Introduction

Of all the classics of Spanish literature, *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) is credited with founding a literary genre, the picaresque novel, from the Spanish word *pícaro*, meaning "rogue." In novels of this type, the adventures of the *pícaro* expose injustice while amusing the reader. This extensive genre includes not only the work of Spanish authors like Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599), Quevedo's *El Buscón* (1626), and Cervantes's *Rinconete and Cortadillo* (1613), *El coloquio de los perros* (1613), and even characters like Maese Pedro in *Don Quixote* (1605), but also the work of international authors like Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Mark Twains's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884). Furthermore, themes of the "anti-hero" are particularly relevant to today's reader, given the parallels that can be drawn between our *Lázaro* and, for example, Rich Terfry's *Wicked and Weird: The Amazing Tales of Buck 65* (2015). However, while *Lazarillo* is still read in its original form, I believe that this graphic novel adaptation offers a new source of information to the modern reader.[1] To begin with, it provides not only the context in which this novel appeared, but also the history of the book and its circulation in the sixteenth century and beyond, giving the reader a complete and immersive experience of the adventures and misadventures of the ultimate picaresque hero.

The *Lazarillo* graphic adaptation is based not only on the "original" four 1554 versions of the book,[2] but also on the 1573 censored *Lazarillo* prepared by the humanist and court bureaucrat Juan López de

1 Rob Davis's graphic novel adaptation of *Don Quixote* (2011) was a great source of inspiration. The enormous success of Davis's adaptation demonstrates that there is an interest in reading graphic novels of the classics today. Some of the comments that readers posted on blogs were that it was less threatening to approach these well-known but little read classics in a medium that felt more comfortable for them. Another recent and interesting adaptation to the graphic novel form is *Don Quijote of La Mancha* (2018) by Ilan Stavans. See also *El Buscón en las Indias* (2019) by Alain Ayroles and Juanjo Guarnido.

2 The *editio princeps*, or first printed copy, of *Lazarillo* is lost. Modern editions are based on the four versions from 1554 that have been preserved. The last one was found in 1992 in Barcarrota (Extremadura, Spain) and the whole quite surreal finding is documented in the graphic novel. The press release illustrated in the graphic novel is based on the actual newspaper clipping that documents the finding; see the actual picture here: http://labibliotecamunicipaldebarcarrota.blogspot.com/2015/12/hoy-hace-20-anos.html.

See also this video for a description of the books found (eleven in total) and references to the main characters who were part of this story: Francisco de Peñaranda, the doctor and the original owner of the books, who hid them behind a wall in the sixteenth century; the actual owner of the house; and the worker who discovered the books: https://www

Velasco.[3] He, along with the Inquisitor Fernando de Valdés and his successors Diego de Espinosa and Gaspar de Quiroga, plays a significant part in the storyline.[4] In this regard, our visual interpretation, carefully documented by research on the history of the book, offers a glimpse into what caused these censors, humanists, and bureaucrats to consider this seemingly harmless book so dangerous. For one thing, this not-so-serious story about a nobody managed to attract the attention of powerful readers, printers, booksellers, and writers, as well as the inquisitors and the king's entourage. You can find all these characters in the graphic novel: for example, the bookseller and printer, Juan Berrillo, who saw the potential for profit in publishing the censored version of *Lazarillo* in 1599 by riding the wave of the commercial success of *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599).[5] His 1599 edition is possibly the most-read edition of *Lazarillo* and most likely the one that authors like Francisco de Quevedo and Miguel de Cervantes read or reread with renewed interest because of the sensation that Mateo Alemán, who probably read the 1573 edition,[6] had caused with his bestseller, *Guzmán de Alfarache*.

Indeed, writers read *Lazarillo* very carefully. It's for this reason that Miguel de Cervantes is featured in this graphic novel: he is, after all, the ultimate reader. There is no one better than Cervantes to offer a literary opinion of the "new" genre, since Cervantes is known for repurposing and appropriating literary genres (Byzantine novels, romances of chivalry, the pastoral, and the picaresque novels) and reworking them into his original creations. In our graphic novel we imagine how Cervantes could have read *Lazarillo* and what his "reader response" to it might have been. For example, one of the issues that Cervantes might have had with *Lazarillo* was its use of the first-person narrative. As Peter Dunn points out, "Cervantes did not write first-person narrative except within a third-person frame. The picaresque did not gain his fervent participation … Yet, without *Lazarillo* and the others he would not have written *Rinconete y Cortadillo* at all, nor the *Coloquio*, nor *La ilustre fregona* as we now have it."[7]

Furthermore, Cervantes's interpretation of the picaresque always includes dialogue, which in theory excludes his works, such as *Rinconete y Cortadillo* and *Coloquio de los perros*, from being true examples of the picaresque. Even the "solitary" task of writing the prologue to *Don Quixote* incorporates the dialogue form by including the presence of a "friend" who advises him on how to successfully complete it. It is for this reason that Cervantes's presence in the graphic novel and the way he expresses his opinion about *Lazarillo* is *illustrated* in the same way: by sharing his thoughts through conversation with a "friend." It is only in dialogue that his creativity flourishes. For the

---

.youtube.com/watch?v=lNWilDyRln4. For more information on Francisco de Peñaranda, see *El secreto de los Peñaranda* (2004) by Fernando Serrano Mangas.

3 With the 1559 inquisitorial ban on the 1554 *Lazarillo*, López de Velasco's 1573 censored edition became the most readily available version of the book in Spain until the abolition of the Inquisition in 1834. This edition prepared by Velasco is as important to literary history as the four 1554 versions since none of them are the original or *editio princeps*. There are two copies of Velasco's 1573 edition: one in the Spanish National Library in Madrid (Biblioteca Nacional BNM, R/1034) and another in the British Library (C.183.c.15).

4 Valdés is responsible for banning *Lazarillo* and placing it on the Inquisition's *Index of Forbidden Books* in 1559. His successor, Diego de Espinosa, is probably the one who decided, fourteen years after the prohibition, to prepare a censored version. This was probably because the books continued to be read in pirate editions. Espinosa died in 1572 without seeing the project finished. It was Gaspar de Quiroga, the next inquisitor, who saw the project come to fruition.

5 Berrillo commissioned three editions of *Lazarillo* in 1599. Two of them are stand-alone editions and one is published, interestingly, with a conduct manual, *El Galateo español* by Lucas Gracián Dantisco. The number of editions in one year is a clear indication that Berrillo's instinct was right. *Lazarillo* clearly enjoyed a renewed success in 1599. See Prof. Felipe Ruan's website for more on the subject: https://www.arcalazarillo.org/1599.

6 Modern editions of the censored *Lazarillo castigado* start in 1967 (by José María Caso Gónzalez). The next one, by Gonzalo Santonja, appeared in 2000 and was deficient because of its discrepancies with Velasco's 1573 edition. There is a very promising edition about to be published by Reyes Coll-Tellechea.

7 Dunn, "Cervantes De/Re-Constructs the Picaresque," 123.

same reason, we imagine that he would have liked Lazarillo to have had a companion, someone to talk to and share his experiences with. In my adaptation, Cervantes suggests this idea to his friend: that Lazarillo's travelling companion should be none other than his half-brother, Zaide's son. He, the son of a Black man and a slave, who as a baby didn't see any physical resemblance with his father, would have had an interesting perspective on the world.

Furthermore, the powerful (the inquisitors Fernando Valdés, Diego de Espinosa, and Gaspar de Quiroga, and King Philip II's entourage) make up another set of characters integrated into the graphic novel. *Lazarillo* had collided head-on with the interests of very influential men because the book's protagonist was blaming those same agents of power within Spanish society at the time for his sins (stealing, lying) and shameful circumstances (living as a cuckold). *Lazarillo*'s author's arrogance could not be tolerated,[8] hence the necessity to silence and "castigate" not only the protagonist but the text itself with a censored version. For example, when Lazarillo explains Zaide's crimes, which he describes in detail, he also mentions the reasons he had to commit them: "… they found out that Zaide was stealing about half the oats used for the cattle. He also rescued firewood, curry combs, aprons, horse sheets, and blankets. When there was nothing left to steal, he would take the shoes off the horses' feet. All this he would give to my mother to sell for her to raise my little brother."

Immediately after this, Lázaro compares Zaide's theft with that of the privileged members of society, thus absolving his stepfather of any sin: "Let us not marvel that a priest or a friar robs his flock to support his vices or those of his peers when love leads a poor slave to act this way." This part of the text is removed by López de Velasco. By censoring it, Zaide is not compared to other "good thieves," who although more privileged than he is, are equally moved by love and necessity and, therefore, he is left alone in his punishment. Moreover, Lázaro goes further in his defense of Zaide, since "priest" and "friars" are not only committing a crime but a sin, since they are breaking the sacred vow of celibacy. The reader of this graphic novel can review all the instances in which *Lazarillo* is censored and determine how most of them are done for the same reason: to protect the powerful.

Furthermore, the graphic novel opens the door to discussion in the teaching of *Lazarillo* by suggesting possibilities rooted in critical research. To name a few, the opening page presents the author in shadow: Who was he? (Was he Diego de Mendoza, as Mercedes Agulló y Cobo suggests, or was he Alfonso de Valdés, as others propose?) The year 1553 also appears by the feet of the anonymous author, and some might think it's a mistake … wasn't *Lazarillo* written in 1554? This is another prompt for discussion, a suggestion making reference to the lost *editio princeps*, possibly from 1553 but maybe earlier. What about the recipient of Lázaro's story, the slippery "Your Excellency"? Who wanted to know about Lazarillo's sexual arrangements and why? Again, in this case we open the door to discussion by suggesting current theories such as the research carried out by Rosa Navarro Durán, who in her 2016 edition of *Lazarillo* posits the argument that "Your Excellency" was a woman, probably a powerful woman who might have gone to confession with the archbishop and who was worried that her "secrets" might be in peril if her confessor were to share them while in bed with someone.[9] In the graphic novel there are also references to the early English translations: the lost 1576 edition and the 1586 edition translated by David Rowlands, who used as his references

8 Much has been written on *Lazarillo*'s authorship (Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, Alfonso de Valdés, Luis Vives, and Fray Juan de Ortega are some of the candidates). A simple search will offer many articles and books on the subject. I will not enter into this controversy; that's why "my author" does not show his face. Interested readers must read the work on the subject by Mercedes Agulló y Cobo and Rosa Navarro Durán.

9 Navarro Durán in Valdés, *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*, 30–2.

the 1560 French translation and the 1554 Spanish Antwerp edition. As Beatriz Rodríguez Rodríguez points out, the common practice for Elizabethan translators was to anglicize the target text by providing the translator's own viewpoint. Protestant propaganda was also present in English translations and it was common to use French versions as intermediary texts with the Spanish originals. For our graphic novel edition, we have found the modern translation by Ilan Stavans (2016) as well as the revised translation by Michael Alpert for Penguin Books (2003) to be very useful. They both offer very approachable and smooth translations without losing the text's Spanish flavour. Only translations like these guarantee that this "sparkling, subversive, hand grenade of a book finds its way into the hands of many college undergraduates."[10] We hope this graphic novel follows in these footsteps and serves as a contemporary visual companion to this truly explosive text.

In addition, our edition seeks to bring the modern reader into the context of the novel by taking into account current interpretations: "A renewed effort to study the work [*Lazarillo*] must rigorously observe the historical context, and thus fix our attention to at least four key but distinct periods: (1) *Lazarillo*'s composition, prior to 1554; (2) *Lazarillo*'s circulation as a printed text 1554–73; (3) *Lazarillo*'s prohibition 1559–73; and (4) *Lazarillo*'s republication as a censored text from 1573 on alone or in combination with other works."[11]

This graphic novel, the first of its kind to date, not only historically contextualizes the 1554 publication, the 1559 prohibition by the Inquisition, and the production of the 1573 censored edition, but also contributes to current studies since, apart from references in modern editions of *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) and a few studies of varying depth and scope, it is not until recent years that the censored version, *Lazarillo castigado* (1573), has received some critical attention. This critical attention has come mostly from Augustín Redondo, in "Censura, literatura y transgresión en la época de Felipe II: El *Lazarillo castigado* de 1573;" Reyes Coll-Tellechea, in "The Spanish Inquisition and the Battle for *Lazarillo*: 1554, 1555, 1573" included in *The* Lazarillo *Phenomenon*; and Felipe Ruan in "Historia editorial, censura y difusión del *Lazarillo de Tormes* en los albores del siglo XVII."[12] Our edition, *Lazarillo: A Graphic Novel*, therefore fills a significant lacuna in the editorial and reception history of *Lazarillo de Tormes* by offering a visual context of a story that is yet to be told. This story shows us, as Coll-Tellechea points out, that "Literary texts are social artifacts embedded in a web of dynamic relations, which are subjected to the vagaries of history."[13] The need for a critical edition and an understanding of the significance of *Lazarillo castigado* is most evident when one considers that Juan López de Velasco's expurgated edition was, as we mentioned earlier, the only one readily available to readers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Far from being a textual "aberration" that has largely been ignored by traditional scholarship, Juan López de Velasco's *Lazarillo castigado* is in fact a significant part of the multifaceted textual and cultural history of *Lazarillo de Tormes* and of that work's relationship to other contemporary literary texts.

In the absence of extant specific inquisitorial instructions on the censoring of *Lazarillo*, the importance of the 1573 expurgation is reconstructed in the graphic novel through recent investigations about the role played by the censor Juan López de Velasco, his place in the interlocking church and state bureaucracies, and in the patronage networks at the royal court in Madrid.[14] The new research on Velasco raises noteworthy issues on the relationship between church and state bureaucracies, and most

10 https://www.stevedonoghue.com/review-archives/book-review-the-norton-critical-lazarillo-de-tormes.

11 Coll-Tellechea and McDaniel, eds., *The* Lazarillo *Phenomenon*, 14

12 Felipe Ruan has developed a website devoted to sharing research on the study and teaching of *Lazarillo*: https://www.arcalazarillo.org/.

13 Coll-Tellechea and McDaniel, eds., *The* Lazarillo *Phenomenon*, 75.

14 Ruan, "Literary History," 283.

importantly, their intervention in the production, circulation, and reception of cultural works. In this respect, our depiction of Juan López de Velasco also relies on studies such as Mercedes Agulló y Cobo's *A vueltas con el autor del* Lazarillo and Reyes Coll-Tellechea's *Lazarillo Castigado: Historia de un olvido (1559–1573–1844)*. We posit that the censor Juan López de Velasco was keenly aware of his role as cultural actor and mediator, was cognizant of political forces and of the literary market, and ultimately saw his role as that of a literary "editor."[15] Our graphic novel reconstructs his editorial input in an interactive way so that the reader is able to witness the reasons behind his decisions, his networks and alliances, and his entrepreneurial approach to the export of his version to the American market.[16]

Furthermore, the only illustrated editions of *Lazarillo* available are addressed to young readers, and apart from comics (*El Lazarillo de Tormes* by Chiqui de la Fuente, 1986) and other illustrated editions of varying degrees of merit (*Lazarillo de Tormes* by Enrique Lorenzo, 2008; *El Lazarillo de Tormes contado a los niños* by Rosa Navarro Durán and Francesc Rovira, 2015; *El Lazarillo de Tormes para niños* by Nuria Ochoa and Cristina Picazo, 2007), to my knowledge, there is no graphic novel to date addressed to an adult audience that takes into account recent scholarship on the history of the text. I believe that this *Lazarillo*'s graphic adaptation will offer the modern reader a more complete experience of the adventures and misadventures of the ultimate picaresque anti-hero and the history of a book that set a precedent in literary history. Moreover, with this edition of *Lazarillo* in graphic novel format, the reader will learn about the historical background of this publishing endeavour, thus laying the groundwork to critically understand the original in an interactive and entertaining way. Truly a *Lazarillo* for the twenty-first century.

15 Maybe more than an editor, he thought of himself as an "angel" doing God's work. In the graphic novel you can find small illustrations of angels writing, probably censoring books (mostly beside the inquisitors and the censor). These angels were inserted as illustrations in the Inquisition's *Index of Forbidden Books* and I thought to include them in the graphic novel as a reference and reminder of how the inquisitors wanted to represent themselves.

16 The letter from López de Velasco requesting the privilege to export his censored edition to America is my translation from the original. The original can be found in the General Archive of the Indies in Seville (In Libros de Peticiones [1572–94] de Juan de Ledesma, escribano de Cámara de Gobernación del Consejo de Indias: Indiferente 1084, L.1, f. 476v.)