

Published in *Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, 26  
(1979): 203-19.

Author's Web site:

<http://bigfoot.com/~daniel.eisenberg>

Author's email: [daniel.eisenberg@bigfoot.com](mailto:daniel.eisenberg@bigfoot.com)

## Does the Picaresque Novel Exist?\*

Daniel Eisenberg

The concept of the picaresque novel and the definition of this "genre" is a problem concerning which there exists a considerable bibliography;<sup>1</sup> it is also the

---

\* [p. 211] A paper read at the Twenty-Ninth Annual Kentucky Foreign Language Conference, April 24, 1976. I would like to express my appreciation to Donald McGrady for his comments on an earlier version of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> Criticism prior to 1966 is competently reviewed by Joseph Ricipito in his dissertation, "Toward a Definition of the Picaresque. A Study of the Evolution of the Genre together with a Critical and Annotated Bibliography of *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes, Vida de Guzmán de Alfarache*, and *Vida del Buscón*," Diss. UCLA, 1966 (abstract in *DA*, 27 [1967], 2542A-43A; this dissertation will be published in a revised and updated version by Castalia. Meanwhile, the most important of the very substantial bibliography since that date, which has reopened the question of the definition of the picaresque, is W. M. Frohock, "The Idea of the Picaresque," *YCGL*, 16 (1967), 43-52, and also his "The Failing Center: Recent Fiction and the Picaresque Tradition," *Novel*, 3 (1969), 62-69, and "Picaresque and Modern Literature: A Conversation with W. M. Frohock," *Genre*, 3 (1970), 187-97, Stuart Miller, *The Picaresque Novel* (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve, 1967; originally entitled, as Miller's dissertation at Yale, "A Genre Definition of the Picaresque"), on which see Harry Sieber's comments in "Some Recent Books on the Picaresque," *MLN*, 84 (1969), 318-30, and the review by Hugh A. Harter, *Novel*, 3 (1969), 85-86, Edmond Cros, "De Lazarillo a Guzmán: Ensayo de definición del pícaro," in *Mateo Alemán: Introducción a su vida y a su obra* (Salamanca: Anaya, 1971), pp. 171-83, A. A. Parker, *Literature and the Delinquent* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967), and the important introduction of Parker to the Spanish translation of the book, *Los pícaros en la literatura* (Madrid: Gredos, 1971), Ulrich Wicks, "The Nature of Picaresque Narrative: A Modal Approach," *PMLA*, 89 (1974), 240-49, and earlier his "Picaro, Picaresque: The Picaresque in Literary Scholarship," *Genre*, 5 (1972), 153-92, and his "Picaresque Bibliography" on pp. 193-216 of the same number; see also the items cited in the following notes. I would like to thank Donald McGrady for sending me a copy of his unpublished paper, "The Spanish Picaresque Novel from *Lazarillo* to Quevedo's *El Buscón*," read before a MLA Seminar on "A Reevaluation of the Structure of the Picaresque," December 29, 1975, and Ulrich Wicks for a copy of his "The Romance of the Picaresque," also read at the Twenty-Ninth Annual Kentucky Foreign Language Conference.

subject of a bitter personal debate.<sup>2</sup> According to Fernando Lázaro Carreter, the picaresque novel is “escurridiza” and something which “se resiste enérgicamente a ser definida.”<sup>3</sup> Claudio Guillén entitled a paper “Toward a Definition of the Picaresque,”<sup>4</sup> implying that a definition is a goal which we can perhaps reach at some time in the future; a recent dissertation bears the ambitious title “Hacia una evaluación exacta de lo que se entiende por literatura picaresca.”<sup>5</sup> Samuel Gili Gaya tells us even that the picaresque novel can not be “lógicamente definida.”<sup>6</sup> I would like to examine in this paper just what sort of genre it is that is impossible to define, and will suggest that if the picaresque novel can not be defined, the term has no validity and should not be further used.

Before proceeding I should state my views on the subject of genres in general, since the concept of genre is also a particularly confusing one.<sup>7</sup> Some genres, I

---

A useful summary of attempts to define the picaresque, although unfortunately not employing Ricapito’s dissertation, may be found in Chapter I, “Hacia un concepto de la novela picaresca,” of the dissertation of Javier Sánchez-Díez, “La novela picaresca de protagonista femenina en España durante el Siglo XVII,” Diss. North Carolina, 1972; abstract in *DAI*, 34 (1973), 286A.

<sup>2</sup> Fernando Lázaro Carreter, “Glosas críticas a *Los pícaros en la literatura* de Alexander A. Parker,” *HR*, 41 (1973), 469–97; Parker, “Sobre las *glosas críticas* de Fernando Lázaro Carreter,” *HR*, 42 (1974), 235–39; Lázaro Carreter, “Contrarréplica,” *HR*, 42 (1974), 239–41.

<sup>3</sup> “Para una revisión del concepto ‘novela picaresca,’” p. 27 of the original publication, which I use, in the *Actas del Tercer Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1970). This paper was reprinted in Lazarillo de [p.212] Tormes *en la picaresca* (Esplugues de Llobregat: Ariel, 1972), and is reviewed in laudatory fashion by Gonzalo Sobejano, “‘El Coloquio de los perros’ en la picaresca y otros apuntes,” *HR*, 43 (1975), 33–35, who calls it “indispensable” and “la solución.”

<sup>4</sup> First published in the *Proceedings of the IIIrd Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association* (The Hague, 1962), pp. 252–66; reprinted in Guillén’s *Literature as System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 71–106. The book of Guillén is reviewed, together with those of Miller and Parker by Maximilian E. Novak, “Liberty, Libertinism and Randomness: Form and Content in Picaresque Fiction,” *Studies in the Novel*, 4 (1972), 75–85, reprinted with more documentation in *Racism in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Harold E. Pagliaro (Cleveland and London: Case Western Reserve, 1973), 35–48. Guillén’s book is now perceptively treated by Ciriaco Morón-Arroyo, “System, Influence and Perspective: Three Words in Search of a Definition,” *Diacritics*, 3, No. 1 (Spring, 1973), 9–18.

<sup>5</sup> This dissertation is by Antonio Burón, Minnesota, 1971, abstracted in *DAI*, 32 (1972), 6415A–16A.

<sup>6</sup> *Diccionario de literatura*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1972), p. 709. For other writing of Gili Gaya on the picaresque, see the work cited below in n. [37](#).

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of modern discussions of genre, including a chapter on “The Genres of Genre Criticism,” see Paul Hernadi, *Beyond Genre: New Directions in Literary Criticism*

believe, are real in at least some sense, and even those critics opposed to them speak of them;<sup>8</sup> therefore, I am not opposed to genres in general, provided that the classifications they represent are valid and meaningful ones, and not merely “simples étiquettes commodes.”<sup>9</sup> “L’esprit humain a besoin d’ordre,” stated Pierre Kohler;<sup>10</sup> the desire to classify things is at the very least a basic theme of our Western civilization, going back to those creators of literary genres, the Greeks,<sup>11</sup> and may be universal. We find it useful to speak of “dogs,” though no two dogs are identical, and of cars and houses, which are all different—without classifications, language as we know it, much less the study of literature, would be impossible.<sup>12</sup> But it is easy to create vague or deliberately misleading classifications, with people or things just as much as with literary works.<sup>13</sup> The validity of terms referring to nationalities

---

(Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972), who includes a bibliography. A briefer but valuable discussion of genre is found in René Wellek and Austin Warren’s *Theory of Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956), pp. 226–37, and Margaret Newel’s *Die dramatischen Gattungen in den Poetiken des Siglo de Oro* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1959; Spanish translation, London Tamesis, 1974) is useful for background. Quite outdated is Wolfgang Kayser’s *Interpretación y análisis de la obra literaria*, trans. María D. Mouton and V. García Yebra, “cuarta edición [no] revisada” (Madrid: Gredos, 1961); Wolfram Krömer, in his learned “Gattung und Wort *novela* im spanischen 17. Jahrhundert,” *RF*, 81 (1969), 381–434, is concerned with the characteristics and evolution of the *novela* in the Italian sense of the word, particularly with reference to Cervantes’s *Novelas ejemplares*.

<sup>8</sup> Elias Schwartz, “The Problem of Literary Genres,” *Criticism*, 13 (1971), 113–30.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Van Tieghem, “La Question des genres littéraires,” *Helicon*, 1 (1938), 99. In the short-lived *Helicon*, now reprinted by Brill, were published the acts of the III<sup>e</sup> Congrès International d’Histoire Littéraire (Lyon, 1939), which was devoted exclusively to a study of literary genres; the papers are stimulating even when not directly relevant to the present problem.

<sup>10</sup> “Contribution à une philosophie des genres,” *Helicon*, 1 (1938), 234.

<sup>11</sup> Van Tieghem, p. 96; see also M. Gustave Cohen, “L’Origine médiévale des genres littéraires modernes,” *Helicon*, 2 (n.d., but 1940), 129–33, and, particularly germane to our study, Rosalie L. Colie, *The Resources of Kind. Genre-Theory in the Renaissance*, ed. Barbara K. Lewalski (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1973).

<sup>12</sup> This point was previously made by Alan Rodway, “Generic Criticism: The Approach through Type, Mode and Kind,” in *Contemporary Criticism* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1971), p. 89. [p. 213]

<sup>13</sup> As an example of questionable literary classifications, responding perhaps to some need to create groupings, we have only to cite the controversial Spanish literary generations, that of 1898, whose members, Ricardo Gullón has said orally, had nothing more in common than their agreement that Benavente should not have received the Nobel prize, and that of 1936; surely another generation will soon be found between 1939 and the present. See Ricardo Gullón, *La invención del 98 y otros ensayos* (Madrid: Gredos, 1968), and *Spanish Writers of 1936*, ed. Jaime Ferrán and Daniel P. Testa (London: Tamesis, 1973). On the general problem see René Wellek, “Periods and Movements in Literary History,” *English Institute*

(“Americans,” “Spaniards”), the old debate about national character,<sup>14</sup> has never been definitely settled. Whether the inhabitants of a smaller political or geographical division have anything in common besides the accident of their location—that is, whether they can be validly and usefully classified—is even more open to question.

It is necessary to state also that, like Lázaro Carreter, I am limiting my comments to those works originally written in Spanish. As both [p. 204] A. A. Parker and W. M. Frohock pointed out independently in 1967,<sup>15</sup> the term “picaresque” is used by non-Hispanists in a very different way, so loosely that, according to Frohock, for every new novel there is at least one critic waiting to find something picaresque in it;<sup>16</sup> the recent novels called picaresque are almost without number.<sup>17</sup> An attempt to study simultaneously the works of the Spanish Golden Age customarily called picaresque and the more recent novels sometimes labeled with this term is to invite further confusion.<sup>18</sup> That these even more diverse modern works which have in common only a journey in which the protagonist comes into contact with low society,<sup>19</sup> could themselves constitute a genre seems to me just as indefensible a

---

*Annual, 1940* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 73–93, and Guillén, “Second Thoughts on Literary Periods,” in *Literature as System*, pp. 420–69.

<sup>14</sup> Itself relevant to literary studies; see Peter Brooks, “Romania and the Widening Gyre,” *PMLA*, 87 (1972), 7–11. A similar point with regard to the study of “Spanish” literature, at least in the medieval period, was made by Keith Whinnom, *Spanish Literary Historiography: Three Forms of Distortion* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1967), Nicholas Round’s “The Myth of National Character and the Character of National Myth,” *EMU* [Glasgow], No. 4 (1974), 7–22, which deals specifically with Spain, deserves to be reprinted in a more accessible form.

<sup>15</sup> Parker, *Literature and the Delinquent*, pp. vi, 2–4; Frohock, “Idea,” *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> “Failing Center,” p. 64. Another example of how loosely the term is used, by a critic who will not accept even Frohock’s mild restrictions, is found in the article of Donald B. Sands, “Reynard the Fox as *Pícaro* and *Reinarts Historie* as Picaresque,” *Journal of Narrative Technique*, 1 (1971), 137–45. The term is now being applied to films as well; see Robert L. Fiore, “The Picaresque Tradition in *Midnight Cowboy*,” *Literature and Film Quarterly*, 3 (1975), 270–76.

<sup>17</sup> Miller, p. 133. Those familiar with Miller’s book and the critical reaction to it will not be surprised to learn that he has left academia entirely to publish presumptuous *Hot Springs; The True Adventures of the First New York Jewish Literary Intellectual in the Human Potential Movement* (New York: Viking, 1971).

<sup>18</sup> Parker attempted in his book to do this (see *HR*, 42 [1974], 235–56), but his definition has not been widely accepted. The scholar who has most recently attacked this problem is Wicks, who, in his *PMLA* article cited in n. 1, tries to find a definition of “picaresque” which will fit all the ways it has been used. Although I respect Wicks, who, like Saint Thomas, conscientiously labors to harmonize the old and the new, I question why the definition of the picaresque should be so stretched, and wonder if this is not reducing the concept to its lowest common denominator.

<sup>19</sup> Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, cited by Parker, *Literature and the Delinquent*, p. 3.

position, but this is not our problem today, and my position regarding those who feel the *need*<sup>20</sup> of a term to refer to these modern “picaresque” works is *allá ellos*. Certainly the validity of the concept of the picaresque novel in Spanish literature must be determined first.

The problem has its origin in the undisputed fact that although some similarities between the *Lazarillo* and the *Guzmán de Alfarache* were noted;<sup>21</sup> neither the term nor the concept “novela picaresca” existed in the Spanish Golden Age. Covarrubias tells us what *libros de caballerías* and *romances* are; he disserts at some length on *comedia* and *tragedia*, but he says not a word about the picaresque novel. Nor do contemporary literary theorists have anything to say about it, since the attention they gave to the novel was directed toward the Byzantine novel and the prose epic;<sup>22</sup> the term “picaresque novel,” like the word “genre” itself, was in fact not used before the last half of the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Miller, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Claudio Guillén has pointed out that the printer Luis Sánchez reprinted the *Lazarillo* almost simultaneously with his edition of Part I of the *Guzmán*, certainly implying that he saw a relationship between the two works (“Luis Sánchez, Ginés de Pasamonte y los inventores del género picaresco,” *Homenaje a Rodríguez-Moñino* [Madrid: Castalia, 1966], I, 221–31, translated and revised as “Genre and Counter-genre: The Discovery of the Picaresque,” in *Literature as System*, pp. 135–58). I can not accept, however, Guillén’s conclusion that the obscure Sánchez “invented” the picaresque genre. Does his association of the two works count for more than Alemán’s deliberate imitation of some aspects of the *Lazarillo*? And what are we to make of the fact that Sánchez in 1603 reprinted the *Lazarillo* together with Gracián [p. 214] Dantisco’s *Galateo español* rather than the *Guzmán* (in which association he was followed by Cristóbal Lasso of Medina del Campo and the Viuda de Alonso Martín of Madrid)? There is nothing in Ginés de Pasamonte’s ambiguous comment to substantiate the hypothesis that by “género,” which did not mean “genre” in the modern sense, he envisioned the picaresque novel, nor even that by mentioning the *Lazarillo* he was referring to a fictional autobiography (*Literature as System*, p. 155) (Were Golden Age readers aware that the *Lazarillo* was fictional?) Ginés seems to imply that he has in mind a numerous body of works (“todos cuantos de aquel género”), not the lone *Lazarillo*, with the anonymous second part of 1555, unknown in Spain, and the *Guzmán*. And the life of Gerónimo de Pasamonte, apparently the real-life model for Cervantes’ “Vida de Ginés de Pasamonte,” has no obvious relationship with either (see Martín de Riquer, “El *Quijote* y los libros,” *PSA*, 54 [1969], 5–24, and Olga Kattan, “Algunos paralelos entre Gerónimo de Pasamonte y Ginesillo en el *Quijote*,” *CHa*, No. 244 [1970], 190–206).

<sup>22</sup> See L. G. Salinger, *Don Quijote as a Prose Epic*, *FMLS*, 2 (1966), 41–68. Alban Forcione, *Cervantes, Aristotle, and the Persiles* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), reviewed by the present author in *NRFH*, 23 (1974, publ. 1975), 419–20, Sanford Shepard, *El Pinciano y las teorías literarias del Siglo de Oro*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Madrid: Gredos, 1970), and Tilbert Stegmann, *Cervantes’ Musterroman Persiles* (Hamburg: Lüdke, 1971), reviewed by Forcione in *MLN*, 88 (1973), 434–44.

<sup>23</sup> Francisco Rico, in *La novela picaresca y el punto de vista* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1973), p. 100, n. 17, says, without explanation, that the term was “elaborada en el siglo XVIII.” It could scarcely antedate the use of the word *novela* in the modern sense; even Ticknor in his *History of Spanish Literature*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1891), III, \*95, has to

Yet genres existed before the word “genre”; they were just called by different names. (López Pinciano called them “diferencias” or “especies.”). Very clear-cut and specific genres are a familiar part of Renaissance literary theory; as Rosalie Colie has pointed out, the Renaissance writers, following classical models, took their genres seriously. Can we say that the picaresque novel existed unrecognized in this genre-conscious period, before the term, before even the idea, was created?

Such genres have been called genres *a posteriori*,<sup>24</sup> genres whose definitions can not be obtained from the statements of the authors of the works, or their contemporaries. Although *a posteriori* genres, now very much in vogue, are less useful to the literary critic or historian than genres which existed in the minds of the authors of the component works of the genre, it is not my intention to question the validity of all of them; even Aristotle, whose statements were later taken as prescriptive, was writing *a posteriori*.<sup>25</sup> I would, however, point out that in the case of genres such as these there must be a clearly identifiable and well-defined body of works which belong to the genre for a usable definition to be obtained, and the more works used in drawing the definition, the more validity it will have.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the similarities between the works must be more [p. 205] than coincidental: there must be some relationship between them, as it would otherwise be possible to create many hypothetical non-genres composed of unrelated works with some accidental similarities.<sup>27</sup>

Critics discussing the nature of the picaresque do start with the assumption that there exists a body of picaresque works. A. A. Parker tells us that beginning in 1605 there were “quite a large number” of picaresque novels (*Literature and the Delinquent*, p. 6). Unfortunately he neglects to tell us what they were, and in his book only mentions a few: *Guzmán de Alfarache*, *La picara Justina*, *La hija de Celestina*, *Marcos de Obregón*, *Alonso, mozo de muchos amos*, *El buscón*, and *Estebanillo González*.<sup>28</sup> Lázaro Carreter, on the other hand, complains of the poverty of the genre, which “no constituyó una moda extensa” and has only “dos docenas escasas de títulos posibles” (“Para una revisión”, p. 42). If there are twenty-four “possible” titles, how many “certain” titles are there? Which works can we all agree to be picaresque novels, from them to draw our definition?

---

struggle for a term (“tales in the *gusto picaresco*”).

<sup>24</sup> Guillén, *Literature*, p. 152.

<sup>25</sup> I believe this to be generally known; nevertheless, see *Classical Literary Criticism*, ed. T. S. Dorsch (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), p. 18.

<sup>26</sup> See on this point the important article of Charles E. Whitmore, “The Validity of Literary Definitions,” *PMLA*, 39 (1924), 722–36, especially pp. 729–30.

<sup>27</sup> Whitmore, p. 730; Hernadi, pp. 2–4.

<sup>28</sup> On p. 111 Parker mentions in passing “three Spanish works from the picaresque canon” published in France, *La desordenada codicia de los bienes ajenos*, Hernando de Luna’s second part of *Lazarillo*, and the *Vida de don Gregorio Guadaña*, without, however, offering us any further discussion or comment on these members of the “picaresque canon.”

The logical starting place is in a search for picaresque novels in the influential collection of Valbuena Prat, which bears the unequivocal title of *La novela picaresca española*.<sup>29</sup> It is surely this set which Lázaro Carreter had in mind with his figure of two dozen possible works,<sup>30</sup> as it in fact contains twenty-three.<sup>31</sup> Of these, one, the life of Torres Villarroel, can surely be excluded, inasmuch as it is not a novel at all but the true autobiography of a professor of the University of Salamanca.<sup>32</sup> Although

---

<sup>29</sup> I use the seventh edition, in two volumes (Madrid: Aguilar, 1974). As with other volumes in the same series (see *HR*, 43 [1975], 428), the influence of this publication has not always been the best. It has served to limit the attention of writers on the picaresque whose novels included (for example, Joseph L. Laurenti, in his *Bibliografía de la literatura [not novela] picaresca, desde sus orígenes hasta el presente* [Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow, 1973], without any explanation simply limits himself to precisely those works included in Valbuena Prat's collection), and it has discouraged examination of other works not included, such as the *Lazarillo de Manzanares*, now edited by Giuseppe Sansone, Clásicos Castellanos 186–187 (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1974), the *Guitón Honofre*, published for the first time by Hazel Genéreux Carrasco ([Chapel Hill]: Estudios de Hispanófila, 1973), and the verse [p. 215] *Vida del pícaro* and *Testamento del pícaro pobre*, which might well be published and studied together with the other works called picaresque. (Both Alberto del Monte, in his *Itinerario de la novela picaresca española*, trans. Enrique Sordo [Barcelona: Lumen, 1971], and Helmut Petriconi, "Zur Chronologie und Verbreitung des spanischen Schelmenromans," *Volkstrum und Kultur der Romanen*, 1 [1928], 324–42, reprinted in *Pikarische Welt*, ed. Helmut Heidenreich [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969], pp. 61–78, include references to many lesser-known works related in content with the "picaresque.")

<sup>30</sup> In the introduction to the Spanish translation of his book, p. 18, Parker states that he too had understood that the "género picaresco" would include all the works collected by Valbuena Prat, except *Periquillo el de las gallineras*, the life of Torres Villarroel, "y, en parte, el *Lazarillo*."

<sup>31</sup> *Lazarillo*, the second part of Luna, four *Novelas ejemplares*, *Guzmán de Alfarache* and the continuation of Mateo Luján, *La picara Justina*, *La hija de Celestina*, *Marcos de Obregón*, the *Buscón*, *La desordenada codicia de los bienes ajenos*, the *Donado hablador* of Alcalá Yáñez, three novels of Castillo Solórzano, *El castigo de la miseria* of María de Zayas, *El diablo cojuelo*, the *Vida de don Gregorio Guadaña*, *Estebanillo González*, *Periquillo el de las gallineras*, and the life of Torres Villarroel.

<sup>32</sup> The term "autobiography" is nearly as recent as "picaresque novel," for it is not documented before 1796 in German and 1809 in English, the latter instance by the English Hispanist Robert Southey (Georg Misch, *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951], I, 5). The autobiography is thus another *a posteriori* genre, but one which is, to me, a more valid one. However much the artistic and creative elements in autobiography are emphasized by critics, however vague the line between truth and fiction, all autobiographies share an obvious common ground: the desire of the author to communicate something about himself to the reader.

Barrett John Mandel, in an essay not irrelevant to a discussion of genres, has pointed out how the autobiography has often been scorned (*Literature and the English Department* [Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1970], p. 9). Early studies are few, those dealing with Spanish works even fewer. (The latest [Frankfurt: G. Schulte-Bulmke, 1962–76] edition of the German original of Misch's *Geschichte der Autobiographie*

Torres had read Quevedo and to a degree attempted to imitate him in his autobiography, he was not even born until long after the other works in the collection were written.<sup>33</sup> No one any longer defends its status as a picaresque novel; most writers on the topic, such as del Monte, scarcely mention it.<sup>34</sup>

Looking at Valbuena Prat's introductory material, we find that he himself questions his own selection of works. *El diablo cojuelo*, he tells us, "pertenece... a un género satíricosocial, más bien que picaresco" (II, 693); it, then, can not help us define the picaresque novel, and one wonders for what reasons it was included. Francisco Santos' *Periquillo el de las gallineras* has, according to Valbuena Prat, a curious quality: we find in it "un ambiente y técnica de picaresca sin pícaros" (II, 959), and it is "más una sombra de picaresca que una obra tal" (II, 961). Professor Parker concurs in excluding *Periquillo* from the list of picaresque works; it "is not, properly speaking, a picaresque novel because it has a saintly hero" (*Literature and the Delinquent*, p. 167).

Vicente Espinel's *Marcos de Obregón*, Valbuena Prat further tells us, is a "novela más de aventuras que picaresca" (I, 72), and in his *Historia de la literatura española* he says it is "más libro de memorias que novela propiamente picaresca."<sup>35</sup> Jerónimo de Alcalá Yáñez's *Alonso, mozo de muchos amos* is compared by Valbuena Prat with literature "a lo divino," [p. 206] and he suggests that the author might have been imitating Fray Luis de León's *De los nombres de Cristo* (I, 80–81); *Historia*, III, 170), whose relation to the picaresque is hard to see.

Other critics and literary historians support Valbuena's own doubts about whether works in his *Novela picaresca española* are properly called picaresque novels. Roy Jones, for example, tells us that *Alonso, mozo de muchos amos* "is not a picaresque novel, though often called one. Alonso is not a rogue, simply a harmless

---

publishes for the first time a posthumous chapter on the relationship between autobiography and the Spanish picaresque.) While the 70's have seen the publication of at least five major books on autobiography in English, in Galbán's *La Vida de Torres Villarroel: Literatura antipicaresca, autobiografía burguesa* (Chapel Hill: Estudios de Hispanófila, 1975) and Russell Sebold's *Novela y autobiografía en la Vida de Torres Villarroel* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1975), in both of which the label of "picaresque novel" for Torres' *Vida* is firmly rejected, and a study of Randolph D. Pope, *La autobiografía española hasta Torres Villarroel* (Bern and Frankfurt: Lang, 1974), in which the life of Jerónimo de Pasamonte (see note 21) is discussed. I have not been able to see Beverly Sue Jacobs, "Life and Literature in Spain. Representative Autobiographic Narratives from the Middle Ages to 1633," Diss. NYU 1975, of which an abstract is published in *DAI*, 36 (1975), 2243A–44A.

<sup>33</sup> "It is far too remote to form a part of the literary movement initiated by *Guzmán de Alfarache*" (*Literature and the Delinquent*, p. 167). "Se la relaciona con la vieja y gloriosa tradición de nuestra picaresca, lo cual sólo es exacto por lo que se [p.216] refiere a algunas partes" (Juan Antonio Tamayo, in the *Diccionario de literatura*).

<sup>34</sup> "No creemos que se pueda hablar de picaresca a propósito de la autobiografía de Diego Torres Villarroel" (del Monte, pp. 159–60).

<sup>35</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Barcelona: Gili, 1968), II, 151.

and garrulous man who has seen a good deal of life.”<sup>36</sup> *Marcos de Obregón*, though commonly called a picaresque novel... is the story of a respectable and prudent man” (p. 139). Samuel Gili Gaya, besides emphasizing the autobiographical and de-emphasizing the picaresque nature of *Marcos de Obregón*,<sup>37</sup> states of another work in Valbuena’s collection, Carlos García’s *La desordenada codicia de los bienes ajenos*—a strange title indeed for a novel—that “más que novela propiamente dicha, es una exposición acerca de la antigüedad y características del oficio de ladrón” (p. xii). Alberto del Monte agrees that “tampoco pertenece al género picaresco... *Marcos de Obregón*” (p. 108), and that “es arbitraria la inclusión en el género picaresco de *El diablo cojuelo*” (p. 149), but he questions yet another of the works in Valbuena Prat’s volume, the *Vida de don Gregorio Guadaña*, in which we find only “huellas de la tradición picaresca” (p. 150), and in which the protagonist “no tiene un talento picaresco” (p. 151).

We could continue in this fashion, pointing out how one or another scholar questions the classification as “picaresque” of one or another of these twenty-three possible titles collected by Valbuena Prat. It is obvious, however, that in contrast with other genres, such as the epic, we have only a very limited number of works, agreed to be picaresque, from which to draw our inductive definition. These remaining works, moreover, have as many differences as similarities, for some, like the *Lazarillo*, are short, and others are extremely long, some, like the *Guzmán de Alfarache*, are serious, whereas others are frivolous, some are literally sophisticated and still others are ingenuous. Under such circumstances, the choice of works from which to draw the definition of the picaresque becomes even more critical, for the inclusion or exclusion of a single work—as Parker has pointed out in the case of the *Lazarillo*—produces a quite different definition. One scholar has even stated that the definition of the picaresque depends on our interpretation of a single work (the *Buscón*),<sup>38</sup> but such a definition would surely have little validity for the other works making up the picaresque “genre.”

This leads us to our first conclusion: since there is no body of similar works agreed to be picaresque novels, it is impossible to define this genre inductively; a large body of works would produce a very vague definition and a more specific one could only be supported by an extremely limited number of works. [p. 207]

There is, in fact, only *one* work which all agree to be picaresque novel, Part I of the *Guzmán de Alfarache*, for Francisco Rico would exclude Part II of the *Guzmán*,<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> *A Literary History of Spain. The Golden Age: Prose and Poetry* (London: Benn, and New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971), p. 139.

<sup>37</sup> “Apogeo y desintegración de la novela picaresca,” in *Historia general de las literaturas hispánicas*, III, rev. ed (Barcelona: Vergara, 1968), p. xi. (This section is printed between pages 104 and 105.)

<sup>38</sup> “It turns out that how one understands the meaning of picaresque depends on how one reads the ending of the *Buscón*,” affirms W. M. Frohock, “The *Buscón* and Current Criticism,” in *Homenaje a William L. Fichter* (Madrid: Castalia, 1971), p. 223.

<sup>39</sup> “Por sólo la segunda etapa de su carrera [Part II of the *Guzmán*] pienso que nadie lo hubiera llamado pícaro” (*La novela picaresca*, p. 105).

Parker,<sup>40</sup> and others before him,<sup>41</sup> the *Lazarillo*, and Edmond Cros would study only the *Guzmán*, excluding all others.<sup>42</sup> This is for a reason which is logical, consistent, and dramatically simple: the work contains a *pícaro*. Mateo Alemán used the word in the work, and the *Guzmán* was to contemporaries the *Libro del pícaro*.<sup>43</sup> Since the book is a novel, what better reason could there be for calling it a picaresque novel?

Yet no critic is willing to accept the consequences of defining the picaresque novel on the basis of the term *pícaro*, and most ignore the meaning the word had in Golden Age Spain,<sup>44</sup> even to the extreme of saying that *pícaros* are unnecessary to a picaresque novel.<sup>45</sup> For if one uses the *pícaro* as a means to identify and classify

---

<sup>40</sup> Although this [*Lazarillo*] is generally considered the prototype of the picaresque novel, it is better called the precursor (*Literature and the Delinquent*, p. 6). “Lázaro is not a *pícaro* at all” (p. 4). Parker’s position is oversimplified by Maximilian Novak in his review article when he states that “Given Parker’s view, every work after *Guzmán de Alfarache*, with the possible exception of Grimmelshausen’s *Simplicissimus* [sic] must appear as a decline” (*Racism*, p. 39). Parker in fact includes at least the *Buscón* within his definition of the picaresque.

<sup>41</sup> Parker has been attacked, most vehemently by Lázaro Carreter (“Glosas críticas,” pp. 470–72), for limiting the *Lazarillo* to the position of precursor, but besides the predecessors cited by Parker himself (p. 144, n. 13), the same point was made by Américo Castro in *El pensamiento de Cervantes* (p. 231 of the second edition [Barcelona: Noguer, 1972]), and in an article, “Perspectiva de la novela picaresca,” (*RABM*, 12 [1935], 123–38, reprinted in *Hacia Cervantes*; see p. 127 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition [Madrid: Taurus, 1967]), which Parker knew (it is cited in his “The Psychology of the ‘Pícaro’ in *El Buscón*,” *MLR*, 42 [1947], 58–69, an article still worth reading and one which clearly prefigures his book); Miguel Herrero García also made this point in his “Nueva interpretación de la novela picaresca,” *RFE*, 24 (1937), 343–62, as did Ricapito in his dissertation, already cited, p. 636. Howard Mancing, in “The Deceptiveness of *Lazarillo de Tormes*,” *PMLA*, 90 (1975), 426, says that the differences between the *Lazarillo* and the subsequent Spanish prose works called picaresque are “a critical commonplace.”

<sup>42</sup> *Protée et le gueux* (Paris: Didier, 1967), p. 16.

<sup>43</sup> Rico, *La novela picaresca*, p. 100. On some of the early editions (though not the first), the title page identifies the book as the *Libro del pícaro Guzmán de Alfarache*.

<sup>44</sup> Discussed by Bernardo Sanvisenti, “Alcuna osservazioni sulla parola *pícaro*,” *BH*, 18 (1916), 237–46. It is instructive to note how the meaning of *pícaro* as “chistoso, alegre, placentero y decidor,” found in the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, is missing from the current (19<sup>th</sup>) Academy dictionary, in which the meaning (of “picaresco,” at least), is explicitly based on the interpretation of unspecified literary works. See also Parker, *Literature and the Delinquent*, p. 144, n. 10, who only cites the meaning from the *Diccionario de Autoridades* which serves his argument.

<sup>45</sup> Castro, *El pensamiento de Cervantes*, p. 234. This position was also taken by José F. Montesinos in his “Gracián o la picaresca pura,” *Cruz y Raya*, No. 4 (1933), [p. 217] 37–63 (reprinted in Montesinos’ *Ensayos y estudios de literatura española*, ed. Joseph H. Silverman [Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1970], pp. 141–58; also see the quote from Valbuena Prat, *supra*, p. 205 [of the printed edition, but p. 8 of this version]. If the novels

picaresque novels, how could one help but agree that *La pícaro Justina* is one of the novels most worthy of being called picaresque? It is the only novel to use the word in the title; more clearly than any other, it imitates the *Guzmán*, the protagonist of which, whom she will eventually marry, is addressed by Justina in a prologue. In the well-known engraving which serves as frontispiece to the book,<sup>46</sup> used by some to demonstrate the existence of a picaresque genre, Justina rides in the “nave de la vida pícaro,” together with Guzmán and “la madre Celestina,”<sup>47</sup> while Lázaro, as if confirming Parker’s thesis, goes in a rowboat which is separate from, though linked to, the picaresque ship.

No one, save Marcel Bataillon,<sup>48</sup> has devoted much attention to *La pícaro Justina*; most treat the work as if it were merely an obstacle which makes a discussion of the picaresque more difficult, as from their perspective, it surely does.<sup>49</sup> The work is in many ways different from the *Guzmán*: it is humorous, while the *Guzmán* is serious; Justina enjoys life and is cruel to others; the moralizing of the work, to which less attention is given than to the “muestrario de versos,” is so superficial as to be obviously parodical. Rather than explaining an “estado de deshonor,” which some have thought a characteristic of the picaresque,<sup>50</sup> the work

---

they refer to have some common, linking feature other than the *pícaro*, the name they are called by should be based on that feature rather than on the *pícaro* they claim is irrelevant.

<sup>46</sup> Parker reproduces it, facing p. xii of his *Literature and the Delinquent*.

<sup>47</sup> The association in the frontispiece of Celestina with the picaresque (an association also made by Justina herself, in the poem which introduces Book III, Chapter IV, Section 3, and apparently by Luis Sánchez as well, since he reprinted not only the *Lazarillo* but also the *Celestina* shortly after the publication of the *Guzmán*), illustrates well how our modern conceptions of genre—the *Celestina* as drama, *Lazarillo* as novel—have led us to minimize relationships which contemporaries may have felt to be present. The picaresque as an answer to the romances of chivalry, now correctly attacked by Wicks (in his paper “The Romance of the Picaresque,” cited in n. 1), has been a commonplace for over a hundred years, and is found in so many discussions of the picaresque that even to list them would be impossible, but its debt is subject matter and *Weltanschauung* to that body of works which make up the “celestinesque” (on which see now Pierre Heugas, *La Célestine et sa descendance directe* [Paris: Institut d’Études Ibériques et Ibéro-Américaines de l’Université de Bordeaux, 1973], and my review in *NRFH*, 25 [1976], 410–12 has scarcely been examined. (For some structural influence of Rojas’ work [only] on *Lazarillo*, see Dorothy Sherman Severin, *Memory in La Celestina* [London: Tamesis, 1970], pp. 67–69; also see *Hacia Cervantes*, pp. 122–23, and Stephen Gilman, “The Death of Lazarillo de Tormes,” *PMLA*, 81 [1966], 155, n. 25.)

<sup>48</sup> Bataillon’s various articles on *La pícaro Justina*, some relatively inaccessible, are collected in Spanish translation in his volume *Pícaros y picaresca* (Madrid: Taurus, 1969).

<sup>49</sup> For example, Parker, *Literature and the Delinquent*, p. 46; Rico, *La novela picaresca*, pp. 118–20; Maurice Molho, *Introducción al pensamiento picaresco*, trans. Augusto Gálvez-Cañero y Redal (Salamanca: Anaya, 1972), pp. 121–23; del Monte, pp. 121–24.

<sup>50</sup> This in particular is the thesis of Rico; see *La novela picaresca y el punto de vista*, p. 116, and his *La novela picaresca española*, I (Barcelona: Planeta, 1968), xlii–lv.

moves toward an “estado de honor.” Yet does this mean that *La pícaro Justina* is not picaresque?<sup>51</sup>

Another example from a more prestigious author is even more clear-cut. Cervantes discusses the *pícaro* at greatest length in the opening pages of “La ilustre fregona.” Carriazo, one of the protagonists, was “llevado de una inclinación picaresca,” and “sin forzarle a ello algún tratamiento que sus padres le hiziesen, sólo por su gusto y antojo, se desgarró, como dicen los muchachos, de casa de sus padres, y se fue por ese mundo adelante, tan contento de la vida libre, que en la mitad de las incomodidades y miserias que trae consigo, no echaba menos la abundancia de la casa su padre, ni el andar a pie le cansaba, ni el frío le ofendía, ni el calor le enfadaba: para él todos los tiempos del año le eran dulce y templada primavera; también [tan bien] dormía en parvas como en colchones; con tanto gusto se [p. 208] soterraba en un pajar de un mesón como si se acostara entre dos sábanas de Holanda. Finalmente, él salió tan bien con el asunto de pícaro, que pudiera leer cátedra en la facultad al famoso de Alfarache.” Carriazo was a *pícaro*, although he was “virtuoso, limpio, bien criado y más que medianamente discreto.” Carriazo “pasó por todos los grados de pícaro, hasta que se graduó de maestro.”<sup>52</sup>

Here we have a character who is labeled by the author as a *pícaro*, as Lazarillo, of course, is not, as Pablos de Segovia is not, as in fact most of the characters in Valbuena Prat’s collection are not. Yet, again, critics are reluctant to accept “La ilustre fregona” as a picaresque novel, dismissing it almost casually.<sup>53</sup> Carriazo does not suffer from hunger, he has known parents, who do not mistreat him, and he is a much more admirable figure than either Lázaro or Guzmán. The characteristics of the *Guzmán*, the autobiographical structure, the serving of a series of masters, the presentation of the world as cruel, all absent from “La ilustre fregona,” are seen more clearly in the “Coloquio de los perros,”<sup>54</sup> and to a lesser degree in “Rinconete y Cortadillo.” Yet to say that these works are picaresque and that “La ilustre fregona”

---

<sup>51</sup> Anticipating a possible objection, it will not do to simply dismiss *La pícaro Justina* as parody of the *Guzmán*, although there is a great deal of parody in *Justina*. An attitude related to that of *Justina* can be found in other works, such as *Estebanillo González*, “hombre de buen humor,” who refers in his prologue to the *Lazarillo* and the *Guzmán*, or in Luna’s continuation of the *Lazarillo*, quoted by Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, *Las lecciones amigas* (Barcelona: Edhasa, 1966), p. 127. See also Bataillon’s “‘La picaresca.’ A propos de *La pícaro Justina*,” in *Wort und Test. Festschrift für Fritz Schalk* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1963), pp. 233–50, reprinted in *Pícaros y picaresca*, pp. 175–99.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted from Rodríguez Marín’s *Clásicos Castellanos* edition, I (1915; rpt.: Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1969), 221–22, 224, checked against the facsimile.

<sup>53</sup> “La nada picaresca novela de *La ilustre fregona*,” is how Marcel Bataillon describes it, “Relaciones literarias,” in *Suma cervantina*, ed. J. B. Avallé-Arce and Edward C. Riley (London: Tamesis, 1973), p. 230. “*La ilustre fregona* [no es] en [p. 218] ningún sentido una novela picaresca,” says Carlos Blanco Aguinaga, “Cervantes y la picaresca,” *NRFH*, 11 (1957), 338.

<sup>54</sup> On the “picaresque” nature of the *Coloquio de los perros*, see the review article of Gonzalo Sobejano cited in note 3.

is not, is to ignore what *pícaro* and *picaresco* meant to Cervantes, and to assign to these words arbitrary new meanings of our own. This is just what Parker and Frohock criticized others for doing.

We arrive, then, at our second conclusion: although one valid approach to the definition of the picaresque novel is by means of the definition of the work “*pícaro*” in the seventeenth century, an attempt along these lines would be doomed to failure because the word is today used so loosely.

Scholars are, of course, aware of the difficulty of defining the picaresque by the means outlined above; the problem of a definition is one of the standard topics which is discussed repeatedly. Their response to this dilemma takes one of two forms, the first of which is to minimize the problem by attacking the concept of genre, or to suggest, as do Wicks and Guillén, that the picaresque must be defined in a different fashion. “Genres, as everyone knows [?], do not really exist,” is the first sentence of Stuart Miller’s *Picaresque Novel*; “un género...no puede definirse,” roundly states Lázaro Carreter (“Glosas críticas,” p. 469). The latter scholar has in fact gone a step further, and suggested that the picaresque novel was a genre with no fixed characteristics, but one in which the author chose which characteristics he wished to incorporate in his work (“Para una revisión,” pp. 28–30).

These suggestions are circular ones, however, and I know of no other example of a genre, above all, one allegedly centuries old, without fixed characteristics nor in which traditional forms of definition (from contemporary literary documents or, failing that, by induction) are inadequate. To argue that the picaresque novel can not be defined in the ordinary way is to admit that it does not exist in the ordinary sense. Although there are works which are tangential or which share only isolated characteristics of [p. 209] other genres, even with the most controversial ones, such as tragedy, there is a larger “core” of works around which such tangential works group themselves.

The second response to the impossibility of a definition by traditional means is a positivistic suggestion that the picaresque should be defined in terms of one of its constituent elements: thus Parker’s emphasis on the subject matter (“an examination of delinquency”), the attention given by Pfandl<sup>55</sup> and others to the social ideas and outlook of the authors, and the traditional emphasis on structure (the autobiographical narration, the service to many masters, and so on), now reaffirmed by Lázaro Carreter, Stuart Miller, and Wicks. The fallacy of this approach is that it is another version of the inductive method, even if not acknowledged as such. *Some* of the works called picaresque offer an examination of delinquency, and thus Parker suggests basing his definition on this feature. *Some* use one or another of the structural features enumerated by the various writers on the topic. But not *all* of them do either, and to exclude a work, such as “La ilustre fregona,” when drawing the definition, and then to justify the exclusion because the work does not share all of the characteristics of the remaining works, is also circular reasoning.

I wish I could offer a new definition of the picaresque novel, one that would be consistent, logical, and acceptable to all. Unfortunately, I can not do this, and if the debate about the definition of the picaresque seems likely to continue forever, it is

---

<sup>55</sup> *Historia de la literatura nacional española en la edad de oro*, trans. Jorge Rubió Balaguer (Barcelona: Sucesores de Juan Gili, 1933), pp. 291–321, especially pp. 300–01.

precisely because it is impossible to ever arrive at a satisfactory one. A term which can mean anything, which is more than just “impreciso,” as Parker called it, is scarcely an aid to communication. Should we not follow Edmond Cros’ suggestion,<sup>56</sup> and abandon its use?

If we were dealing with a closely-knit body of works with many features in common, and if the Spanish picaresque novel did become, in Guillén’s term, an *a priori* genre, it would be imprudent to discard a label for these works. We do not have this, of course. When we have mentioned the influence of the *Guzmán* on López de Úbeda, a few *Novelas ejemplares*, the *Guitón Honofre*, and the *Buscón*, all written, by best guesses, within a very short time period,<sup>57</sup> and the influence of *Lazarillo* on Mateo Alemán and on the author of *Estebanillo González*, we have virtually exhausted the influence of the authors of Golden Age picaresque novels, most written at irregular intervals over a century of more,<sup>58</sup> on each other.

By saying this I am not taking the position of Croce, who, reacting against rigid nineteenth-century concepts of genre, insisted that all works of art are unique, and must be so studied.<sup>59</sup> I do think that the works called picaresque have something in common, a description of low society or lower-class life. But I would like to suggest that this feature is incidental to the works rather than a meaningful common element, a “semejanza” rather than a “diferencia significativa,” in Parker’s terms.<sup>60</sup> Likewise, I [p. 210] would also suggest that it is a distortion of the Golden Age literary scene and some of the individual authors to take these works out of their context, for no other reason, in many cases, than their supposed realism, falsely concluded from the lower-class subject matter, and to give them such disproportionate attention as the picaresque has recently received. The error of seeing Spanish Golden Age literature in terms of its so-called realistic works was pointed out by Amado Alonso in 1929, a position also taken by Dámaso Alonso and Américo Castro shortly thereafter.<sup>61</sup> The

---

<sup>56</sup> See note [42](#).

<sup>57</sup> Although there is no firm evidence, Lázaro Carreter and the Cavillacs agree on the early composition of the *Buscón*; see Michael and Cécile Cavillac, “A propos de *Buscón* et de *Guzmán de Alfarache*,” *BH*, 75 (1973), 114–31.

<sup>58</sup> Thus the comment of Parker on the *Lazarillo* and the *Guzmán*, *Literature and the Delinquent*, pp. 23–24.

<sup>59</sup> On Croce’s ideas about genre, see Benito Brancaforte, *Benedetto Croce y su crítica de la literatura española*, trans. Juan Conde (Madrid: Gredos, 1972).

<sup>60</sup> Introduction too the Spanish translation of *Literature and the Delinquent*, p. 15.

<sup>61</sup> Amado Alonso, “Lo picaresco de la picaresca,” *Verbum*, 22 (1929), 321–38, Dámaso Alonso, “Escila y Caribdis de la literatura española,” *Cruz y Raya*, No. 7 (1933), 78–101, reprinted in *Ensayos sobre poesía española* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1944), pp. 9–27, and *Estudios y ensayos gongorinos*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Madrid: Taurus, 1967), pp. 118–42; see p. 122 of the latter version. Critics have repeatedly attacked the widespread assumption that the works called picaresque are realistic. Dámaso Alonso in the article cited argues against the realism of the *Buscón*, and Blanco Aguinaga, in “Cervantes y la literatura picaresca,” against that of the *Guzmán de Alfarache*; on the *Lazarillo* see Ángel González Palencia, “Leyendo

*Guzmán* was surely a popular work, though no doubt more for its moral tone and didactic qualities than for its “realistic” descriptions of Spanish life or its contributions to the development of the novel.<sup>62</sup> *Lazarillo* had a certain popularity, ambiguous enough for this point in itself to be a cause of debate,<sup>63</sup> since it was most known as the bowdlerized *Lázaro castigado*<sup>64</sup> and published together with other works; certainly it would have been less important to a contemporary reader than the *Araucana*, or Lope’s *Arcadia*, or any one of a long series of more widely accepted and more influential books. The other titles collected by Valbuena Prat, and I include the *Buscón*, were works which disappeared from the Spanish literary scene shortly after their publication, with a small number of reprints, or none at all. Vicente Espinel was known for his poetry, not *Marcos de Obregón*; “El amante liberal” was held in higher esteem than “Rinconete y Cortadillo” or the “Coloquio de los perros,”<sup>65</sup> Quevedo would surely be disappointed if he knew that he is remembered today for the *Buscón* and to a much lesser extent, the *Sueños*, and that his philosophical and social works are read only by a handful of specialists.<sup>66</sup>

My final conclusion, then, is that we should not refer to the Spanish novels

---

el *Lazarillo*”, in *Del Lazarillo a Quevedo* (Madrid: CSIC, 1946), pp. 3–39 (first published in *Escorial*, 15 [1944], 9–46), Stephen Gilman, “Death,” p. 151, and Gregorio Marañón, in his preface to the Colección Austral edition of the *Lazarillo* (15<sup>th</sup> edition, Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1966; reprinted, though with the date of its composition erroneously given as 1958, in Volume I, pp. 1019–27 of his *Obras completas* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1968).

<sup>62</sup> I thus disagree completely with the superficial comment of Novak, “his book was read for its roguish adventures and romantic novellas,” in *Racism*, p. 40.

<sup>63</sup> Rico, *La novela picaresca y el punto de vista*, pp. 95–100. I agree with the arguments expressed by Alberto Blecuá in the introduction to his edition of the *Lazarillo* (Madrid: Castalia, 1972 [publ. 1974]) pp. 46–47. See also on this point, and on *Lazarillo*’s alleged realism and the Spanish “preference” for the same, Cyril Jones, “*Lazarillo de Tormes*: Survival or Precursor” in *Litterae Hispanae et Lusitanae*, ed. Hans Flasche (Munich: Heuber, 1968), p. 187. I am fascinated by Jones’ Unamunian observation that *Lazarillo* is not an innovative but rather a medieval work, whose publication was similar in purpose to that of the contemporary collections of *romances*.

<sup>64</sup> Neither this version, the one reprinted by Luis Sánchez (see note 21), nor that of Juan de Luna, has received a modern edition. From these two censored [p. 219] versions we can tell that at least some contemporary readers of the original saw only the most obvious religious criticism.

<sup>65</sup> See Ruth El Saffar, *Novel to Romance. A Study of Cervantes’ Novelas ejemplares* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1974), reviewed by the present author in *NRFH*, 23 (1974), 420–22, for information on the relative popularity and contemporary opinion of the *Novelas ejemplares*. James Mabbe, the first English translator, chose to translate precisely those novels least read today: “Las dos doncellas,” “La señora Cornelia,” “El amante liberal,” “La fuerza de la sangre,” “La española inglesa,” and “El celoso extremeño.”

<sup>66</sup> For a welcome look at some of them, see Henry Ettinghausen, *Francisco de Quevedo and the Neostoic Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), which I review in *NRFH*, 25 (1976), 150–51.

discussed in this paper by the term “picaresque,” which has no exact meaning and which suggests close relationships between the works which in many cases do not exist. If we would cease to do so, we could better study each of the works for what it is, and see more accurately the contribution each makes to Spanish literature. I am not so naive to think that this modest proposal will gain widespread approval, since the term “picaresque novel” is so widely used, but I do ask that those who continue to use the term specify which works they mean to refer to, and that they consider it in the same way that Croce considered all terms for genres, as a convenient modern label, one which would have been unfamiliar and perhaps unacceptable to the Golden Age authors in question.

[Notes on pp. 211–19.]