

THE PICARESQUE GENRE IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOLS' LITERATURE: A STUDY OF
LA VIDA DE LAZARILLO DE TORMES AND DER ABENTHEUERLICHE

SIMPLICISSIMUS TEUTSCH

by

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(Under the Direction of Max Reinhart)

ABSTRACT

Fools' literature, one of the predominant literary practices of the early modern period, assumed various genre forms. This thesis proposes to follow and demonstrate the evolution of the idea of the fool in two national literatures (Spanish and German) beginning with the humanist tradition and ending with the late baroque. The two works chosen here to exemplify fools literature belong to the so-called picaresque genre in which the fool assumes a socially critical role in exposing moral behavior.

INDEX WORDS: picaresque novel, Grimmelshausen, Simplicissimus, Lazarillo, Erasmus, fools' literature, laughter in early modern Europe, humanism, Spanish golden age, baroque

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“Picaresque” is an ambiguous term. Alexander Parker attempts the following typology, which puts special emphasis on the “delinquent” aspect of the picaresque character: 1) it is often, though not always, autobiographical; 2) an “atmosphere of delinquency” permeates the work; 3) the main character is a lower-class rogue who climbs the social ladder; 4) he is normally of humble stock; and 5) as a “delinquent” he is born into an environment of dishonesty and learns to use these schemes for personal benefit.

The element of delinquency subverts not only the social order, but even classical structures and categorization. The main character, who reflects this inversion, may be called an “anti-hero” (Yovel, 1297), one who employs delinquent methods in order to survive. For sixteenth-century Spain, Parker calls the narrative genre for this picaresque type an “anti-romance” and sees in it a sign of a new realism (8). Bjornson (4) notes that its episodic storylines are driven by a protagonist from the lower class (he typically lives on the outskirts of society) who survives through wit and the ability to adapt to corrupt society. As Yovel observes (1299-1300), the autobiography becomes the fiction behind the narration of the story.

These definitions of course do not fully account for the complexity of picaresque humor. Indeed, scholars of the picaresque have generally underappreciated a key component in this genre: the intricate bond between comedy and foolishness, which may be traced back to its origins in early humanism (late fifteenth and early sixteenth century).

For the early humanists the fool was an ideal didactic tool for responding to the many social and institutional changes taking place in the course of the transition — as we now see it — between the late medieval and the early modern periods (Dunphy). This tendency would soon

take on a greatly expanded role with the Protestant Reformation's criticism of the Roman Church, which was at first generally supported by the humanists. The particular concern of the humanists, however, was with folly in general and with instructing people in how to improve. Through raising the standard of morality in individuals, the moral worth of human institutions, such as the church, would be improved as well.

The first such work, and one of the most famous by a humanist, was Das Narrenschiff (The Ship of Fools) by the Strasbourg lawyer Sebastian Brant (1457-1521). Composed in the German vernacular in verse form in 1494, Das Narrenschiff contains a series of 114 exempla, each of which puts on exhibit a different type of fool. Each brief verse chapter is accompanied by an emblematic woodcut (most by Albrecht Dürer), which could be "read" by even illiterate individuals (at the time, literacy was enjoyed by only about 10% of the population). Brant's work became so popular that it was regarded as an essential companion to the Bible. Three years later it was translated into Latin, as Stultifera navis, by his student Jacob Locher (1471-1528), and thereby reached an educated European audience, where it was received with equal enthusiasm and became the model for many imitations in other languages.

Brant explains in his introduction that his work intends to contain every type of foolish person in society; the first, in fact, is none other than he himself, the Büchernarr (book fool). Brant does not attack others, but seeks to exhort through revealing what individuals do not see in themselves. He makes light of foolishness, in order thereby to make people sensitive to their own folly, as well as to adjust immoral behaviors through recognition of moral pitfalls.

The Dutch humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466/69-1536) wrote in a similar vein in Stultitiae Laus (*The Praise of Folly*) in 1509 (printed 1511). Composed in Latin, his work was intended from the beginning for a larger European audience. While Erasmus employs many of

the stock Renaissance characters that also appear in Brant's work, he personifies Folly as a common human trait. His intention is similar to Brant's: to distinguish human moral pitfalls so that we may become aware of them and change our behavior. Erasmus indeed, most notably in his De civilitate morum puerilium (On the Civility of Youthful Morals, 1530) went well beyond Brant to develop an actual pedagogical system, based on original Christian principles — he called it philosophia Christi (philosophy of Christ) — for guiding young people from crude behaviors to Christ-like civility (Kühlmann).

Geiler von Kaisersberg (1445-1510) represents the beginning of the religious reform tradition of fools' literature. The series of sermons that he gave between 1499 through 1510 were published posthumously as a collection in 1520 under the title Narrenschiff (Ship of Fools) in obvious allusion to Brant's famous work. Indeed, Kaisersberg makes use of the woodcuts in Brant's Narrenschiff, but he interprets them in different ways. He portrays the different types of fools in the world, but does not describe himself as one; he appeals to human reason and proclaims a need of reform of immoral behavior. The tone is still intended to instruct people in their folly, but is not satirical, as was the former works by Brant and Erasmus, but accusatory, even condemnatory.

Thomas Murner's Von dem grossen Lutherischen Narren (The Great Lutheran Fool, 1522), follows in this tradition, but from the perspective of the early Catholic Counter-Reformation, which sought to prevent the spread of Luther's teachings. It is a personal attack on Luther. Ironically, Murner calls himself a "Murr-narr," a foolish cat (German Murr = cat), but in the sense of a cat who plays the jester and exposes his opponent's folly. He judges the moral and theological errors of Luther and his followers in an aggressively polemical fashion. For Murner,

the fool adopts negative tendencies, and is transformed from the positive didactic function of humanism.

With the advent of the picaresque genre in the later sixteenth century a functional change in the fool occurs. In humanist literature the fool was considered capable of positive change, so that he could be saved and become a better human being; in the new picaresque tradition the fool commonly lacks the ability to assist in his own salvation. This diminished view of human nature seems to have reflected a new social and anthropological view, a negativity likewise reflected in political theories of the time. It is at the very least an interesting coincidence that after the Augsburg Accords of 1555, which granted territorial princes the prerogative of selecting the religion of their subjects (*cuius regio, eius religio*), we find the advent of the picaro whose life and adventures appear to expose the inability of individuals to choose their own spiritual fate.

Laughter — one of the traits of fools' literature since Brant — undergoes a similar change with the rise of the picaro. In Bakhtin's famous formulation, laughter is a "universal" quality in humans, that is, it belongs to the very essence of people and has individual and group manifestations. More to the point here, laughter has an essential relationship to freedom and can accordingly be expressed either positively or negatively. In the new picaresque literature, laughter tends to degrade (mockery is a chief expression) and to transmutate into grotesque forms. Only in the eighteenth century, under the greater openness of the Enlightenment, would laughter turn back to the gentler, educational, forms of humanism.

The changes in laughter and the main type of fool that happened between humanism and the advent of the picaro took place within a span of approximately sixty years, measured from the publication of Brant's Narrenschiff and the appearance of the anonymous Spanish novel La Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes y de sus fortunas y adversidades (The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes,

including his Fortunes and Adversities), published simultaneously in Spain and the Low Countries in 1554.

Why this novel was published anonymously remains unclear. Certainly, however, its caustic satire and socioreligious criticism — particularly in its imputation of wrongdoing to a nameless friar, pardoner, and priest (Mount, 325) — provide reasons for believing that the author hoped to escape persecution by the Spanish Inquisition. Indeed, the novel was censured for its depiction of the clergy.

Although Brandt and Erasmus also criticized social classes, the intention is different in the picaresque genre. The humanist tradition used satire in order to instruct how to recognize foolishness and thus lead a civilized moral and religious life; the basic attitude behind the criticism was tolerant and always softened by humor. The practitioners of fools' literature in the religious reform movement tended to speak in vicious tones and often disparaged their confessional opponents in an ad hominem manner, though their purpose too was ultimately to turn people to the true path to salvation. The picaresque, on the other hand, instructs through the demonstration of an immoral life; its didacticism is primarily conveyed, not through a forgiving humor, as in humanism, or vindictive condemnation, as in confessionalism, but through a certain rough comedy having more in common with the expectations of the lower social classes. The laughter of the picaresque fool often gives expression to grotesque situations.

This trend continues as least as late as the first major non-Spanish picaresque novel, Der abentheuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch (1669) by Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen (1621-76). Simplicissimus Teutsch does, owe much, to be sure, to the humanist and religious reform traditions, as well; but in the first place it is clearly conceived within the more recent

Spanish picaresque tradition. Set during the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), it reflects the social and moral degradations that accompanied one of the most devastating wars in German history.

This thesis will compare these two novels, from two different national traditions, in hopes of coming to a more judicious understanding of the picaresque type of fools' literature in early modern Europe. This exercise will involve a consideration of the socioliterary functions of laughter, irony, satire, and comedy, and consider how the picaro as jester-fool exposes and criticizes the several social estates for their immorality and general resistance to positive change.

CHAPTER TWO

LA VIDA DE LAZARILLO DE TORMES

The pretended autobiographical prologue of the novel Lazarillo de Tormes, sus fortunas y adversidades provides to an anonymous patron a quasi legal justification of what he calls his case (caso), which is constituted by the unfortunate circumstances of his life, and the reason why he consents to ignore the sexual deviance of his wife and the archpriest. By marrying a wife and taking employment with the archpriest, Lazarillo is able to enjoy more comforts than before. The narrator, Lázaro,¹ explains the conditions of his low birth, and the unfortunate series of events that ensued. In order to survive he must believe in the virtue of his wife. He entreats others to sympathize how difficult his lower-class life has been; nevertheless, will not be offended if others find his story entertaining (89).

Some critics believe that the intent of Lazarillo de Tormes was solely to amuse a learned audience, though most agree that much more lies behind this enigmatic work. What this “much more” could be has much to do with the roles of the fool and his laughter, not only as comic elements, but for how they also encourage empathy and identification with Lázaro’s shame; the social criticism is highlighted in the depiction of the cruelty of the masters whom Lazarillo serves. George Shipley remarks that Lázaro utilizes laughter to liken himself and his crude behavior to that of other classes: “He knows the value of humor as a means for socializing opposition, and he controls diverse techniques for creating and aiming laughter” (45). Comedy tends toward social equalization, to subject each citizen to the same judgment. The picaresque returns to the humanist fools’ tradition of making all humans subject equally to fault and judgment. It differs from the humanist tradition insofar as it utilizes the accusatory tendencies of

¹ The ending “-illo” is a diminutive in Spanish. In the novel, the older narrator who reflects on his life is referred to as Lázaro. As a child, he was called Lazarillo.

the religious reform tradition through a process of exhibiting the comic exploitation of a child's naiveté to exhibit faults within society, and how they are resistant to change.

The picaresque also purports to have its basis in historical events, a fiction that enhances its verisimilitude. In the novel Lazarillo de Tormes, the picaro Lázaro is often reduced to begging. References are made to decrees in Toledo that worsened Lázaro's position as a mendicant (Blecua, 12). The existence of mendicants within the city, as well as decrees that prohibited begging, left many of them without resources. The reality of Lázaro's hunger becomes an empathetic plea.

JESTERS AND SHAME IN RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIAL CRITICISM

The didactic function of the jester, which Lazarillo assumes in the tradition of fools' literature, is central to picaresque. In Lazarillo de Tormes, examples of foolishness, laughter, and comedy provoke shame, ridiculing the inhumane unconcern of the nobility and the clergy toward the lower classes.

One major purpose of jesters at court was, of course, to provide entertainment. This role was especially well suited to psychologically defective or physically handicapped — or simply abnormally formed — persons. Dwarves, for example, were commonly found amusing:

[W]e are dealing with a period when misfortune and suffering were thought comic (in Western Europe as recently as the eighteenth century physical deformity provoked jeers, and a visit to a lunatic asylum was an agreeable diversion).

(Deyermond, 20-21)

In seventeenth-century Spain, jesters first of all served a social purpose by relieving pressure at court, and also served an instructive purpose, satirizing persons of the court, ridiculing authority, and underlining painful realities. "The antics of court jesters drew attention to their defects, but

also pointed an accusing finger at our own” (Frieder, 17). The painting by Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez of Don Baltasar Carlos with a Dwarf (1632) demonstrates how dwarves as jesters not only mocked authority but also, as in the case of the young prince Don Carlos, functioned as a “visual foil”: “In early modern Europe, the physical deformities and mental failings of dwarfs and simpletons were used to enhance the splendor of the rich and powerful” (6). The dwarf in the painting augments the prince’s authority and influence. Not uncommonly, they were treated as privileged and adored pets. In the painting Isabel Clara Eugenia and Her Dwarf (1599) the dwarf-jester is literally a pet of the princess.

They were at times pitied for their destitute position in life. Jestors reflect typical human behavior in an exaggerated form. Perhaps this helps to explain why jestors were an integral part of courtly households: they functioned as a mirror, reflecting and justifying the household members’ elevated position in society. Still, their presumed depravity, based on their manifest base behavior — they depended on it for their survival, of course — could not be ignored. Both Erasmus and the author of Lazarillo de Tormes offer the fool as a means to identify with the human condition. As Hoyt Hopewell Hudson points out, however, “Erasmus may be saying what may need to be said, that these dim-sighted souls are human souls and belong within the range of human as well as divine love” (xxxiv). Lazarillo’s work is fundamentally different, to be sure, in at least three ways: in its first person autobiographical narrative form; its intended religious didacticism; and the sympathetic depiction of the jester. The qualities of compassion and pity for the jester, as Hudson notes, encourage “human and divine love” (xxxiv). Manuel J. Asensio emphasizes the sympathy aroused in witnesses of the cruelty that Lázaro must endure (87). Prior to this work, according to Asensio, no genre existed that played so effectively with the human emotions.

Christoph Schweitzer, in his comparison of Lazarillo de Tormes, Simplicissimus Teutsch, and Moll Flanders, discovers that all of these works evoke feelings of empathy in the reader, namely, through the use of the first-person narrator as well as the naiveté of the child. After the author has gained the reader's trust, the peccadilloes and excesses of the picaresque become relatively excusable, given what readers already know of the world's corruption. Besides, the picaresque was forced to play a fool in most instances. The shame is thereby largely removed.

But is the picaresque not a mere puppet — a “dancing Jack” in the words of Henri Bergson — in the hands of the author? This idea seems to conflict with that of freedom, since freedom is typically related to seriousness. Nevertheless, psychologically there is a tendency on the part of a reader, Bergson claims, to side with the picaresque, because “the spectator sides with the knaves” (Bergson, 111).

The novel is presented in a quasi legal format, and is therefore divided into tratados or “treaties.” In the first three tratados (referred to in the analysis that follows as “chapters”) the fool utilizes comedy, laughter, and satire to criticize different social classes, immoral behavior, and religious problems reflective of historic and contemporaneous events. This satire requires decoding (Yovel, 1303).

THE FIRST CHAPTER

In this first chapter, “Cuenta Lázaro su vida y cómo hijo fue” (Lázaro Recounts His Life and Tells of His Parents), Lazarillo explains his state of affairs under the service with his first master, a blind man. Due to the circumstances of his indigence and the death of his father, the young Lazarillo is given by his mother as a guide to a blind man. Lazarillo learns one of his first lessons of the world on the Puente Romano in Salamanca. The blind man ridicules the boy by smashing his head brutally against a stone bull statue. The blind man laughs at his prank: “Y rió

mucho la burla” (And he had a good laugh at his own joke; 96). This phrase highlights not only the humor of the situation, but also the tragedy of Lazarillo — a child unaware of the malice of the world.² It is not a depiction of individual folly, as in the humanist tradition, but the grotesque reduction of life. This a singular instance of how human beings are robbed of their humanity and identity. We do not laugh at the joke; *he*, the blind man, laughs. In this moment Lazarillo realizes the depravity of life and that he is alone: “solo soy” (I’m on my own; 96).

Lazarillo is able to make the transition between comic and seriousness (Menhennet will refer to this, with respect to Grimmelshausen’s later novel, as “the Simplician manner”). The reaction of the boy indicates the alternation from the telling of a funny tale to a serious and mature reflection of his life. This scene provides both slapstick humor and alienation.

Lazarillo declares that his childishness and gullibility are to blame for the incident: “Parescióme que en aquel instante desperté de la simpleza en que, como niño, dormido estaba” (It seemed to me that at that moment I awoke out of the simplicity in which I had remained like a sleeping child; 96). The loss of innocence is another reason to empathize with the rogue. Lázaro explains why he told this story: “Huelgo de contar a Vuestra Merced estas niñerías para mostrar cuánta virtud sea saber los hombres subir siendo bajos, y dejarse bajar siendo altos cuánto vicio” (It is a joy to me to recount these childish matters to Your Excellency, to show how much virtue there can be in those who are born to low estate and drag themselves up, and how much vice in the great who let themselves be dragged down; 97). Here Lázaro subjects nobles to criticism as well as the peasantry, for the ability to judge the various classes of persons in the same manner is

² The critical edition by Alberto Blecua is punctuated and separated into paragraph form according to modern stylistics. When compared with the text and concordance of the three different editions published simultaneously in Alcalá de Henares, Burgos, and Amberes, none appear to have this sentence as a separate paragraph. Blecua explains his modernization of certain style elements in his “Nota Previa.”

important for the criticism in the picaresque novel. Lázaro's shame reflects the wrongs of this society (Yovel, 1299), epitomized in the blind man's cruel remark, "Y rió mucho la burla."

At the end of this episode Lazarillo plays an equally vicious prank on the blind man, who almost dies as a consequence of the joke. Lazarillo causes a blow to the head of the blind man equal to the one he endured.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

In this chapter, "Cómo Lázaro se asentó con un clérigo y de las cosas que con él pasó" (How Lázaro was Employed by a Priest, and What Happened to Him in the Service of that Master), Lazarillo serves another master, a cleric. Under his new master, Lazarillo experiences more hunger than when he begged for alms with the blind man, since the cleric refuses him food. Many passages from this chapter were censored by the Inquisition, since this episode exposes the cleric as a cruel man, exploiting others for personal profit and forgetting his religious oath (Mount, 328).

In a sixteenth-century Spain, beggars were common and therefore treated with "absolute indifference" (Blecuca, 16). Hunger notwithstanding, theft was punished severely, as we can see from the anti-mendicant laws of Alfonso V or in the sermons of Johann Geiler von Kaisersberg. In this second chapter Lazarillo's schemes have comedic qualities, but simultaneously provide insight into the depravity of humanity, and specifically bitter criticism of the clergy. Due to his circumstances he is made into a fool, a jester to be laughed at by the cleric and his ilk.

Lazarillo devises a hoax: after acquiring a key to the locked chest where the cleric stores bread, he pretends that rats are eating the bread. The cleric thus carves out the tainted parts with a spoon and pretends charity to Lazarillo, saying, "Cómote eso, que el ratón cosa limpia es"

(There, eat that. The mouse is a clean animal; 121). This sentence is ironic and humorous to an audience that comprehends the reality of the rat.

At one point during his tutelage under the cleric, Lazarillo even prays for others to die, because after a funeral, he is able to eat what remained from the feasts, “Deseaba y aún rogaba a Dios que cada día matase el suyo” (I yearned, I actually prayed to God to kill off one of His servants every day; 116). While there is a certain humor in believing that his prayers are the reason for the funerals, the point is to criticize the clergy for its unconcern in the face of wide starvation.

Most ironic is that Lazarillo is led further astray from God when serving under the cleric. In his hunger Lazarillo begins to hallucinate that bread is the face of God, “la cara de Dios,” a parody of the Eucharist. This chapter exposes through hunger and comedy the abuses and avarice of the clergy. The intention is accusation rather than reform.

Many passages in the second chapter are written to gain sympathy for the boy, such as the constant mention of his hunger: “Finalmente, yo me finaba de hambre” (In the end, I was dying of hunger; 114). Furthermore, Lázaro describes the cleric as being even more avaricious than the blind man (113-14). The cleric is “el cruel cazador,” (the cruel hunter) and “el cruel sacerdote” (the cruel priest).

Since Lazarillo must choose between the extremes of life and death, of immorality and morality, he is less concerned with and less capable of making moral decisions. Whatever his beliefs may be, he must first of all survive, and this often results in immoral behavior (Bjornson, 27-28). Whitbourn observes:

The work may be seen as an illustration of the gulf that exists between man’s perfectly sincere aspirations to virtue and his limited ability, when faced with

temptation and need, to lead a virtuous life. The most difficult problems are those in which right and wrong are intermingled, and by presenting the reader with a work in which the moral distinctions are blurred. (xi)

The human inability to strive for virtue and the lack of spiritual redemption, because of the overriding need for survival, is a common theme throughout the text.

The priest leaves Lazarillo for dead after discovering the prank. He hits him so fiercely for stealing the small pieces of bread that Lazarillo remains unconscious for some weeks. After he recovers, the narrative is short. The priest and his circle of friends laugh at Lazarillo's misfortune and afflictions: "Ahí tornaron de nuevo a contar mis cuitas y a reírlas, y yo, pecador, a llorarlas. Con todo esto, me dieron de comer, que estaba transido de hambre, y apenas me pudieron demediar" (And they started recounting my troubles again and laughing over them. But I, poor sinner, cried over them. Anyway they gave me something to eat, for I was so faint with hunger that their other ministrations were hardly any good to me; 128). A dichotomy between "them" and "I" is visible here, recalling the blind man's one-sided laughter above.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Like the blind man and the cleric, Lazarillo's next master, the squire, is also a deceptive character. In this chapter, "Cómo Lázaro se asentó con un escudero y de lo que le acaesció con él" (How Lázaro was Employed by a Squire, and What Happened to Him with that Master), Lazarillo comes into the employ of the squire while begging for alms, and believing the squire to be of noble birth and of a certain comfortable income due to his dress, he agrees to serve under him in order to quit himself of the beggar's life. The alleged nobleman however, is bereft of money, resources, and food, and Lazarillo suffers even more hunger than with his first two masters, and he shares his alms with the squire. In this episode Lazarillo is portrayed as a fool yet

again because he believes in the affluence implied by the squire's nobility, as well as the God-given right to own land.

This chapter alludes to the debate throughout literature during the Middle Ages and the baroque of honor based on noble birth or deeds. According to Ernst Robert Curtius ("Seelenadel," 188-89), this topos may be delineated back to the Sophists. Noel Fallows notes that the term described by Curtius as "nobility of soul" represents the centuries-long debate over the roots of virtue, whether it is transmissible through noble blood or proven through virtuous conduct. Virtue and virtuous conduct were assumed by the nobility still in Lazarillo's day to be their natural attributes and signs of their divine ordination, though the ideology had been cast into question as early as the thirteenth century.

In the traditional view, the reason for differences in honor among the social classes was due to the political-social hierarchy based on a common cultural memory of past grievances or of honor. To be a peasant was punishment for ancestral wrongdoing, and the peasant allegedly suffered on the earth from ignoble or immoral ancestry (Southern, 99-100). The status of a peasant in the Middle Ages was also religiously based and required a demonstration of piety and humility; in fact, many persons volunteered for a life of servitude in order to lead a religious life, and prove themselves worthy of salvation after the period of a life trial (Southern, 99-107).³

Since there is no lexical distinction in the English language between the two meanings of the Spanish honor and honra,⁴ the fact that virtue is mentioned regularly within this tale demonstrates how Lazarillo de Tormes revitalizes a complex of controversial issues in fools' literature: personal virtue, moral behavior, and judgment. In the present chapter, although the

³ Southern is not referring to monasticism. Noble persons who retreated to a life of piety retained their secular nobility.

⁴ These ideas are conveyed in two terms: honra and honor, one being a state of honor or virtue only within reach of that nobility ordained by God, and the latter an inner state of virtuosity proven through deeds. Either a peasant or noble could achieve the sense of honor, though it was not prerequisite for salvation.

squire has honra, he lacks virtuous conduct. The squire's differentiation suggests his lack of virtue, puts his true honorable intentions and worthiness in question, and ultimately subjects him to the same judgment as the beggar and cleric. The squire states: “— Eres mochacho – me respondió — y no sientes las cosas de la honra, en que el día de hoy está todo el caudal de los hombres de bien” (You're only a boy, he answered, and you have no feelings for affairs of honor, which nowadays constitutes the man of breeding's only treasure; 148).

Lazarillo's naiveté prevents him from grasping this concept of honra vs. honor. It is reflected in a scene in which he is unable to decipher common metaphorical speech at a funeral procession. Having been told that the bier is being taken to a place where people never eat or drink, that is, heaven, Lazarillo thinks they mean his residence. In his confusion and fear he attempts to block the funeral procession by locking his door and moving furniture. The squire laughs at his idiocy.

Immediately following the funeral scene, a serious discussion of virtue ensues (in the voice of the squire). This sudden change from comic to serious is one of the unique features of the picaresque (Menhennet's "Simplician manner"). The squire somberly explains the idea of honor to Lazarillo — something that a boy from the third estate could not possibly comprehend, especially given his delinquency. Even though the squire has honra through birthright, he does not behave according to the precepts of honor. He imagines he can fool others into believing he possesses an elevated position in society. Though he is starving, he claims his social superiority. He would not beg for food because of his honra and pride, yet he consumes the alms that Lazarillo provides; thus his graciousness and charity is betrayed as pretence. Lazarillo claims to fall from his estate while under the service of the squire. This is humorous and ironic, since as a

peasant and beggar Lazarillo can hardly fall any further. The destitute state of the squire reflects the aristocracy's declining status. Lazarillo only acts as the foil.

When the squire abandons his fiscal responsibilities to his creditors and leaves Lazarillo to answer for him, another humorous scene arises. Lazarillo explains to the mayor and scribe that his master has gone to his land in Castile (which of course does not exist). Lazarillo, unable to differentiate a lie from the truth, believed the squire's claim of having land and estates and that he had left them for the sake of his honra, unable to bear the disrespect of another noble. The mayor and the scribe question Lazarillo, and likewise laugh at his idiocy.

This laughter exposes Lazarillo's credulousness as well as the squire's dishonor at having been reduced to lying in order to sustain his position in society. The neighbors say that Lazarillo is an unknowing, innocent child (154). Their remarks suggest that Lazarillo is equally a sinner for his poverty, whereas one would expect the squire to be so described for his hypocrisy and vanity. Thus Lazarillo functions once more as a foil to the squire's higher class, honra and noblesse; his role is also typical of the general hesitation to accuse the nobility of wrongdoing. That Lazarillo is defined as a "pecador" (sinner; 128) makes sense given his low birth, which preordained his suffering much as the squire is presumably preordained to be shown grace for his inherited honra. They represent opposite poles; Lazarillo and the squire are connected by their hunger, but they are judged differently. He may be a "sinner" (he was responsible for the severe injury of the blind man and stole food from the cleric), but why this is so can only be assumed because of his low birth. Here he actually behaves in a Christian manner by being charitable with the squire. This episode subtly comments on the question of honor and honra that permeates Golden Age Spanish literature by raising the question of whether the squire acted honorably

according to the precepts of chivalry and by reflecting on the virtuousness of Lazarillo's past deeds.

Thus the circle of criticism of the three estates is completed. The subsequent chapters level a harsher criticism of church and society, but they are ancillary to these first three, which constitute the foundation of the novel. It may be that these first chapters were meant to represent the three traditional medieval estates.

CONCLUSION, PART 1

The blind man, the cleric, and the squire are all nameless characters who represent not one person but many. The masters are caricatures that give witness to the base reality of beggars, the avarice of many in the clergy, the fall of the noble class, and the absurd pretensions of honor. The novel reflects the world as it is, where the state of beggars has become a ruthless and hopeless one, where noblemen would rather starve than work like the commoners, where all sense of charity has been lost, and where the greed of the clergy gives direction to the religious reforms. The narrator brings to the forefront these topics of social importance. All of these characters represent social problems and criticism, yet provide no answers for their improvement. The entire novel, including its prologue and its ending, explains why Lázaro is forced to continue to live a life of a delinquent. In order to get enough food to eat, Lázaro must be a cuckold to the clergy and ignore what everyone else knows in Toledo—that his wife is a concubine of the archpriest. But he accepts this sexual deviance for the sake survival. The world does not allow him to have moral fiber.

Lazarillo functions as a jester, a foil to his masters. Though he never explicitly named as such, it is implied through the laughter of the masters and others. As we have seen, this is done through the first-person narrative, which also contributes to the novel's authenticity and evokes

sympathy. Humorous scenes entertain while displaying vices and criticizing different estates. The pizaro is made to be a fool against his will, forced to be the point of humor by the cruel persons who surround him. Identification with the pizaro's suffering helps to reveal the state of affairs in Europe and to redefine the fool. The fool is no longer a means to moral redemption.

CHAPTER THREE

GRIMMELSHAUSEN'S DER ABENTEUERLICHE SIMPLICISSIMUS TEUTSCH AND

SATIRE

Grimmelshausen's Simplicissimus Teutsch serves as a testimony to the havoc and destruction of the war by drawing upon personal experience from his childhood as well as from historical accounts not only of this war but of others. Much of what passes here for historical fact from the Thirty Years' War is topological and applies to any war anyplace. The first non-Spanish picaresque novel, it constitutes part of a series of novels known as the Simplician cycle.

The fools' tradition, reaching back to the humanist tradition, has a rich history in Germany, as we have shown. How the tradition changed with the Spanish picaresque tradition is a primary theme of this thesis. Grimmelshausen uses the picaro as a way to introduce German society to a new kind of jester-fool. Like Lazarillo de Tormes, the German picaresque provides a delinquent first-person narrator to motivate identification. The picaro entertains through comedy and satire even as it demonstrates the brutal theft of human dignity and its grotesque consequences.

THE FOOL ACCORDING TO GRIMMELSHAUSEN

Grimmelshausen often employs the terms Narr and Tor (both meaning fool), as well as Schelm (rogue), as well as variations on these words. He also creates episodes in which Simplicissimus is forced to take on the roles of jester (at court, in the military) or clown (especially for foreign entertainment). For a time, in fact, Simplicissimus keeps an apparent lunatic calling himself "Jupiter" as his own personal jester. We find three major appearances of the jester in the novel: Simplicissimus at the court of the Governor of Hanau, where he entertains at court and divulges truths about social foolishness; Simplicissimus with the Saxonian army,

where he has become critically aware of politics and the way of the world, as well as of the fact that he is playing a fool; and the lunatic Jupiter who functions as a foil to Simplicissimus, exposing not only social truths but his master's own questionable behavior. Simplicissimus's coat of arms displays three masks and a jester.

SIMPLICISSIMUS AS THE JESTER AT THE COURT OF HANAU

Simplicissimus is first made into a calf-jester and must wear calf's ears, symbolic of his innocence, according to Welzig. After an elaborate prank to deceive him into believing that he has gone through hell and heaven again in order to be reincarnated as a fool, Simplicissimus accepts his fate. Though previously a simpleton, now he discerns the depravity of the world. As a jester in this episode Simplicissimus frequently mentions how the metamorphosis of a human being into an animal is dehumanizing. The forcing of humans to become fools became a central metaphor in post-Reformation Europe. The loss of his human dignity is depicted in a scene where Simplicissimus consumes his first meal as a calf jester. Having asked for grass to eat, he is brought a salad with salt, and he looks on it in wonderment. The food is a symbol of his transformation. Everyone pretends that they are shocked to meet a talking calf. Simplicissimus remarks to himself after looking at the salad, and appearing to accept his fate as a calf: "es ist heutigestags so weit kommen, daß sich nunmehr ein geringer Unterscheid zwischen ihnen und den Mensehen befindet, wolltest du dann allein nicht mitmachen?" (125) (It's even reached the point where there is hardly any difference between calves and humans. So why should you be the only one to hold out and not join in the fun?)⁵

Simplicissimus approves of the metaphor of persons being similar to animals, for he himself has seen human depravity, how they can become worse than animals in their lust, envy,

⁵ Translations of Simplicissimus are generally by George Schulz-Behrend. Where passages are quoted that are not included in his expurgated edition, the translations are by Debra A. Frantzen.

greed, and foolishness (125-26), an explanation that creates sympathy. He insists that he himself, as the “calf,” possesses innocence his tormentors do not.

This animalization of humans is made the subject of another particularly witty scene in which Simplicissimus describes various persons at court as animals, to the chagrin of the women present:

“Wie,” sagte mein Herr, “vermeinst du dann diese Damen seien Affen?” Ich antwortet: “Seind sie es nicht, so werden sie es doch bald werden: wer weiß, wie es fällt, ich habe mich auch nicht versehen, ein Kalb zu werden, und bins doch!”
(130)

“How so?” said my master.” Do you think these ladies are monkeys?” I answered, “If they aren’t now, they soon will be. Who knows how it all comes out? I never thought I’d be a calf, and yet I am one.”

Simplicissimus relates his metamorphosis into a calf as an entertaining but grotesque way of comparing women to monkeys. His deconstruction of women’s features has a precedent in courtly literature, indeed; but as jester he compares them to unprecedented items, such as their rolled hair to sausages, or their powdered hair to dandruff. Simplicissimus equates himself, a former human, to a donkey in the same way that he reasons women are like monkeys, and then to other coarse items of food that would only be considered beautiful to an animal. Humans are like animals in Simplicissimus’ world, unable to have power over their life, their souls, their choice of religion, or their salvation.

Simplicissimus admits that he has been made the fool but insists that he allows this only as far as he likes. This strange claim suggests an autonomy that he does not possess. “Hierüber erhob sich ein soch Gelächter, daß man mich nicht mehr hören, noch ich mehr reden konnte,

gienge hiemit durch wie ein Holländer, und ließe mich, solang mirs gefiel, von andern vexiern” (At this they all started laughing and I could no longer be heard, nor could I speak anymore. So I took to my heels laughing, letting others make fun of me only so long as I was pleased to put up with it; 131).

Eventually, a pastor hatches a plan to make him into an insane fool in order to free him from his humiliation; worried for Simplicissimus’ salvation, however, he provides him with protective ointments. This is not a critique of the church, as in Lazarillo de Tormes, however. The pastor, an unambiguously benevolent character, demonstrates caring and goodwill towards Simplicissimus and, knowing that it is inhuman and incorrect to make a child of God into a monstrosity, he asks the governor to release Simplicissimus from his jester bonds.

Simplicissimus explains after his transformation that he understands his ability to speak universal truths in the court, quite beyond his role of entertainer. Simplicissimus understands his first function as a comedian, then as proclaimer of the truth. “Doch war ich so schlau, daß ich nichts sagte, dann wann ich die Wahrheit bekennen soll, so bin ich, als ich zum Narren werden sollte, allererst witzig, und in meinen Reden behutsamer worden” (However, I was so clever, that I did not say it then, when I should profess the truth; I became that way, when I had to become a jester: first of all funny, and in my speech more cautious; 128). Now he is careful about what truths he proclaims, since he comprehends the consequences of his actions. When he attempts comedy, he uses satirical methods to explain a truth. By indirectly stating what he wishes to say, he succeeds not only in saving himself but also in relaying his message through satire.⁶ We thereby recognize that Simplicissimus is an innocent youth subjected to the will of a ruler. The governor is not necessarily bad, only confused and unaware of the consequences of his actions.

⁶ Müller, Komik und Satire, discusses the process that the reader/audience must undergo to understand and decode satire and comedy. Müller states that a message exists in satire and comedy.

The preacher warns Simplicissimus against the path that has been laid out before him by the governor. His transformation could be a risky undertaking, potentially resulting in the damnation of his soul.

Hierum darfst du dich nicht bekümmern, die närrische Welt will betrogen sein; hat man dir deine Witz noch übriggelassen, so gebrauchte die derselben zu deinem Vorteil, bilde dir ein, als ob du gleich dem Phönix, vom Unverstand zum Verstand durchs Feuer, und also zu einem neuen menschlichen Leben auch neu geboren worden seiest: doch wisse dabei, daß du noch nicht über den Graben, sondern mit Gefahr deiner Vernunft in diese Narrenkappe geschloffen bist; die Zeiten sein so wunderlich, daß niemand wissen kann, ob du ohne Verlust deines Lebens wieder heraus kommest; man kann geschwind in die Höll rennen aber wieder heraus zu entrinnen, wirts Schnaufens und Bartwischens brauchen. (127)

From here on out you should not concern yourself of these matters, since the foolish world wants to be deceived. Man has not left you out of the joke, so you should use the same advantage; just imagine yourself as if you were a phoenix that has endured a lack of judgment and regained that sanity through the fire, and as if you were newly born to another human existence. At the same time, know this: that you do not yet have one foot in the grave, and you are in real danger of losing your reasoning capabilities while you sleep in this fool's cap. The times are so whimsical, that noone can know if you once more will come out of it without the loss of your life. One can go quickly to hell, but to get out, well, you will need the dogs of hell.

This explanation is also a part of the frontispiece and therefore central to the theme of the novel. Simplicissimus is compared to a phoenix in his transformation and rebirth. His rebirth as a jester has much more potential for the loss of his salvation because the foolish world wants to be fooled, and Simplicissimus as jester is complicit. On the title engraving of the frontispiece of Simplicissimus we read:

Ich wurde durchs Feuer, wie Phoenix geboren. Ich flog durch die Lüffte! wurd doch nit verlorn. Ich wandert durchs Wasser, Ich raißt über Landt, in solchem Umschwermen macht ich mir bekindt, was mich oft betrüebet, und selten ergetzt, was war das? Ich habs in diß Büche gesetzt, damit sich der Leser gleich, wie ich itzt thue, entferne der Thorheit und lebe in Rhue. (Sestendrup, 31)⁷

I was born through fire like the Phoenix. I flew through the air, and was not forsaken! I wandered through water, I traveled through the countryside, and with such a terrible burden it became known to me, what had often afflicted me and seldom amused me, what was that? I have said it all in this book, so that the reader may as well as I do, remove oneself from foolishness and live in peace.

Clearly, the author hopes that his work will be a guide to right living by “removing oneself from [the] foolishness” of life, that is, by avoiding folly through reading others’ folly, as in the tradition of Brandt and Erasmus. In the work of Lazarillo de Tomes the author also describes the reason for writing in the prologue, yet says that he would not take offense if readers found his story entertaining. Lázaro also states that he writes so that the privileged may appreciate that they have Fortune on their side, unlike those who are born without equal privileges.

Simplicissimus as narrator also explicitly says that he writes to instruct while entertaining, namely, with the moral satirical pill, in the Continuatio. The Continuatio is the sixth

⁷ See website by Christina Schumann for transcription of frontispiece.

book of Simplicissimus, and is usually as part of Simplicissimus Teutsch, though it is counted as a separate book. Grimmelshausen wrote the sixth book in part to clarify that this work was not merely meant for entertainment. In the opening lines of the sixth book Grimmelshausen states that he uses this sweetened moral-satirical pill in order to sweeten the message, using humor to entertain while teaching a lesson:

daß ich aber zuzeiten etwas possierlich aufziehe, geschiehet der Zärtling halber, die keine heilsame Pillulen können verschlucken, sie seien dann zuvor überzuckert und vergüldt; geschweige, daß auch etwan die allergravitätische Männer, wann sie lauter ernstliche Schriften lesen sollen, das Buch ehender hinwegzulegen pflegen, als ein anders, das bei ihnen bisweilen ein kleines Lächlen herauspresset. (483-84)

The reason I am presenting my story with a dash of humor is that some delicate tenderlings can't swallow pills that are good for them unless they have been coated with sugar and gilt, not to mention the fact that even the most sober-sided of men will put down a serious book, whereas they keep reading one that makes them smile ever so little every once in a while.

Directly thereafter the narrator states that he eschews satirical attacks to demean the enemy (Stopp; also Worchester). Indeed, the criticism and laughter are not so much pejorative as they are didactic in the older humanistic vein.

SIMPLICISSIMUS AS THE JESTER FOR THE SAXONIAN ARMY

In his new assignment with the Saxonian army Simplicissimus desires to quit himself of the jester's garb. Not one scene of his duty as a jester is revealed. It is only stated that his jokes are more of the type that originates from an intelligent person. "Ich agierte zwar einen Narrn,

brachte aber keine grobe Zotten noch Büffelspossen vor, so daß meine Gaben und Aufzüge zwar einfältig genug, aber jedoch mehr sinnreich als närrisch fielen” (I was still acting the part of the fool, but my jokes had become more thoughtful than foolish; 171) The tutor, having quickly recognized Simplicissimus’s acuity, sees that he is no real fool, certainly not mentally ill, as jesters often were. Simplicissimus is overjoyed at the prospect of being released from the confinements of his jester garb, though he soon finds that he first must demonstrate his intelligence to others.

It is at this point that he meets one of the most influential persons of his life, Herzebruder (Heartbrother). Together with the pastor and the Knan (Simplicissimus’s foster father), Herzebruder belongs to a small group of several benevolent characters in Grimmelshausen’s novel. The presence of these good persons, however, sets Simplicissimus Teutsch apart from Lazarillo de Tormes, in which elements of goodness and altruistic characters are strikingly absent.⁸ Typically, however these decent persons typically receive more punishment than little reward for their virtues, but only punishment. Thus Herzebruder is wrongfully accused by his opposite, the competitive and jealous clerk Oliver, and subsequently punished. Simplicissimus had warned him against ambitious rivals, but Herzebruder’s belief in people makes him blind to this reality. It is only after this episode that Simplicissimus attempts on his own to escape his jester bonds.

In his desperation to escape, Simplicissimus is willing to risk his life for even a shred of dignity. “Ich wurde meines Stands so müd und satt, als wenn ichs mit lauter eisernen Kochleffeln gefressen hätte; einmal, ich gedachte, mich nicht mehr von jedermann so foppen zu lassen, sondern meines Narrnkleids los zu werden, und sollte ich gleich Leib und Leben darüber

⁸ In the dissertation by Mario André Chandler, he makes a point that the stepfather of Lazarillo named Zayde is the only benevolent character with a name other than his parents. The scenes that include these characters are brief.

verlieren” (I grew sick and tired of my jester’s garb and my foolery, and I no longer cared to be the butt of everyone’s jokes. I wanted to be free of all this, even if it cost me life and limb; 182). This episode is a turning point for Simplicissimus in that from this point forward, he begins to conspire how he may transcend the role of a jester. No longer the simpleton, he forgoes comedy or sarcasm. He has the intention never to perform the duties of a jester. This element of choice, though still minimal in *Grimmelshausen*, significantly distinguishes Simplicissimus Teutsch from Lazarillo de Tormes.

JUPITER: THE FOIL FOR SIMPLICISSIMUS AS THE HUNTER OF SOEST

Simplicissimus encounters Jupiter during his period as the Hunter of Soest — a Robin Hood type who justifies his shenanigans and thievery by giving back to the poor, though in fact this is only a ruse to conceal his real desire for greater wealth and status. Simplicissimus and his accomplices attempt to rob Jupiter, believing him to be a nobleman. Only after discovering his idiocy do they realize that they are stuck with him. Simplicissimus soon appreciates Jupiter’s presence however, for it seems to enhance his own reputation and social standing, much as the dwarf jester acted as a foil to Don Carlos, as we have seen. Simplicissimus and his accomplice, Jump-up, both suppress laughter at Jupiter’s stories, knowing that Jupiter would be offended. They also wish to exploit Jupiter’s insanity for their own entertainment. Jupiter of course does not sense the irony and continues to explain his master plan.

Simplicissimus also begins to contemplate what it means to be a fool, and learns to empathize with Jupiter. Jupiter’s presence also contributes to our ability to see that Simplicissimus is becoming a significant person in the world, though at times Jupiter transcends the role of mere foil. He gives Simplicissimus sound advice from his great learning; he is more the treasured adviser than the comedian, much as the younger Simplicissimus was at the court of

Hanau. Simplicissimus is as well read and knowledgeable of the Bible as Jupiter is of mythology and poetry. Each lives in his own world, with his respective norms.

Jupiter entertains a utopian vision of a German hero who will bring justice and unify all religions and all nations. There is a scene in which Jupiter tells Simplicissimus to rid himself of all his money, an ostensibly foolish piece of advice that within context makes practical sense: if Simplicissimus does not give away his newly found fortune, he will have neither reliable friends nor peace of mind (260). By retaining Jupiter as a jester, Simplicissimus acknowledges Jupiter's human dignity, a moment that recalls the issue of dehumanization during his role as a jester at the court of Hanau. Simplicissimus remarks, "I kept altogether mum about having been a jester, for I was ashamed of it" (Schultz-Behrend, 139), for he is ashamed of his former degradation in Hanau. He empathizes with Jupiter, and perhaps this is the reason why he does not elaborate on his idiocy, or share in the common amusement with him.

Simplicissimus fashions a coat of arms for himself in order to make his place in society visible — an audacious move that flaunted the social reality of the age, of course. The coat of arms consists of three red masks, each on a white background, and on the crest a precise image of himself as the court jester at Hanau, complete with the donkey's ears and bells he wore there:

das waren drei rote Larven in einem weißen Feld, und auf dem Helm ein
Brustbild eines jungen Narrn, in kälbernem Habit, mit einem Paar Hasenohren,
vornen mit Schellen geziert; denn ich dachte, dies schicke sich am besten zu
meinem Namen, weil ich Simplicius hieße. (252)

It had three red masks in a white field, on the crest the bust of a young jester in calfskin with a pair of rabbit ears, and bells in front. I thought this matched my name perfectly, for after all I was called 'Simplicius.'

While it is ridiculous that Simplicissimus considers the ability of social ascension possible, his coat of arms is a symbol for his last roles as a jester and what he himself represents. Although coats of arms did not always have a deeper meaning, in the simplicity of his design has profound meaning: it ideally symbolizes his name, “The Simpleton,” the name he received in his first role as a jester. It helps him remain mindful of when he was at the bottom of the wheel of fortune, and not to become too vain and proud. The symbol of the jester serves to justify both his name and his individual right to a coat of arms.

The jester is a symbol for shame and dehumanization, as well as being a source of comedy. As Yovel explains, the implications for social justice and social change in the shame of the picaro are important to understand the symbol of the role of the jester within Simplicissimus. Comedy — a form of Rabelaisian laughter — is, in the jester, an expression of rebellion against the sober limitations of social institutions.

CONCLUSION, PART 2

Grimmelshausen’s representation of the fool was influenced by previous Spanish picaresque novels and by the German and European tradition of fools’ literature. The depiction of the fool as a signifier for the loss of humanity comes to the forefront here. This changing definition of the fool is part of the historical innovativeness of the picaresque genre.

This dehumanization at the Court of Hanau and with the military is on elaborate display in Simplicissimus Teutsch. Simplicissimus can no longer perform his functions as a jester once he has comprehended its humiliating nature. Consequently, he risks everything to escape this role.

After obtaining a coat of arms as a show of social elevation, Simplicissimus still sees fit to be represented by a jester; he also retains a personal jester. This jester, however, comes to

represent the fool that Simplicissimus once was and is on the way to overcoming. Throughout the novel, indeed, the fool serves to illuminate the defects of society and morality by internalizing and representing, through the specific role of the picaro, the suffering and maltreatment of the other humans in his condition. The picaro becomes a kind of Everyman for all people of his social station.

In all of these episodes, the backdrop is the Thirty Years' War. The atrocities of war and the situations in which the naïve child finds himself are a form of protest, even as laughter acts as the narrative vehicle. Through the character of the picaro and the situations into which he is thrown by the vagaries of a war-torn world, Grimmelshausen uses comedy and satire to convey his messages. The picaro qua fool is thus less harshly judged than as in the religious reformatory tradition; there is an implicit desire in picaresque literature for changes in the human condition.

Finally, Simplicissimus likens his narrative to a contract with God, with language similar to that in Lazarillo de Tormes. It provides the ground for his ethics and, ultimately, for his decision to remove himself from society and live as a hermit.

CONCLUSION

As a form of fools' literature, the early modern picaresque genre may be said to have had roots in the humanistic and reformatory traditions. Sebastian Brant exemplified common human flaws that are nevertheless capable of improvement. Thomas Murner turned the tradition to polemical invective and condemnation of fellow human beings who did not share his beliefs. The picaresque genre adapted elements from both antecedent traditions into a new presentation of the fool that incorporated the courtly jester. The jester in history functioned both pragmatically — as a means to release political and social pressures through laughter — and as an ethical mirror.

The earlier fools' literature (Brant and Erasmus) operated didactically as a means to moral improvement, based upon a positive anthropological theory: we are all fools, but we have the power of choice. The Protestant Reformation brought with it a negative view of the human being as fundamentally flawed (original sin). The picaro seems to have borrowed from both anthropological views: the social station into which one is born allows for little improvement and less escape; we see everywhere the disintegration of morality, a lack of moral options. Nevertheless, by the acquisition of certain skills — comedy, cunning, adaptation — survival may be assured; indeed, sympathy is evoked in the wider community of “readers” that may well help to set the stage for the rise of tolerance (Toleranz) and understanding (Verständnis), and the accompanying greater concern with social well-being, in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment.

The two picaresque novels, Lazarillo de Tormes and Simplicissimus Teutsch utilize satire and comedy to convey a message. While the picaresque novel offers a humorous story (Grimmelshausen's “moral-satirical pill”) on the surface, its message must be decoded. Grimmelshausen refers to this concept as the “moral-satirical pill,” using humor to entertain while teaching a lesson. The insistence of the narrator on not making any satirical attacks refers

to the custom during the time period of using invective satire to criticize and debase the enemy. Grimmelshausen in this way is not pejorative, but only mildly critical. In many ways, he follows the humanist tradition in his gentle pedantic style.

The opening lines of Simplicissimus Teutsch and Lazarillo de Tormes explain that these “autobiographies” were written so that readers could learn from their experiences and avoid their mistakes (title engraving of the frontispiece to Simplicissimus). The prologue of Lazarillo de Tormes expresses the wish that readers learn, first of all, but beyond that they be entertained.

Using the mask of humor to publish works that were morally and socially critical was common in the sixteenth century, first as a means of avoiding censorship. Some critics (e.g., Menhennet) have argued that the novels are only humorous. Others (Whitbourn, Yovel, Ulloa, Schweitzer, Parker) find political-social criticism beneath the surface. Indeed, to read these texts only for amusement is to ignore this serious purpose. The element that carried this message was above all that of the fool. That fools’ literature did not survive the Enlightenment (except in subterranean genres) speaks to the political and social effects that accompanied that profound transition in European history from the early modern to the modern.

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