to study psychoanalysis with literature (or the other way around)? What have been the traditional approaches to their intersection? To answer these questions, I examine notions of the inside and outside of law, starting with *Rinconete and Cortadillo*, the exemplary novel [novela ejemplar] by Cervantes, about two characters who live outside of society’s laws. The exemplary novel contains a terrific theory on the trauma of deidentification -the splitting of the ego through nominalization and materialization. I analyze Cervantes’ construction of the narrative voice as a trickster, both inside and outside of narration, alongside Freudian theories – namely the splitting of the ego and its subsequent Verleugnung. Finally, I explore conventions in the intersection between literature and psychoanalysis offered by Freud and highlighted by Brooks, to see how the former is also escaping some of these apparent laws.

Keywords: Cervantes, narratology, Freud, law, institutions

“- ¿Cómo nos ha de ir – respondió Rinconete – sino muy bien? Ánimo tenemos para acometer cualquiera empresa de las que tocaren a nuestro arte y ejercicio.

– Está bien – replicó Monipodio...; pero querría yo que también le tuviédeses para sufrir, si fuese menester, media docena de ansias sin desplegar los labios y sin decir “esta boca es mía.

- Ya sabemos aquí – dijo Cortadillo –, señor Monipodio, qué quiere decir ansias, y para todo tenemos ánimo; porque no somos tan ignorantes que no se nos alcance que lo que dice la lengua paga la gorja, y harta merced le hace el cielo al hombre atrevido, por no darle otro título, que deja en su lengua su vida o su muerte: ¡cómo si tuviese más letras un no que un sí!

¹ Assistant Professor, Spanish Program, California State University-Fullerton
Email: jpalenciagutierrez@fullerton.edu

- ¡Alto, no es menester más! - dijo a esta sazón Monipodio -. Digo que sola esta razón me convence, me obliga, me persuade y me fuerza a que desde luego asentéis por cofrades mayores y que se os sobrelleve el año del noviciado.” (Cervantes 215-16)

What may seem a short and simple dialogue between two fictional characters hides various ideas that demand reflection, inserted in the fascinating narrative employed by Cervantes in *Rinconete and Cortadillo*. This fragment, beautifully subtle in terms of the simplicity with which it presents complex ideas, seems to me a perfect starting point to get into the apparatus developed by the author.

Before analyzing the quote and the problems it presents, let me start by providing some context. In this picaresque exemplary novel, two young boys, Diego Cortado and Pedro del Rincón, make each other's acquaintance after running away from their respective homes. Soon they become friends and decide to go to Seville. However, on their way to the city, they lose all of their money; so, in order to survive, - and having decided that they do not want to work- they start to steal from people.

One day, they successfully steal a bag of money from a sacristan, but someone notices the robbery: Ganchuelo, a boy who warns them about the consequences of stealing in Seville without being part of the brotherhood [cofradía] led by Monipodio, who controls and commands the city's professional thieves, prostitutes, and rascals. Ganchuelo tells them that Monipodio takes care of thieves, and he advises them to meet him to become part of this institution of marginalized people- a subtle reflection on the idea that institutions are meant to protect us. They introduce themselves to Monipodio, who changes their names to Rinconete and Cortadillo, and asks them what strengths and skills they bring to the group. He happily accepts them as new members of his brotherhood - this is the excerpt presented at the beginning of this essay.

The concept of brotherhood signals not only a physical space, but a symbolic one as well. In this exemplary novel there is a sort of encounter between the inside and outside of law and their respective institutions. This encounter determines what is acceptable within the brotherhood's outside-of-legality. This institutional exteriority, insofar as the brotherhood is formed by marginal people, is the axiom behind the laws governing said brotherhood. Only those who recognize themselves as marginal subjects - here the relevant institutional identity - can join. Being outside of society is the condition to create this society. This distinction - you have to be outside of the law - constitutes the source and point of crystallization for the ontological and epistemological basis of the brotherhood as an institution, and consequently, yet paradoxically, of its laws. The recognition of this type of subject depends on the elimination or marginalization of everything to do with his/her investment - in Freudian terms, *Verkehrung* (Triebe und Triebchicksale).

The future of the institution depends on a sovereign immanence that is truly subjective but is presented as a norm, as a natural way of understanding social relations; in this case, Monipodio as the leader and social relations that traverse legality from marginalization and vice versa. Social norms are the archive of the brotherhood which determines them, the devices of a project to legitimize the society and give it ideological coherence. In terms of political structure, what is produced as a norm has to erase itself as political subjectivity.

How is this need for an institution created? How is the feeling of need of that institution created? The brotherhood arises from a psychological modality: the introjection of an external world that creates forgotten fetish objects in our interior, that act through repetition of an act, a repetition that obeys this internal desire - in Lacanian terms, an *extimacy* operation. An institution created to legitimize and give ideological coherence to marginal lives, the brotherhood creates while eliminating the secret of an identity that does not pertain to society.

In the quote that opens this essay, Monipodio and Cortadillo have a confrontation, a total conceptual contradistinction, since the latter postulates that acts prevail over speech, “hombre atrevido, por no darle otro título, que deja en su lengua su vida o su muerte” (Cervantes 215). In other

words, those who try to escape life or death situations by talking, are daring [atrevidos], a word he uses as a euphemism for insolent – “por no darle otro título” (Cervantes 215). Cortadillo entertains the idea that problems do not get solved through speech, given that its content is as irrelevant as its function when in a critical situation – “¡cómo si tuviese más letras un no que un sí! (Cervantes 215). Consequently, Cortadillo privileges action over words.

However, Monipodio wants them to have the desire and strength, not only to commit crimes, but to suffer the torments that accompany them without saying anything, without uttering a word: “pero querría yo que también le tuviédeses para sufrir, si fuese menester, media docena de ansias sin desplegar los labios y sin decir esta boca es mía” (Cervantes 215). That is, he positions the speech act as the most basic tool for freeing oneself from a torment, the first step in solving a problem, before taking any other action. Monipodio, who represents the brotherhood, installs a primary *modus operandi* that does not match Cortadillo’s.

These antagonistic opinions create a big problem. How can he – and Rinconete, by extension – become part of the group when he does not adhere to one of its core axioms? The desire for narrative continuity here comes into conflict, since, to continue, it must overcome the disjunction between opinions, allowing Cortadillo and Rinconete to join the brotherhood. However, even if they do manage to arrive at a solution to this conflict, will they change their views and abide the laws of the brotherhood? It is with the solution to this problem, which arises in an extremely subtle way, that I can begin to unmask the picaresque narrative strategy that Cervantes develops in *Rinconete and Cortadillo*.

After Cortadillo expresses in a concise and abrupt way his disagreement with Monipodio, the latter answers “no es menester más” (Cervantes 216). Cortadillo’s words “convince” the leader; they “force him”, “persuade him”...to do what? To bribe them: at this point he offers them certain benefits, a privileged position in the brotherhood – “desde luego asentéis por cofrades mayores y que se os sobrelleve el año del noviciado” (Cervantes 216), “sobrellevar” understood as “to exempt”, a common meaning in Cervante’s times but no longer used in contemporary Spanish. Therefore, to put an end to the issue, Monipodio bribes the boys with a sophistry, emulating a paternal solution to an argument with their children – a role he fills throughout the novel (Carroll 3).

This proposes a solution to the conflict between the characters. But the narrative strategy, how does it resolve this? Going back to the quote again, referring to the discussion’s final words, pronounced by Monipodio, the narrative voice uses the word “sazón” – “dijo a esta sazón Monipodio” (Cervantes 216). “Sazón” means “time”, or “moment” in English. Etymologically, it comes from the Latin *satio*, *sationis*, which means “sowing, planting” (Morwood 2012), or “satisfy; satiate; fill to repletion” (Morwood 2012). This semantic metaphor, which Cervantes introduces here, slips by entirely unnoticed. Why is it so important? Because it is precisely at this point that the apparatus created for Rinconete and Cortadillo is to be sown, to be disseminated. “Satisfy; satiate; fill to repletion”, fill someone with satisfaction until they are satiated, which is precisely what happens here: Monipodio fills them with the satisfaction of being allowed to join the brotherhood, but this also satisfies the reader because something happens, and they avoid the confrontation.

At this moment, the conflict moves to the background for reasons external to the characters embroiled in the problem: in the midst of this conversation, a new character appears on the scene and announces that the sheriff [*alguacil*], a friend of Monipodio, is on his way to the brotherhood. This shifts the narration’s primary focus, splitting –*spaltung* is a way to say splitting, as it will be addressed later – the story, and making the reader focus on the new conflict.

Monipodio asks the brotherhood’s members for the bag of money from the sacristan. No one knows that Diego and Pedro have the money, but seeing the leader becoming aggressive, Cortadillo himself decides to hand it over. The problem with the sheriff is solved with the joint action of Rinconete and Cortadillo, since the latter acts on behalf of the former. What is the consequence of this act? The head of the brotherhood, as a reward, gives Cortadillo a new name, “Cortadillo el

Bueno”, Cortadillo the Good. He baptizes him, creating a new “me” for Cortadillo, based in a concrete action. With this act of "absolution", Monipodio creates a new character, solving the previous conflict between the two through the "Cortadillo". In addition, he bribes him again: “no es mucho que a quien te da la gallina entera, tú des una pierna della” (Cervantes 218); “morally” justifying this act of re-nominalization and, therefore, of submission.

This symbolizes Monipodio’s position of hierarchical superiority. Through this operation of name-calling, there is a mediation between individual and institution, represented by Monipodio. The relation between the individual – Cortadillo – and the institution is mediated by he who can designate somebody in a particular way. A name that gives legitimacy.

The classical concept of institution is based on an atomic continuity in time of a subject who, entering the institution, becomes a member of it – a principle of identity offered by the institution once a subject is inside of it. A moment in which the self finds his/her most general aspect. However, in seems that in the brotherhood everything has been dissolved, and the only thing left to us is a mark by which desire matches writing- names-, a dissolution of writing’s directionality and the reduction of truth to the mark.

An identity can be instituted. However, through a paradox: that which is instituted, if it does not have continuity and permanence, cannot be identity. The type of institutionality contemplated in the brotherhood is possible through identity as constant affirmation or constant creation, one that does not therefore have a temporal relationship. Everything is the "already".

It effaces time, and so identity is constantly affirmed. Institutions seem already given: but this shows how they are hauntologically harassed by counter-institutions that open the possibility of criticism, and that have been banned. Counter-institutions not necessarily as something that goes against the institution, but as something that has a different structure – cultural forms play a crucial role not only in the visibilization of space, but also its regulation.

The consequent re-appointment of Cortadillo symbolizes, at the same time, a redemption of his previous "sins", placing the "creator" on a higher level; thus, resolving their previous confrontation. But at the level of the narrative, the discussion has been resolved by a series of declines, from moments that break with the argument, which allow avoiding the conflict’s center, the antagonistic opinions of both characters that yet exist within a desire for narrative continuity.

How do these narrative twists occur? Mostly through the process of nominalization and its consequent materialization. I’d say that, in this exemplary novel, the whole narrative focuses on the concept of "deterministic nominalization". What do I mean by this? Cervantes declines the narrative, mischievously manipulating the development of the story, based on nominalization, the creation of names. The names of the protagonists are destroyed, they are de-materialized, splitting their previous subject, their previous being, to create to a new character, a new "me."

This is precisely what we see in this scene: the materialization of a new character, a re-invention, a new "me"- Cortadillo el Bueno- who is split in the act of receiving a new name. His previous “I”, Cortado, and his even more previous “I”, Diego Cortado, are rejected, denied, to continue with the narrative by avoiding confrontational issues. Rincón also received a new name, but the semantics reveal it as even more exaggerated. He introduces himself as Pedro del Rincón; the preposition “de” in Spanish, contracted with the definite article “el”, indicates origin. The only time in the novel that his full name appears is upon introduction, the next time someone refers to him he is already "Rincón." With the suppression of "del", the narrative is eliminating its origin, its genealogy. A genealogy that, on the other hand, the character does not want to reveal, as El Saffar points out: “when Monipodio insists that they tell him their parents’ names Rinconete manages both to mimic Monipodio’s verbal errors, and to slide out of revealing to him anything of his past” (1974, 36). Each of the names refer to the same person, but they cause different reactions; a game with the relationship between name and referent.

Cervantes, being himself a picaresque author, gives the reader clues throughout the text, making theme and performance coincide: the theme of a picaresque society is expressed through a picaresque narrative. If one reads the text very carefully, they will find several points wherein the narrative voice tricks the reader - the narrator uses the name "Cortadillo" even before Monipodio assigns it to Diego: "¿Y con sólo eso que hacen, dicen esos señores – dijo *Cortadillo* – que su vida es santa y buena?" (Cervantes 209, emphasis added). Moreover, in the first dialogue between Cortadillo and Rinconete, the narrator uses "el mayor", "el menor" and "el mediano" to reproduce their conversation: "así es – respondió el *mediano* – pero yo he dicho verdad en lo que he dicho [...]" (Cervantes 193, emphasis added). It may seem that these labels – "el mayor", "el menor" and "el mediano" – refer to their size. However, it is impossible for "mediano" to refer to anyone, since we only have two characters at this moment. The other option would be that they refer to their age, but nor do they state their age. Cervantes escapes the laws and conventions of narratology.

There is a continuous and ambiguous game between both names: when they appear, before Rincón says his name, Cortado already makes a pun with his own name and that of his later partner - "la *corta* suerte me tiene *arrinconado*" (Cervantes 194, emphasis added). Even when Cortado receives the nickname Cortadillo el Bueno, there is a time when the narrative voice refers to Rincón as Rinconete el Bueno: "Rinconete el Bueno and Cortadillo are given by district until Sunday..." (Cervantes 237); foreshadowing the moment when, some pages later, they "absorb" each other and become the same character.

Throughout the novel, Cortado and Rincón stick together. Two characters that become inseparable... so much so that they become just one. The novel begins at the moment of their meeting, and, after several clues, ends with the moment of their fusion. They suffer so many splits throughout the novel, and so many re-materializations, that they become the same character. In the final scene of this open-ended novel, Monipodio says goodbye to Rinconete and Cortadillo, both then in his presence, and reminds them that they all will get together the following week. However, immediately after that, the narrator only refers to Rinconete. The narrator starts to play with linguistic ambiguities and twists the narrative again: the conjugation of the final verbs changes, and all of them are conjugated in the third person singular instead of plural.

I have so far analyzed what happens in the exemplary novel, but only through the novel itself. At this point, after having immersed myself in the text, I suppose, I must look beyond the surface, to try to find an adequate explanation of those points in the literary text where I see that narratology alone is not enough to allow the reader understand the text in its entirety. The apparatus that Cervantes creates in Rinconete and Cortadillo is based on an ambiguous, mischievous discourse, and narratology is limited in its explanatory power.

Thus, I would like to go back to a term I introduced earlier: "*spaltung*", which in German means "split"; a crucial concept in psychoanalysis. Since I am entering dangerous lands – the intersection of literature and psychoanalysis – I consider it appropriate to talk about how to study literature and psychoanalysis together: with a lot of distance and caution, always keeping in mind that one should not "apply" Freud to Cervantes, for several reasons, anachronism being one of the main ones.

In 1908 Freud publishes "Creative Writers and Daydreaming", an essay based on a lecture he gave in a prior year. It focuses on the psychoanalytical relationship between the literary author and his work, establishing an analogy between the writing process and the repression of the writer's desires since childhood in the unconscious.

Peter Brooks takes this essay as a starting point for his critique of the practice of applying psycho-analytic theory to literature in *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling* (1994, 20). According to his work, there are three objects of study within psycho-analytical literary criticism: author, reader, and the characters involved in the, I would say, diegetic narrative - Brooks literally uses the term

"fictitious" (fictive), which does not seem entirely appropriate to describe the concept of characters participating in a narrative.

He claims that one of the main problems underlying psychoanalytical literary criticism is confusing the object of study (1994, 20). It is not difficult to understand why sometimes there is confusion between author, characters and narrator, believing that all are one, a real person, who could be psychoanalyzed. But one should keep in mind that psychoanalysis and its tools are not meant to presuppose and create people's traumas, unconscious, etcetera.

One should not fall into the tautological trap of establishing an analogy between the psychoanalytic interpretation of a literary text and the ultimate goal of literary theory. It is because of the concept that one "applies" psychoanalysis to another discipline, that the possibility that this analysis seems somewhat tautological always remains open; an analysis predicated on conceiving the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature via privileging psychoanalysis as having "the last word" (1994, 22-23), assumes that the writer's intention was not to go further and develop a coherent discourse and conceives of the critic's interpretation, in which lies his own unconscious, as "the interpretation" (1958, 300).

However, in order to get a deeper understanding and a more complete analysis of a literary text, one can study literature alongside other fields, such as psychoanalysis – and vice versa, as Freud does in his reading of *Gradiva*, of which I discuss below – to understand the techniques of textual narration, and the different strategies used in the creation of the narrative voice; always as long as this is done very carefully and maintaining distance from our object of study.

Freud was, in fact, fascinated by Cervantes. As expressed in an 1883 letter to his fiancé, Martha Bernays: "[...] all this is written with such finesse, color, and intelligence, the whole group in the enchanted tavern is so attractive, that I cannot remember ever having read anything so satisfactory which at the same time avoids exaggeration" (Freud 1992). It was that year that Freud really became influenced by Cervantes' work, according to Grinberg and Rodríguez:

"Freud was going to do in the scientific world what I found Cervantes doing in the literary one. That is, he was going to restore the status of fantasy and subjectivity in a post-Cartesian world which had tried to deemphasize those factors, and to discover and study the laws and mechanisms by which psychic reality is governed." (28)

But what does the first do clinically that the second does literarily? What of the writer fascinates Freud? One of the main topics in Cervantes is the blurred line between reality and madness. When he writes about his fascination with Cervantes, Freud was concerned with the problem of dreams - not in the dreamlike sense - and the difficulty in achieving them.

Freud takes the text *Gradiva*, by Wilhelm Jensen, and poses the problem of the nature of creative writing. To study the topic, he proposes two modes of approach: to deepen a specific literary work, speaking of the dream creations [dream-creations] of the author; or contrast all possible examples within the problem of the use of dreams in literature, using a greater number of authors. It is this last approach that most interests Freud, referring to the fact that we can speak with greater ownership of the generalized and abstract concept of "writer / s" (1993, 132).

However, in an interesting turn, he chooses the first option and focuses on *Gradiva*, on the delirium and dreams of the text's protagonist. Freud poses quite complex questions and problems, as though the author's imagination were determined by personal factors or experiences or by pure arbitrariness (1993, 132); elevating this to a second level of abstraction, he later postulates that his own interpretation of *Gradiva* may also be conditioned and constructed from one's own unconscious and experiences (1993, 171).

Following Freud's reasoning, one should not filter the reading of *Gradiva* – as metonym for any literary text – through the lens of psychoanalysis; denying – understanding the action of denying as an energetic denial, as Otto Ranks' *dementierung*– all the author's ideas that cannot be applied to psychoanalytic concepts and ideas and, therefore, re-interpreting the text as an accumulation of meanings autonomously attributed to one's own theory and rejecting the apparatus created by the author. To avoid this, Freud offers a perfect paradigm of how to study a literary text together with psychoanalysis: after a thorough reading, he proceeds to analyze in depth certain moments in the literary text; however, conceptualizing them from the author's theory as a totality, embracing it and understanding it as a whole, to understand and criticize them through psychoanalysis.

However, it then highlights the problems that arise in turn, calling into question the relationship of author and psychiatry:

“Perhaps in the judgment of the majority we are doing a poor service for him [Wilhelm Jensen] when we declare his work a study in psychiatry. An author is to avoid all contact with psychiatry, we are told, and leave to physicians the portrayal of morbid psychic conditions. In reality no true author has ever heeded this commandment. The portrayal of the psychic life of human beings is, of course, his most especial domain; he was always the precursor of science and of scientific psychology.” (1993, 172)

The generally assumed statement that the author should not delving into psychiatry – understood as the construction of the literary characters' psyches– may be wrong. But how to properly create a literary work that deals with psychiatric topics? Is it not possible to do it well, respecting the parameters of psychiatry, “standing before the judgement of science” (1993, 185), while giving it literary beauty?

It seems to me that the problem here is not the creation of a literary text based in psychiatric concepts, but the re-interpretation afterwards by literary critics. One should avoid falling into those traditional psychoanalytic analyses that, as Brooks posits, focus on the study of the unconscious of the author, reader or characters.

What, then, are the theories and concepts within psychoanalysis that I consider relevant to understand *Rinconete and Cortadillo* as a whole? Within the famous Freudian Oedipus Complex, there is a moment in which the child is persuaded by the castration complex and represses his incestuous love - desire - for his mother: seeing the woman's body and noticing that she has no penis, that she has been "castrated," he believes this will happen to him as well, as a punishment. The child, at this point, has to replace that desire with the “reality principle”, which Laplanche and Pontallis define as:

“One of the two principles which for Freud govern mental functioning. The reality principle is coupled with the pleasure principle, which it modifies: in so far as it succeeds in establishing its dominance as a regulatory principle, the search for satisfaction does not take the most direct routes but instead makes detours and postpones the attainment of its goal according to the conditions imposed by the outside world.” (379)

From the moment the child modifies his behavior, instead of wanting to replace the father and possess his mother, the father becomes a figure to which he indirectly aspires to one day become (Eagleton 134).

On the other hand, from the perspective of a white man in a hetero-patriarchal society, Freud establishes that the girl, having verified her "castration", feels inferior and identifies - again, inferiorly - with the mother, replacing the penis symbol with the desire to have the father's child. Obviously, in these theories lays a strong conceptual discrimination against women - which the feminist Luci Irigaray herself deconstructed, in due time.

So, what exactly happens at that iconic moment when the child discovers his mother "has been castrated"? He represses his incestuous desire, and the child that results from this process has the ego, the figure of the "I", repressively divided between reality and unconscious. It is precisely this repressive split that makes us who we are (Eagleton 145).

As Rocha Barros points out, "the human mind has the power to isolate experiences that are painful to it or actively attempt to isolate itself from these" (18) For Freud, this process of "estrangement" of memories or experiences that harm us is carried out through the split of the self, which is not a defense mechanism per se, but a consequence of the defensive processes, a way of making two defensive processes co-exist - one to deny the prohibition of reality and the other to demand the instinct. The subject is able, at the same time, to reject reality and refuse to accept any type of prohibition; besides recognizing reality and the danger derived from it and move away from it. However, this has consequences: these reactions that co-exist but are totally contrary are the basis of the excision of the self, a split that the subject will never overcome and that, in fact, will be magnified with time.

There are two terms for the denial that is mentioned in the splitting of the self, and they are often misunderstood: on the one hand we have the *Verneinung* and, on the other, the *Verleugnung*. Both procedures operate within the paradigm of the problem between reality and pleasure; they deny reality to get pleasure, but there are differences. *Verleugnung* needs an excision of the self (*Ichspaltung*) and that a fetish replaces what is being denied. It is precisely by creating this fetish that the subject can deal with the denial of reality (Sales 35). On the contrary, *Verneinung* implies a denial of that which is absent in what one has unconsciously repressed.

The basic difference between both processes is that with the *Verleugnung* there is a feeling of insecurity, confusion, ... while with the *Verneinung* the feeling that the subject has is an absolute certainty that it is simultaneously wrong. In fact, it is not so rare to confuse both processes if we consider that Freud himself, when he wrote about denial, titled the document "Die Verneinung und Verleugnung", to finally cross out "und Verleugnung".

In *Verleugnung*, we have a subject that uses alternatives to "defend" from reality, to deal with what traumatizes him, denying it and persisting in ignorance of it. Freud focuses on this problem in his *Fetishism*, a text that interests us not only because of the theory of splitting of the self and its corresponding *Verleugnung*, but because in it, Freud splits himself.

Fetishism ends on the question of the division that causes the fetish, indicating to us: the fetish is not compensation, but creates division. Freud himself cleaves his "I", his own narrative. At the beginning it says:

"When now I announce that the fetish is a substitute for the penis, I shall certainly create disappointment; so I hasten to add that it is not a substitute for any chance penis, but for a particular and quite special penis that had been extremely important in early childhood but had later been lost. That is to say, it should normally have been given up, but the fetish is precisely designed to preserve it from extinction. To put it more plainly: the fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and - for reasons familiar to us - does not want to give up." (1927, 1)

However, at the end of the essay he entertains that "in conclusion we may say that the normal prototype of fetishes is a man's penis, just as the normal prototype of inferior organs is a woman's real small penis, the clitoris" (Freud *Fetishism* 5). Throughout the essay, he talks about the penis as something abstract, as a symbol, and in the end, he inverts it and postulates that the normal fetish is the penis. Yet suddenly, in the final sentence of the essay, he claims something that contradicts the rest of the text. Freud takes a step back in his narrative and covers what he has discovered. What he has discovered is of such magnitude that he has to produce an *Ichspaltung*; a catachresis that Freud believes we could describe as *Verleugnung*, a split of the self that leaves traces in his essay and takes

place to cover itself. A split that has on the one hand, an inter-discursive function, in that it exemplifies with its narrative structures its own theory, and meta-discursive, to speak of the discourse itself used to launch that theory.

This split in Freud's own narrative is interesting because it throws light on the narrative structures used by Cervantes in *Rinconete and Cortadillo*. We have a trauma: disidentification; and it is to overcome this that the fetish of the narrative is created. To overcome the problems that arise between the demand for instinct and the prohibition of reality, it is conceived as a picaresque discourse that could be understood from the vantage point of the *Verleugnung*. Narrative usually creates, but here it vanishes; it destroys the concept of narrative to then rebuild it. It is a picaresque narrative that is capable of creating different lives for the same character. A narrative that responds to the need for the creation of a fetish to overcome the trauma of disidentification.

Through this “picaresque *Verleugnung*”, Cervantes’ narrative is produced based on a whole strategy of polysemic gymnastics (Ruta 1171) that, as El Saffar points out: “draw the reader's interest away from the words’ meaning toward a focus on their surface” (1974, 37). On a different note, I find it interesting that El Saffar does not consider *Rinconete and Cortadillo* a picaresque novel, claiming – in her book about Cervantes’ exemplary novels – that *Rinconete and Cortadillo* do not really fit the tradition of the picaresque character, due details such as the fact that they have not been forced to steal, they have not been rejected by their families, their parents are alive, and it is their short-term greed that leads them to join Monipodio’s brotherhood (1974, 33-34). However, in my opinion, the novel is picaresque, not only because of its characters, but because of the narrative structures that I study in this essay.

In *Rinconete and Cortadillo*, I see a split, liquid, changing, picaresque narrative. Cervantes confuses the reader with his silences, his linguistic ambiguities, his games of mirrors, his jumps between synchronous and diachronic narrator, and so forth. He re-invents himself as a fictional character and tries to hide what is fictional and what is not, manipulating the information at will, unfolding its identity. It is a narrative that escapes the law by destroying subjects so that they themselves can overcome the trauma of disidentification through the abstract fetish of the narrative and its declines. I found characters outside the laws of a brotherhood that is outside the laws of the city. I found a narrative that escapes the law, as do the characters. This led me to a brief study of certain “laws” within the intersection of literature and psychoanalysis according to Freud, who escaped these laws as seen in *Fetishism and Creative Writers and Daydreaming*.

Rinconete and Cortadillo absorb one other. The absorption of both characters could be read as a metaphor of the split subject that is both and none at the same time. Just like the institution that is inside and outside of law. The outside of society and the outside of that outside have to devour each other in order to exist. The Freud that creates laws and dissolves them. The narrative that creates and destroys. The literature that eats psychoanalysis and psychoanalysis that eats literature, that keep interrupting each other. The narrative that is split. The law that regulates what exists outside of it.

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