The Picaresque, Translation and the History of the Novel.

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1. Introduction

The picaresque as a generic category originates in the Spanish *Siglo de Oro*, with the two novels that constitute the core of its canon—**the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) and Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599, 1604)**.

In spite of the fact that definitions of the picaresque are always established upon these Spanish foundations, it has come to be regarded as a transnational phenomenon which also spans different periods and raises important questions about the nature and definition of a literary genre.

After its appearance in the Spanish 16th century, picaresque fiction soon spread all over Europe, exerting a particularly important influence during the 17th and 18th centuries in Germany, France and above all England, after which its impact diminished gradually.

A study of the picaresque calls for a dynamic, flexible, and open-ended model. When talking about the picaresque we should not countenance it as a solid and coherent whole, but rather as a fluid set of features that had a series of precedents, an important foundational moment in the Spanish 16th and 17th centuries, and then spread out in a non-linear way. It grew instead into a complex web whose heterogeneous components were brought together by the fact that these new varieties of prose fiction were responding to similar cultural, social and economic realities.

These new printed artefacts resulted from the demands of readers as consumers and the policies of publishers and printers as producers of marketable goods. Because one of those common, transnational components that determined the emergence of the modern novel was the invention of print, and the accompanying emergence of a market for mass-produced, affordable printed matter—much of which consisted of popular realistic fiction. This sort of fiction frequently overlapped with early modern types of news reports of a sensationalist kind.

We must not think, however, that all the fiction which enjoyed such popular demand was realistic. Romance, the fantasy fiction of the day—which included chivalric novels—also was, like the picaresque, among the founding subgenres of the modern novel.

But romance and chivalric fiction hailed from a tradition that had deep roots in the Middle Ages, and their success was to a large extent attributable to a certain nostalgia for ideals and values that were receding into the distance: namely courly love, or the aristocratic codes of errant knighthood.

The picaresque, by contrast, defined the literary ground where modernity sought to explore universal philosophical concerns through the particulars of a literary plot. The picaresque constitutes a critical paradigm for the study of the origins and evolution of the novel as the discursive space where the modern self—the individual—engages with the other—with society and its changing structures.

The historian of the novel Thomas Pavel views the novel as an ambivalent, paradoxical, and open-ended genre that embodies the philosophical and epistemological concerns of modernity. In this critical narrative the picaresque occupies an important space in the transition that led first

from the end of the Middle Ages, then into the Renaissance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and finally flowed into the Enlightenment during the eighteenth century. This is why the picaresque is so important when it comes to an assessment of eighteenth-century prose fiction. It was in the 18th century when the novel established itself as one of the dominant literary genres all over Europe, and above all within the English canon.

As one of the most emblematic literary embodiments of modernity my lecture will trace the history that evolved from the picaresque—a genre that appeared during the Spanish Renaissance, that is, during early modernity—into the golden age of the novel, which flourished in particular during the English Enlightenment, in the midst of full modernity.

In the case of English prose, the picaresque must be studied in parallel with analogous traditions that addressed similar concerns and responded to the same early modern cultural stimuli—such as rogue literature. The fact that the Spanish picaresque was relatively easy to transfer into the English canon confirms that they were all textual varieties of a similar phenomenon which extended over several linguistic traditions.

The picaresque and its relation to the emergence of the novel also appear inextricably tied to the role of translation in the transmission of literary standards. In this lecture I will use the concept of translation understood in very broad terms. Translation here casts its net, as it were, in a broad field that goes from imitation and adaptation to mere linguistic translation. The path that leads from the picaresque to the modern novel is a paradigmatic example of how literary traditions are essentially international, and it demonstrates that the processes involved in translation play a fundamental—and very often ignored—role in their establishment.

This is why the best model for an approach to the picaresque contemplates it as part of a larger network. Its heterogeneity requires an interdisciplinary approach to the core of the picaresque and its related discourses, which must include literary theory, cultural and gender studies, social, political and economic history, and of course, translation studies.

Of course, we must not think that the picaresque came out of the blue. Some of the features of the picaresque, such as its comic, satirical tone, or its social realism have important precedents in works like Boccaccio's *Decameron* or Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (both dating from the 14th century). Other scholars have stretched the concept of the picaresque further back to Roman fiction, and list Petronius's *Satyricon* (*ca.* 1st century AD) or Apuleius's *Golden Ass* (*ca.* 2nd century AD) among the earliest picaresque novels.

The international success of the picaresque as an important episode in the history of the novel cannot be separated from the influence of Cervantes. The picaresque has been frequently eclipsed by the overwhelming shadow cast by *Don Quijote* upon literary history. But we must agree with Michel Cavillac when he claims that Mateo Alemán (the author of *Guzmán de Alfarache*) deserves to stand side by side with Cervantes. Francisco Rico has also demonstrated the foundational status of *Lazarillo de Tormes*.

The first part of my lecture will concentrate on how the picaresque spread all over Europe between the 16th and the 18th centuries, against the background of important social, economic, and political changes.

The second part of my lecture will focus on how translations of Spanish picaresque intersected with an English variety of prose fiction called rogue literature, which in turn overlapped with early modern journalism. The agents and networks that intervened in the production and distribution of both picaresque and rogue fiction overlapped with the agents and

networks that catered for the readers of broadsheets, chapbooks and other types of popular print products.

The evolution, and the relevance of the picaresque after the 18th century has been subject to much controversy. There is not a consensus on how, or even whether the picaresque as a genre survived beyond its golden age—that is the period that went from the 16th to the 18th centuries. The third and final part of my lecture will look at some accounts of how translation and adaptation have changed the nature of the original picaresque. And I will conclude by examining some of the arguments in favour and against the status of the *pícaro* as a modern myth, and of the picaresque as a relevant literary mode still in common currency.

2. The picaresque: modernity, economic and social history.

The popularity of the picaresque coincides with the emergence of a financial capitalist economy in Western Europe, and with the transition that led from feudal agrarian societies ruled by the hereditary aristocracy to the emergence of powerful nation-states endowed with more sophisticated administrations run by well-educated bureaucrats.

Feudal societies relied on the values of honour and personal fidelity, on the exchange of service for rewards. These principles regulated social and economic relations within a strict hierarchy. The Church provided literate clerics for the administration of kingdoms or fiefs, and above all it provided an ideology which proclaimed that the order of society was identical with the order of Nature and of Creation. As such, this social order was legitimized by God's indisputable will.

The changes that facilitated the emergence of an affluent middle class of individuals educated in more secular values also undermined the legitimacy of the values that buttressed feudalism. Towards the seventeenth century new philosophical and scientific models had started to displace the traditional hierarchies of a medieval cosmos sustained by divine intervention.

The relation between lords and servants, founded upon fidelity and honour, was gradually displaced by a system of wages in which labour was exchanged for cash. The new money-based economy and the pursuit of self-interest now run underneath the official rhetoric which still voiced many of the traditional values.

The picaresque thematizes this new relation of the individual with society and with other individuals. It examines the values that regulate these relations and exposes the contradictions between the official rhetoric and the naked ethos of self-interest that actually sustains social interaction. The *pícaro* is an outsider—normally a young boy who has abruptly lost his innocence and then must find his way in a hostile environment. These conditions educate him in trickery and deceit. In the case of female *pícaras*, their survival depends on the commodification of sex, i.e. the exchange of sexual favours for goods or money—in other words, prostitution.

This as regards the topics of 16th and 17th-c. picaresque fiction.

In formal terms, one of the most relevant features of the picaresque is the presence of a first-person narrator—as opposed to its actual author. The picaresque also relies on a new type of discourse that portrays itself as both a true account of subjective experience and a faithful description of the social landscape. But the events narrated are filtered for the actual reader through the subjective voice of the narrator. This distance between the narrator and the contents

of his plot contributes to the density of a text that frequently had a virtual narratee—besides its actual readers.

The narrative complexity of the picaresque, and the external agents that produced these texts—the readers as consumers, and the publishers and printers as profit-seeking entrepreneurs—come together in the articulation of its main concerns: poverty, vagrancy, crime, prostitution. As mentioned above, these plots deal with the struggle of alienated individuals for material survival first, and then for social acceptance, or at least for accommodation within a troubled environment which upholds lofty ethical standards as it also requires the reckless pursuit of self-interest.

This is why the picaresque constitutes a literary reponse to societies that are in the middle of a transition from one social and economic model to another. Spain underwent one of these transitions between the last decades of the 15th century and the early years of the 17th century. England did too, at around the same period—although as we shall see there were differences between the Spanish and the English case.

While posing as a sincere autobiographical narrator providing his narratee with a true account of his own personal and subjective experience, the first-person protagonist of the picaresque appears before actual readers as an unreliable storyteller.

Claudio Guillén claims that the notion of language as 'the instrument of dissimulation or of irony' is one of the main features of picaresque fiction. As the expression of an alienated interiority in dialectical confrotation with the other, with a hostile enviroment, couched in a first-person autobiographical account, the picaresque expresses a very modern type of disenchantment and ambiguity. By exposing how an unreliable narrator can claim to be telling a story while actually implying something different, readers are confronted with the aporias of the language and the narratives upon which we build our world. This is one of the great challenges of the picaresque. This is also one of its greatest artistic achievements.

The result is a complex discursive artefact made up of intersecting narrative planes. And the autobiographical narrator gilds with exemplary rhetoric a plot which *de facto* demonstrates that the best—sometimes the only—option for survival is trickery and a disregard for the very moral standards that he or she claims to sustain.

These first-person narrative accounts frequently appear as letters. *Lazarillo de Tormes* is a long letter penned by the autobiographical narrator for an unknown addressee. One of the innovative trends that the picaresque, as an episode in the emergence of the novel, illustrates, is the literary articulation of a discourse for the self-fashioning, the self-construction, of a modern individual. According to Francisco Rico, *Lazarillo de Tormes* may have circulated in manuscript as a true story, posing as a piece of news report.

This epistolary character is an aspect of early modern novels that would be further developed in other subsequent 18th-century English novels. Epistolary fiction in the European 18th century evinces and unfolds the potential for alternative points of view and the complex narrative levels that were already present in some of the earliest Spanish works of picaresque fiction such as *Lazarillo*.

I have mentioned before that the *pícaro* is normally a young boy, or a young girl, who is thrown into a hostile environment that teaches him or her devious strategies for survival. Life, in this respect, teaches the *pícaro* the wrong type of lesson. And if early modern prose fiction *in general* stirred considerable anxiety about its exemplarity, the picaresque naturally aroused

much concern among moralists and censors. Its authors, publishers, and translators constantly emphasised its negative exemplarity.

One of the most productive techniques of these early plots—which contributed to the ambiguity mentioned above—originates in the the tension between the actual events being told, on the one hand, and the domesticating tendencies that try to tone them down or even cover them, usually with moralising speeches, or happy endings.

More often than not, however, the attempts to cover the negative aspects of the plot and the cynicism of its protagonists fail to obliterate the real drift of the story. Such is the case, for instance, in Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, in early 17th-century Spain. In Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, or *Colonel Jacque*, and in other English rogue or picaresque fiction. Happy endings, and stories of personal conversion do not completely resolve the contradictions between the moral claims of the narrator, and the methods that the protagonist has used to survive, and even to thrive and eventually succeed in life.

Historians of the English novel have underlined the similarities between the narrative strategies of Spanish picaresque fiction and English rogue literature. These two, in turn, also share significant features with the genre of spiritual autobiography. *Pícaros* and rogues frequently present their biographies through narratives of personal conversion—following similar patterns to those established by Augustine's *Confessions* (4th c. AD), Santa Teresa's *Libro de su vida* (1562-1565) or John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). The difference of course is that in true spiritual autobiographies there is a coherent and linear narrative that leads from sin to salvation, whereas *pícaros* and rogues evolve from poverty and deprivation towards the cynical assimilation of the self-interested strategies and the dissimulation he or she must apply for social integration—even though the steps the *pícaro* and the rogue take in their respective paths contradict the exemplary rhetoric and the moral discourse voiced by these autobiographical narrators. This creates what the historian of the English novel Michael McKeon has described as 'two levels of narrative consciousness'.

This moral paradox has its counterpart as regards narrative techniques. We have already seen how unreliable the autobiographical narrator of the picaresque can be. In certain cases the exchange of letters in epistolary novels contributes to create in readers an increased awareness of the fact that life can be contemplated from many different perspectives—that reality is a dialogical discursive artefact, consisting of different subjective points of view that do not always find a common harmonious ground, or a dialectical resolution. The historian of the novel Thomas Pavel sees in the picaresque the linguistic expression of the break-up of social bondages among humans: and this fragmentation is encapsulated in its language and its narrative rhetoric.

Guzmán de Alfarache claimed to be a 'watch tower of human existence'. The realist narrative techniques of the picaresque—which can be described as 'plausible lies'—rely on a sort of discourse in which language deceitfully stands as a transparent vehicle. This notion of a neutral medium which conveys what actually happens—which is a mirror of reality—overlaps with the narrative rhetoric employed in historical chronicles and even more importantly with early modern news reports. In 1830, more than two hundred years after *Guzmán de Alfarache*, the French novelist Stendhal still continued to define the novel as 'A mirror carried along a high road' ('*Un roman est un miroir qui se promène sur une grande route.*').

We've seen how Francisco Rico suggested that *Lazarillo de Tormes* may have circulated as a true manuscript report before it was ever published. As we shall see later, the criminal biographies which were in such great demand as 'true stories' in 17th- and 18th-century England constitute another case in point. Claudio Guillén emphasises that the picaresque and the realist

novel use the same type of discourse employed by historians, or by the authors of those criminal biographies which oscillated between actual cases and plausible lies, and consequently straddled the generic boundaries that separate prose fiction from historical biography and from early journalism.

It was only natural that the Spanish picaresque could become successfully integrated within the networks which in England were issuing news pamphlets and other sort of popular printed products—such as the rogue biographies produced by Richard Head and Francis Kirkman—about whom more later.

The growth of a market for the consumption of printed matter and the emergence of the picaresque in Spain coincided with the rise of news pamphlets and rogue literature in England between the 16th and the 18th centuries. And for the first time, the evolution of literary genres and the type of discourse, topics and narrative techniques they used responded to the demands of their consumers more than to any sort of aesthetic criteria.

Claudio Guillén accurately concludes that the joint intervention of publishers and readers was instrumental in the emergence of the picaresque first, and then of the modern novel. The novel is a printed literary artefact marketed for the consumption of middle-class readers. This is why the novel is the modern literary genre par excellence.

The printing press as a new technology had made this possible. Although some books could still be expensive and elitist, publishers could also produce large amounts of more affordable volumes in smaller formats. And above all they could produce chapbooks and pamphlets that cost only a few pennies, and could consequently reach much wider audiences.

The picaresque exemplifies the canon-building power of the new conditions for the production and reception of printed matter. In other words, it illustrates the power of printers and publishers, of readers as consumers, to shape literary history.

These hybrids of fact and fiction, story and true reports, are the early modern equivalent of our current reality shows on tv. Then as now they satisfy an avid consumer demand for *true* stories that are actually carefully orchestrated. As with modern audiences in satellite tv and in the internet, we have always felt a morbid curiosity, a taste for gossip, and a fascination, for sensationalist stories peppered with crime, moral corruption, sex and violence. Picaresque fiction and rogue literature, criminal biographies and 'news' reports satisfied this thirst for 'true stories' among early modern audiences. And this combination of fact and fiction was as profitable for early modern printers and publishers as reality shows are for tv producers today.

3. The Spanish picaresque and English rogue literature

Spain and England responded in different ways to those momentous social, economic and cultural transitions that took place in Europe between the 15th and the 18th centuries.

In Spain the development of a mercantilist bourgeoisie and its accompanying values stagnated as its theocratic empire went into an inexorable decline, and closed in upon itself.

In England, by contrast, these changes accelerated towards the end of the 17th century, when Britain started to build an empire founded upon global expansion and international trade, which in turn facilitated the growth of a sophisticated financial economy at home.

The great French scholar Michel Cavillac (2010, p. 3) reads *Guzmán de Alfarache* as a metaphor for the arrested development of the Spanish bourgeoisie and its values—such as rational mercantilism, or political pragmatism. In the same vein, Claudio Guillén declares that '… the rise of the novel in sixteenth-century Spain seems to have been rooted not in the triumph but in the frustration of the bourgeoisie'.

The historian of the English novel, Michael McKeon also sees the picaresque in Spain as the literary expression of these middle-class, meritocratic values, and he understands the absorption of the Spanish picaresque into the emerging tradition of the English novel as symptomatic of the triumph across the Channel of the same middle-class values that had been truncated in Spain.

When the Spanish picaresque spread throughout Europe it merged with other similar native traditions. Before the translation of *Lazarillo de Tormes* into English (in the 1570s and 1580s), and indeed, before the translation of *La Celestina*, or *Guzmán de Alfarache* (in the early 17th century) there already existed a native tradition of rogue literature in England. According to the literary historian Arthur Kinney the rogue pamphlets constitute 'nothing less momentous than the birth of the novel in England'.

Consequently, rogue pamphlets and traditional jestbooks intersected with the popularity of James Mabbe's *The Rogue*, and they all together flowed into the important phenomenon of the English criminal biographies that became so popular towards the end of the 17th century. In turn, the joint influence of the picaresque and the native tradition of rogue pamphlets stand behind successful novels like Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* or *Roxana*.

One of the most interesting English cases is William Harman's *A Caveat for Common Cursitors Vulgarely Called Vagabones*. The dates of Harman's text (1566, 1568 twice, 1573) show that roguery predated the presence of the picaresque in England. Like the picaresque, Harman's *Caveat* was a response to the problems of crime and poverty raised by the rapid processes of urbanization. Economic development and the migration from the country to the city had created significant problems in prosperous but also socially disfunctional cities all over Europe. The concern of moralists, authorities and scholars found its expression in a variety of formats.

The shape that some of these responses took oscillated between formal proposals for social and political reform launched by humanists like Juan Luis Vives—his *De subventione pauperum*, i.e. *On the Relief of the Poor*, 1526—and texts like Harman's *Caveat*, which wavered between the rhetoric of a merely descriptive report addressed to those who had the power to implement new policies, and the fiction of a jestbook designed for the entertainment of the reading public.

Thomas Harman's *Caveat* is therefore a good example of this continuum between mere fiction, reformist reports, and true accounts of the early modern urban underworld of crime and prostitution. Harman's *Caveat* also influenced historians like William Harrison's *Description of England*—which was part of Holinshed's *Chronicles*. But it was also imitated and plundered by authors who were seeking a profit, like Thomas Dekker in his *Lantern and Candlelight* (1608).

It also provides an interesting connection with late 17th-century roguery, since it was also imitated by Richard Head in his important *The English Rogue*. Like the picaresque, *The English Rogue* reveals society as a battlefield where everyone is competing against everybody else.

The fact that the combination of Mabbe's English rendering of one of the central works of the Spanish picaresque (his *The Rogue*) with native products like Harman's *Caveat* found a

prolific progeny in historians, hacks, and Richard Head's half-fictional account, half-journalistic report (or posing as such), illustrates the nature of roguery: It also demonstrates how both the picaresque and rogue fiction straddle the fields of story and history. And how this discursive indeterminacy runs parallel with their moral paradoxes.

But there were also differences. Whereas the picaresque in general (and *Guzmán de Alfarache* in particular) openly moralized, and even provided obscure learned references for the more scholarly readers, Head and Kirkman were simply interested in the sort of materials that they could cull from the most morbid aspects of traditional picaresque, and then piled on them to cater to the taste of their audiences. Once this market of news, biographies, scandalous lives of thieves, pirates, male and female rogues, had become well established and profitable, these heirs of the picaresque underwent a literarily dignifying treatment, by turning them into moralizing novels with an exemplary and happy end—as we can see in *Moll Flanders* or *Roderick Random*.

The Spanish picaresque had also undergone a similar evolution in England that oscillated between fascination with crime and the realistic account of social conditions, on the one hand, and the justification of these squalid stories through the sort of moralization that could legitimize them in the eyes of moralists and the authorities. Thus, James Mabbe construed his translations of *La Celestina* or *Guzman de Alfarache* as cases of negative exemplarity couched in brilliant prose style and skilful character construction. And a few decades before, the translator of *Lazarillo de Tormes* has offered it as a true account of the lives and customs of Spaniards.

But after the editorial success of Mabbe's *The Rogue*, the Spanish picaresque was absorbed and lionized by commercial and entreprising publishers like Head and Kirkman, who as we have seen combined it with the native tradition of rogue fiction. Like many other publishers of similar texts in the period, they never hesitated to manipulate copy to maximize profits.

The success of the picaresque and of rogue fiction also had an impact upon spiritual literature. We have already mentioned how Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress* is an exemplary and allegorical spiritual biography. But Bunyan also produced the biography of a rogue, *Mr Badman*, with the intention of turning him into a negative example of what a godly, virtuous Christian should never do.

Critics like Alexander Parker actually see Bunyan's *The Life and Death of Mr Badman* (1680) as part of the picaresque tradition—an offspring, as it were, of Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*. The contrasts between Bunyan's *Mr Badman* and the protagonist of his *Pilgrim's Progress* reinforce the view of the *pícaro* as the protagonist of a negative narrative of conversion. Some critics (e.g. Walter Allen) actually describe Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* as a sort of godly picaresque novel.

Popular criminal biographies like Richard Head's *The English Rogue*, and negative spiritual biographies like Bunyan's *Mr Badman* constitute some of the paths through which the Spanish picaresque found its way into the English novel of the 18th century.

Many of the great English novels of the 18th century grew out of a publishing market within which criminal biographies—of both male and female rogues—were in great demand. Straddling the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries, these texts, combining true reports and fiction, facilitated the emergence of works like Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) or Smollett's *Roderick Random* (1748).

Defoe and Smollett were seeking to solidify their careers as professional authors, and as they did so, they sought to establish a reputation and cash in on a new variety of prose fiction that followed the patterns of products that were in great demand by the reading public. Scholars like John Richetti emphasize the undoubtedly commercial aim but also the moral and aesthetic dignification that these canonical English novels sought to bring to what had always been a tremendously popular genre—crime fiction.

Experts in Anglo-Spanish literary relations during this period, like Gustav Ungerer, have demonstrated how the figure of the rogue was appropriated for a variety of purposes, and how its character was manipulated to serve commercial purposes, in particular with its adaptation to popular calendars which featured a large diversity of texts, including short picaresque or roguish episodes similar to those featured in the picaresque and in rogue fiction. Ungerer provides many samples of English calendars in the late 17th and early 18th centuries that prove the enormous popular appeal of these fictional characters, beyond an upper- or upper-middle class readership.

According to other scholars, like Calhoun Winton, the origins of the English picaresque *lie* somewhere 'in that murky swamp which is 17th-c. London printing and publishing practice'. Winton devices the concept of 'Nugget fiction' to describe the sort of short pieces of report/fiction that filled periodical publications in the period. The popular Newgate Calendars, which proved to be so influential right up to the 19th century, were precisely compilations, protean and constantly changing collections of this sort of 'nugget fiction'.

I have mentioned before that following in the wake of the success of rogue pamphlets and fiction, there was a process of dignification and domestication of the *pícaro* and the rogue, which also sought to bank in on its profitability. Tobias Smollett's *Roderick Random* is a good example here of the transition from picaresque to romance, since in this volume the adventures and misadventures of this English *pícaro*–who is both a victim of society and also a rogue, and a swindler—end with a romantic and economically profitable marriage wrapped up in the sentimentalizing and moralizing rhetoric of romance fiction. The unbalance between the sentimentalizing and moralizing final part of the novel and the rest is quite obvious and representative of this combination.

Roderick Random as an interesting product, which apprehends the picaresque through the transmutation that it underwent in Lesage's *Gil Blas*—which Smollett was translating at around the same time as he wrote this novel. *Gil Blas*, in turn, was produced under the influence of a French translation of *Guzmán de Alfarache*—which shows how complicated were the paths that the picaresque took in early modern Europe.

Thus, if the English translation of *Guzmán de Alfarache* had combined with the success of native rogue fiction to encourage Smollett to produce a novel that featured this sort of story, the moralizing transformation and translation that the models of the Spanish picaresque had undergone in France with *Gil Blas* encouraged Smollett first to translate this French novel into English, and then also to adopt some of its techniques and ideas into the novel that would make his fortune.

Roderick Random shows how the Spanish *pícaros* were transformed into English *pícaros* who achieved respectability and social acceptance through their acquisition of wealth. Moll Flanders follows a similar path: after a life of roguery and prostitution, she establishes herself as a successful member of society thanks to her prosperity and wealth.

As opposed to Spain—where the *pícaro* may have gained a precarious hold on social respectability and material progress, but always remained a stigmatized half-outsider, in the French, German and English picaresque novel, these dispossessed characters enjoy a certain

potential to evolve towards respectability and even prosperity as fully integrated members of the bourgeoisie. This turns the English picaresque, or rather the novels that were inspired by the Spanish picaresque, into narratives of social mobility. Here the lower classes had an opportunity to improve their station in life (or in some cases, see it restored after a series of misfortunes) precisely because of their inherent virtue and nobility—although they had to occasionally and in different degrees resort to trickstery and theft, as was the case with *Roderick Random*.

These novels were then quite reassuring for the bourgeoisie because besides celebrating social mobility they also portrayed these middle classes as inherently virtuous and noble—a nobility of the soul, a sort of material as well as spiritual meritocracy, as opposed to the nobility of blood that constituted the Spanish caste system—which occluded any sort of outlet for those who were not *Cristianos Viejos* in Spain.

There are also differences between male *pícaros* and female *pícaras*. In his interesting comparison between Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* and Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Blanco Aguinaga emphasises the continuities between female Spanish and English *pícaras* as opposed to the differences between the male *pícaros* and their English counterparts. The social and economic conditions of women in both countries during their respective periods show more similarities than they did with regard to male pícaros.

If Defoe found inspiration for his character in Mateo Alemán's *pícaro*, he also moulded it after a famous English female rogue, Mary Frith, also known as Moll Cutpurse, whose deeds had already achieved mythical status in the early years of the 17th century. Since then she had become a cultural and literary icon. Once again, we find the combination of English rogue fiction and Spanish picaresque coming together in the construction of important novels within the canon of 18th-century English prose. Defoe also mentions *Don Quijote* and *Lazarillo de Tormes* in his writings, and in his own 'Preface' to *Moll Flanders* he echoes Ginés de Pasamonte's in *Don Quixote*, 'regarding the contrived nature of 'fictional' picaresque 'Lives''. Defoe's library also had a copy of the famous Spanish picaresque novel *La pícara Justina* in its original Spanish.

Gustav Ungerer proves how the account of Mary Frith's (aka Moll Cutpurse) life constitutes an exemplary case of the transition between life and literary myth, and also a fundamental case study for the analysis of the crystalization in narrative prose current social and gender problems. Mary Frith and her complex sexual identity also poses interesting potential for analysis.

Ungerer also uses the case of Mary Frith to illustrate the commercial and editorial strategies employed by the publishers of rogue fiction and criminal biographies. Driven almost exclusively by market demand, they used to have teams of hacks working for them, and they also felt free to tamper with the texts. These publishers stood at the forefront of the markets of popular prose fiction, whose new dynamics completely ignored claims of individual authorship, or creative rights, and had no respect for the integrity of the texts either.

Janet Todd and Elizabeth Spearing, the editors of a modern edition of the criminal biographies of Moll Cutpurse and Mary Carleton underline some features in these texts that are already familiar to us: their generic indeterminacy, and their autobiographical character. In displaying the autobiography of two lower-class women who manage to survive and even thrive by *unusual* means and strategies which in some cases mimic the workings of the elite, these two texts enact the interaction between alienated self and social other that constitutes one of the defining features of the picaresque.

Nicholas Spadaccini emphasizes the differences between *Guzmán* as one of the central works in the Spanish picaresque, and *Moll Flanders* as the best representative of the English

picaresque. The patent mercantilist mentality of Defoe as it appears in the 'triumph' of his *pícara* and her redemption through achieving a situation of affluence that guarantees her social respectability is proof that the English bourgeoisie succedded in establishing these values at the very center of their social system, as opposed to the spiritual aspirations of certain Spanish *pícaros*, some of which result from the frustration of the values that triumphed in England.

4. The picaresque: from genre to myth.

We saw above that Claudio Guillén included among the salient strategies of the picaresque the paradoxical notion of language as 'the instrument of dissimulation or of irony' which is simultaneously used to inform a first-person autobiographical expression of the real inner self of the *pícaro* and an account of the world as this unstable subjectivity apprehends it. The picaresque thus confronts readers with the inherent aporias involved in the representation of the modern self and its world. This is what turns the picaresque into an essentially modern literary artefact that sets it on the path for its status as a literary myth, or a cultural icon beyond the historical context in which it originated.

Taking as their starting point rogue literature and the sort of crime fiction that we have studied in the English 17th and 18th centuries, some scholars extend their analysis of crime fiction to the 19th century. Other claim that the picaresque, if it ever survived after the 18th century, did more so as a myth or a mode, rather than as a genre in its own right.

This view is illustrated by Jerome Christensen, who lists the following among the features that Byron's *Don Juan* shares with the picaresque: the blurred distinction between the protagonist and the author, moral dissolution, and irony. The inherent anomie of Don Juan's world also overlaps with the chaos that underpins the picaresque.

Progressing even further into the 19th century, Sherman Eoff is among those who see traces of the picaresque in some of Dickens's novels. Without classifying them as *pícaros*, Harry Sieber underlined the similarities between some of Dickens's characters and above all their circumstances—as helpless individuals struggling within a hostile environment—and those that engulfed the original *pícaros*.

Maximillian Novak identifies the Newgate Calendars phenomena, with their morbid and exemplary criminal biographies as one of the main sources of William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794). The Newgate Calendars were compilations into a single volume of originally loose chapbooks and broadsheets. This episodic anthology of crime fiction enjoyed a long-lasting popularity, and went through many different editions, reaching up to 1840. The different editions of the Newgate Calendars underwent constant changes and fluctuations. It was, therefore, a highly adaptable and flexible text, that defied traditional notions of authorship and fetishistic attachments to a single, authentic text. Its popular demand is a testimony to the fact that this was a format that worked very well in the publishing market.

That important authors like William Godwin, who was also a radical political thinker of the first order, found in the Newgate Calendar a source for the literary expression of his political ideas and his denunciation of social injustice demonstrates the lasting permeability between the discourse of verisimilitude that inspired the Spanish picaresque and English rogue fiction, on the one hand, and the discourse of social, political and economic reform that inspired Godwin, on the other.

As we have seen in the first part of this lecture, this is a tradition that goes back to the sixteenth century. The processes of urban migration and industrialization in late 18th- and early 19th-century England had also provoked problems that resembled those brought about by the social and economic changes experienced by Spain and England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One of the features that may indeed turn the pícaro into one of the myths of modernity lies in the fact that he embodies the confrontation of an individual in search for survival against a hostile social world founded upon chaos.

Some other scholars think of the picaresque as a mode, a tone, or an ethos, rather than a myth or a formal invariant. Arnold Weinstein takes the formal autobiographical component as his starting point, and uses three picaresque novels, *Lazarillo, Buscón* and *Simplicissimus* to illustrate the first stage in his account of the avatars of the self in Western fiction.

Weinstein pursues a thread of common features shared by these three works, and significantly concludes with Rousseau's *Les Confessions*. This amounts to an implicit acknowledgement of the importance of Augustine's *Confessions* when it comes to the history of the self in the West, and to certain narrative patterns in the long tradition of the novel, such as the picaresque, narratives of conversion, or spiritual autobiography.

Howard Mancing's definition of the picaresque as a Protean form leads him to include in his survey Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), Thomas Mann's *Felix Krull* (1954) or Gunter Grass' *The Tin Drum* (1959), among others. These works also feature in other accounts of the picaresque as an international fictional mode that extends to contemporary fiction.

Other critics like Christoph Ehland and Robert Fajen stretch the concept of the pícaro beyond the *classical* period of the picaresque (16th-18th century), beyond its definition as a myth, and even beyond its presence in 19th- and 20th-century fiction. They also view the picaresque as a component in modern popular culture—including tv series and movies. A similar view of the rogue in modern popular culture features in the introduction to Craig Dionne & Steve Mentz's *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture* (2004). This development of the concept of the picaresque belongs more to the field of cultural studies rather than literary history, and although this is a very controversial view it has found a certain echo among cultural historians. It has also led to concepts like the *neo-picaresque*.

Richard Lewis applies his peculiar concept of the picaresque saint to authors like Alberto Moravia, Albert Camus, André Malraux, William Faulkner, or Graham Greene. He endorses the well-known image of the *pícaro* as a sort of hero that struggles against a hostile environment, but endows it with unequivocal spiritual, quasi-mystical overtones. In his view the picaresque saint always seeks to transcend these dire material circumstances. This interpretation would therefore amount to a latter-day return of the picaresque to one of its original sources, i.e. the spiritual autobiography—but this time, without the satire and the irony.

A very recent book by Ligia Tomoiaga (*Elements of the Picaresque in Contemporary British Fiction*, 2012) sets out to demonstrate that the picaresque is 'a cultural and literary invariant' of British fiction. The author follows the usual path, starting with the Spanish picaresque, and then on to English rogue fiction and the usual names from the 18th century—i.e. Defoe, Smollett, or Fielding. In the 19th century she enlists Byron and Dickens, and moves on to the Angry Young Men novelists of the mid 20th century. The second part of Tomoiaga's volume is devoted to Postmodern fiction with a focus on their views of the self—which confirms the continuing appeal that the concept of the *picaresque* still holds for those scholars interested in the literary expression of modern and postmodern individualism. The novels that Tomoiaga enlists include

Salman Rushdie's *Shame*, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Malcolm Bradbury's *Doctor Criminale*, or Kazuo Izhiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, among several others.

Edward Friedman's ambitious account of female rogues or *pícaras* (*The Antiheroine's Voice: Narrative Discourse and Transformations of the Picaresque*, 1987) starts with *La Lozana Andaluza* in 1528, continues with other 16th- and 17th-centuries Spanish *pícaras*, moves on to the 18th century with Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* by way of Mary Frith and other English female rogues, and finally proceeds on to 20th-century novels. The postmodern colophon is Erica Jong's *Fanny: Being the True History of the Adventures of Fanny Hackabout-Jones*. This 1980 novel recreates the world, the formats, and the language of the 18th-century English novel, and includes historial characters in its plot—thus, as in the classical picaresque, once more, truth and fiction coexist in the same text. With *Fanny* we can say that the essentially modern satire and irony of the original picaresque have evolved towards the status of postmodern feminist historical fiction.

Whether we lend credibility to their thesis or not, Lewis, Friedman, Tomoiaga and other scholars who emphasize the persistence of the picaresque until our own days prove that for some critics the heuristic power of the picaresque has not exhausted its potential.