

**You Never “Sausage” a Sight¹: Food and the Search
for Olfactory Truth in *Lazarillo de Tormes***

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With the prominence of hunger and the search for food in the picaresque *Lazarillo de Tormes*, one might quickly assert that there is nothing novel to be said about such a theme in such a work.² To claim this potential redundancy, however, is to not consider the question in the context in which it was written. While food had certainly been included in other literary works before the sixteenth century, the explicit nature of Lazarillo’s hunger and his constant quest to satisfy it brings food to the forefront in the work. The reader joins with the young rogue as he schemes and tricks his way to procuring (never) enough sustenance to fill his empty belly. The obvious nature of food in the work is the very reason that it merits further consideration. That the anonymous author wrote a piece with food as a governing theme asks the reader to return to the text to see if there are more treasures to glean from the narrative. Doing so adds even further commentary on the place of the work in Renaissance Spain and as a forerunner for Golden Age literature in the Peninsula.

The discourse provided comes through the voice of the protagonist himself as he recounts life with a series of masters, finally ending with his current adult situation, married to the priest’s mistress. The first-person narrative, directed toward the unidentified “Vuestra Merced” describes the many ways that the neglected Lazarillo manipulated situations in order to procure food for himself. In this, the reader is drawn over and over again to the boy’s mouth and tongue. Lazarillo uses them to taste and eat the food he finds but the use of his mouth also surrounds this consumption. Though Lazarillo’s tricks are many and varied, his speech factors heavily in them, either as he manipulates the situation in order to get the food (pre-consumption) or as he explains away the guilt that his master would place on him for having illicitly taken the food (post-consumption). In this way, Lazarillo’s use of his mouth for speaking surrounds its use for eating, highlighting the power of this aperture in the story.

Beyond its use within the narrative, however, one must of course remember that it is this very same mouth that is now commenting on the food acquisition and consumption, telling the tale

¹ The idea for this title was inspired by a bit of childhood nostalgia: the restaurant South of the Border’s billboard in South Carolina that, accompanied by a 3-D hot dog announces, “You never sausage a place.” It seemed a fitting play on words for the trickery of Lazarillo and the novelty of the sense of smell found in the episode I will be discussing.

² *Lazarillo de Tormes* is generally recognized as the first novel of the picaresque genre in Spain and as such it follows the life of a young rogue as he sets out to survive by his own skills and trickery in a corrupt world. As the *pícaro* makes his way through the city, he uncovers unscrupulousness at every turn and reveals his findings to his audience. In this way, the picaresque work serves to *desengañar*, disillusioning the sixteenth and seventeenth century reader by exposing, in exaggerated form, the nature of the reader’s world and making him question what is before him:

The Spanish picaresque novel does not reflect scientific discoveries, or new speculations about the nature of the physical world, just as it does not reflect society in a literal, realistic way. Rather, one might say that it is itself a discovery, a new means for extending human consciousness of the existential process of a human life, captured from within, in contrast to the incidents and adventures seen from without (Dunn, *Spanish* 16).

The picaresque genre is typically considered to span the century from 1554 to 1646 (Dunn, *Spanish* 13) and includes such prominent works as: *Guzmán de Alfarache* (Mateo Alemán, 1599 and 1604), *La pícaro Justina* (Francisco López de Úbeda, 1605), “Rinconete y Cortadillo” and “Coloquio de los perros” (Cervantes, in *Novelas ejemplares*, 1613), *La vida del escudero Marcos de Obregón* (Vicente Espinal, 1618), *El Buscón* (Francisco de Quevedo, 1626), and *Vida de Estebanillo González* (anonymous, 1646).

and painting a picture of the dining that took place. In his analysis of the literary description of Renaissance feasts, Michel Jeanneret expresses the innate connection between feasting and commentary on such events:

When banquets become textual objects and verbal creations, they can be appreciated through images and style. Words related to the stomach awaken in language all sorts of dormant powers, as if convivial talk, acquiring mimetic qualities, takes on the sensuality of a good meal. So reading, which touches and tastes verbal matter, itself becomes a feast.

It is after all the same organ, the tongue, which savours words and delights in foods. (2)

There is certainly a distinction between the feasts that Jeanneret's selection treats and the simple food Lazarillo manages to put in his stomach but there is something to be said for the centrality of each in its context.³ As a feast garners attention from all those involved, everyday food receives the all-consuming focus of the hungry boy. The experience for the reader is similar as we anticipate the moment of consumption and the pageantry that surrounds it.

Such pageantry is particularly noted in medieval banquets which were not just about food consumption but also were designed to be feasts for the senses, appealing not only to taste but engaging sight, hearing, smell and touch in the spectacle as well (Bynum 60). This connection between feasting and the senses works also in *Lazarillo* as the food episodes are filled with sensorial description, forging an even stronger connection between the two. The life of the *pícaro*, -- his activities and surroundings -- overflows with sensorial stimulation. As these characters survive by their cunning they are always aware of what surrounds them, constantly perceiving the world through their senses. We see this in particular in the relationship between Lazarillo and his first master. Since the latter is blind, his mind and other senses work more assiduously. His handicap and Lazarillo's novicehood match them well in their day-to-day battles against each other.

The trickery that is an essential element of the text heavily involves the senses, especially as it relates to the missing sight of the blind man. While we see the intertwined nature of the senses and food throughout the work, there is an even greater emphasis on the olfactory in Lazarillo's narration.⁴ This does not surprise, of course, since part of the essential nature of food and wine is to smell. Foodstuffs will always give off an aroma and that relation is powerfully at work in this text. The external turns inward through the use of smell as it relates to the food that Lazarillo and

³ Lazarillo's only mention of a feast or banquet in the first *tratado* comes when the two are given a bunch of grapes to eat during the harvest. Because they would soon go bad, the blind man "acordó de hacer un banquete" (36) and he and Lazarillo ate all that was there.

⁴ In this present work I am focusing on the use of the senses in the first *tratado*, for their obvious relation to the lack of one, sight, in the blind man and the way that his other senses, and his sense (astuteness) in general, must work together to make up for his eyes. The combination of trickery, food and the senses does appear at other parts in the work. For one example, in the second *tratado* Lazarillo convinces his master that mice are getting into the chest with the bread offerings when really it is Lazarillo who time and again works his way in to scrape crumbs off the votive loaves. Once the priest is convinced it is a snake who is terrorizing him, and not the previously supposed mice, he is extra alert for any indication of the snake sneaking into the box in the middle of the night. The real culprit has been able to access the bread using a key he had made and which he now keeps in his mouth while sleeping, since his master has taken to arising in the night and searching Lazarillo's warm bed, convinced the snake is waiting there. It is this latest facet of his trickery that alerts the ears of his master and reveals his involvement:

Quisieron mis hadas, o, por mejor decir, mis pecados, que, una noche que estaba durmiendo, la llave se me puso en la boca, que abierta debía tener, de tal manera y postura, que el aire y resoplo que yo durmiendo echaba salía por lo hueco de la llave, que de cañuto era, y silbaba, según mi desastre quiso, muy recio, de tal manera que el sobresalto de mi amo lo oyó y creyó sin duda ser el silbo de la culebra, y cierto lo debía parecer. (68)

his blind master share, most notably in the sausage that incites the last food-related altercation between the two.

The olfactory works in a fascinating way in this episode, by taking the reader from the external sustenance to its aroma, which wafts through the nose and into the body, ultimately affecting the mind and inspiring physical, external action. Both Lazarillo and the blind man are called into action by an intoxicating smell, though each in his own way. Uncharacteristically, smell is used in a compelling way in this episode, as it shows itself unique to its counterparts in this brief commentary on the senses.

The work's intended audience, *Vuestra Merced*, along with any reader who follows him, is asked to consider the senses from the very first line of Lazarillo's story as he starts out, "Yo por bien tengo cosas tan señaladas, y por ventura nunca oídas ni vistas..." (3). Lazarillo draws the reader in by explaining that he will relay things that the reader's senses have never perceived. As intriguing as that sounds – the revelation of something completely unknown – his manner of speech does more literally call the reader open his eyes and ears wider in order to not miss what might have previously escaped him, to pay attention, to keep these two main senses on high alert in order to take in what Lazarillo has already seen and heard and that which he intends to share with his audience.

The preoccupation with the senses that begins in the prologue is indicative of the work's mid-sixteenth-century publication. The contemporary reader was living in shaky times. What would become an omnipresent culture of doubt in the seventeenth century began as uncertainty in the sixteenth resulting from a loss of surety of knowledge of the world: the Reformation had destroyed the complete reign of the Catholic Church, the discovery of the New World and the Asian peoples had created doubt about the superiority of the European race and skepticism had sprouted its own collection of perplexities (Robbins 44-45). The shift from idealism to realism is readily seen in works such as *Lazarillo de Tormes* and other picaresque texts. One aspect of the disillusionment is a mistrust of the senses; the five purveyors of material from the outside world cannot be trusted to provide correct information and neither can the processing agents be relied upon to understand correctly that which is perceived. The specific address of sight and hearing in the opening lines of the text allude to the uneasiness felt during this time in regard to sensorial function.

At the same time, the prologue to the work whets the reader's appetite. Lazarillo's conversation here addresses the varying tastes his audience may have: "mayormente que los gustos no son todos unos, mas lo que uno no come, otro se pierde por ello, y así vemos cosas tenidas en poco de algunas que de otros no lo son" (4). Although he is discussing literary preferences, the linguistic choice prepares the reader for Lazarillo's food fixation and at the same time, already having been advised to prepare his sight and hearing, his taste buds are now alerted, his sensorial arsenal called to attention.⁵

Perhaps Lazarillo readies his audience in this way because he too was required to become more aware at the beginning of his journey. After serving his blind master for a few days, the former decides they must set out from Salamanca in search of better options. Just starting out the two arrive at the bridge and alongside a stone figure resembling a bull. The blind man encourages Lazarillo to cozy up to it and listen to the sound inside: "Lázaro, llega el oído a este toro y oirás gran ruido dentro dél" (23). As soon as Lazarillo places his head against the stone, his master,

⁵ Helen H. Reed presents a connection between the orality of the text, in particular as it is presented in the prologue, and the use of food in the work, asserting that, "the discourse of pleasure is concentrated on food and that food and talk are sometimes associated with the erotic" (61).

sensing his closeness, slams the boy's head into the bull and offers his first words of wisdom: "Necio, aprende que el mozo del ciego un punto ha de saber más que el diablo" (23). Though it would seem that the blind man is teaching Lazarillo about the requirements of his new job – that he pay careful attention in order to serve and guide his master well – there is another, more cautionary message in this chastisement. The blind man is also warning Lazarillo that he must be on alert in the profession he is entering – his mind sharp and his senses heightened – in order to become part of and survive in the poor man's begging world. He must also, we find, be on guard in the same way in his interactions with his new master.

The blind man knows well how to get what he can from the world around him. Lazarillo explains the variety of ways he earns money in such a way that his skill in this area is evident. There is much that Lazarillo can learn from his new teacher. In order to survive in these circumstances, the blind man has learned to compensate for his lack with his other senses, something with which he has had great success. Lazarillo's descriptions demonstrate this but it also comes to the reader's ear as the narrator explicitly refers to the astuteness of his master, telling *Vuestra Merced* on one occasion that, "desde que Dios crió el mundo, ninguno formó más astuto ni sagaz" (25). Moreover, the blind man's perception is described on multiple occasions with the verb *sentir*.⁶ That he could sense how things were and what was happening is a skill he had built over time by employing the senses that remained to him and by practically learning about the world in which he participated. This is the "gift" he can share with Lazarillo as he later explains: "Yo oro ni plata no te lo puedo dar; mas avisos para vivir muchos te mostraré" (23).⁷ Though he may never attain the same level, this is the functional awareness to which the blind man calls his young servant.

Lazarillo's head throbbing, and his master delighted with laughter, the boy reflects on what transpired in that brief moment: "Parescíome que en aquel instante desperté de la simpleza en que, como niño, dormido estaba. Dije entre mí: 'Verdad dice éste, que me cumple avivar el ojo y avisar, pues solo soy, y pensar cómo me sepa valer'" (23). His senses have been awakened, he is roused from the sleep in which he had been since childhood. He realizes that the world he is entering requires much more vigilance than had been needed before. His senses must work at a level not previously known, to distrust that which he would normally trust and to perceive things differently from how he would have in the past.

This initiation completed, Lazarillo and his master settle into their everyday routine of begging and performing the small tasks that earn them money. Though the blind man promised to teach Lazarillo the ways of the beggar's world, it seems that hunger itself served as an effective instructor for the famished youth: "Digo verdad: si con mi sotileza y buenas mañas no me supiera

⁶ When Lazarillo makes the hole in the wine jug, he explains that he returns to drink from it, "no pensando el daño que me estaba aparejado ni que el mal ciego *me sentía*" (32, my emphasis) and just a few lines later that "*sintió* el desesperado ciego que agora tenía tiempo de tomar de mí venganza" (32, my emphasis). Later, as Lazarillo swears he is not purposefully leading them down inconvenient paths, he comments "no me aprovechaba ni me creía, mas tal era el *sentido* y el grandísimo entendimiento del traidor" (35, my emphasis).

⁷ When Lazarillo's mother asks the man to take good care of her son, Lazarillo tells us that, "[é]l respondió que así lo haría y que me recibía, no por mozo, sino por hijo" (42). In a sense, the blind man does serve as the boy's father, raising him in their corrupt society and, through daily practice, teaching him to use his wits to get by. This father-son relationship is also signified in the chapter divisions and titles. While the narration of Lazarillo's time with every other master is given its own chapter, the story of the first master is included in the first chapter, entitled, "Cuenta Lázaro su vida y cuyo hijo fue." There is very brief mention of Lazarillo's criminal biological father with only slightly more attention given to his pseudo-stepfather, and so, in searching for a paternal figure, we turn to this adoptive father in Lazarillo's new life. Lazarillo acknowledges how formative the blind man was: "después de Dios, éste me dio la vida, y siendo ciego me alumbró y adestró en la carrera de vivir" (44).

remediar, muchas veces me finara de hambre. Mas, con todo su saber y aviso, le contaminaba de tal suerte, que siempre, o las más veces, me cabía lo más y mejor” (27). In the first episodes of his *picardía*, he steals from the blind man without the latter knowing. First, he simply takes food out of the master’s sack and, though the man is confused, he does not realize what happened. The second instance that Lazarillo describes shows that he is becoming craftier. As the two are sitting begging, people give the blind man coins. Before these reach the man, however, Lazarillo grabs the coin and instead gives his master one that is half the value. The blind man complains: “¿Qué diablo es esto, que después que conmigo estás no me dan sino medias blancas, y de antes una blanca y un maravedí hartas me pagaban? En ti debe estar esta desdicha” (46-7). Though he only indirectly blames Lazarillo for this misfortune, this instance marks his recognition of Lazarillo’s deception.

The next episode, that of the wine jug, is truly presented to the reader as a battle between the two characters. By this point the blind man has learned of Lazarillo’s trickery and is on guard. The master keeps hold of the jug but Lazarillo uses a straw to get the liquid out. Then the blind man moves the jug between his legs and Lazarillo, pretending to be cold, curls up between his legs, and carves a hole (complete with plug) in the bottom of the jug to give himself access. Once the blind man discovers this, he takes Lazarillo off guard and smashes the jug into his face, breaking all the boy’s teeth. The blind man had been able to perceive what was happening, his hands determining the nature of Lazarillo’s scheme: “Tantas vueltas y tientos dio al jarro, que hallo la fuente y cayó en la burla” (32). This victory is countered by Lazarillo as the boy uses his blindness against his master. Lazarillo tells the reader that he takes advantage of this malfunctioning sense as part of his revenge: “Y en esto yo siempre le llevaba por los peores caminos y adrede, por le hacer mal daño: si había piedras, por ellas; si lodo, por lo más alto” (50). The back and forth of this episode, each trying to best the other as they machinate within their physical world, seems to end in a winner-less draw.

The blind man’s acumen, however, wins out in the next incident, recalling Lazarillo’s earlier description of his master’s sagacity. The two come upon a town during the grape harvest and are given a bunch of grapes out of charity. Since they are already ripe and will not last long, the blind man suggests a feast and, to assure equal division of the grapes, that they alternate taking one at a time. It is not long, however, before the blind man starts to eat two at once and Lazarillo, rather than merely keeping up with him, begins to take three grapes for each turn. The blind man turns to him and accuses him (accurately) of taking three. Since he could not see what Lazarillo had been up to, the latter is in awe that he’s been found out. The master explains: ¿Sabes en qué veo que las comistes tres a tres? En que comía yo dos a dos y callabas” (52).

The following episode is that of the sausage and we here see the olfactory in full force. The two arrive at the tavern in Escalona and the blind man procures a sausage for himself, giving it to Lazarillo to prepare for him. As the sausage is cooking over the fire, his master pulls out some money and sends Lazarillo off to buy wine to go with the sausage on which he is planning to feast. At that moment Lazarillo tells the audience that, “[p]úsome el demonio el aparejo delante de los ojos [...] y fue que había cabe el fuego un nabo pequeño, larguillo y ruinoso, y tal que, por no ser para la olla, debió ser echado allí” (38). The devil uses the sight of the turnip to initiate Lazarillo’s next transgression.⁸ Seeing the rotten vegetable (one which had already been discarded

⁸ Reed identifies a stark difference between the food references in this first *tratado* and the second as concerns the connection between sustenance and the otherworldly. As demonstrated by Lazarillo blaming the devil in this quote, there is a great diabolical force associated with the attainment of food and the tricks used therein in the first *tratado*. That which follows, however, in which Lazarillo serves the cleric of Maqueda, trying repeatedly to free holy bread

as not good enough to be used in cooking) inspires the idea of replacing the sausage with it. One must consider also the smell that the turnip is giving off. Though it is not mentioned explicitly in the text, there is indeed an aroma surrounding this episode even at this juncture, perhaps waking up Lazarillo's sense of smell so that it will work dynamically in just a few moments. At this point, however, as Lazarillo explains, the plan is only in his mind. Lazarillo continues: "[C]omo me vi con apetito goloso, habiéndome puesto el sabroso olor de longaniza, del cual solamente sabía que había de gozar, [...] saqué la longaniza y muy presto metí el sobredicho nabo en el asador" (38-9). Each phrase of this rich sentence requires attention. To begin, Lazarillo's use of the verb *ver* reminds the reader of the involvement of the senses in this episode in particular. With a number of other ways to express the idea of recognizing his appetite, the narrator's choice of *vi* in this moment alerts the reader to the interplay of sight and smell that is about to explode on the page. The importance of the senses, all of them, in governing one's feelings and actions, comes through in the adjective used to describe Lazarillo's appetite, *goloso*. Rico points out that medieval scholarship identifies two types of appetite, one that deals directly with natural, animal hunger and the other with sensations and emotions: "El primero pertenece a las potencias del alma vegetativa y el segundo – al que allude Lázaro – corresponde a la concupiscencia desordenada de la comida y bebida" (38, n. 115). How curious that the boy whose concern with food was to acquire it simply to feed his empty stomach leaves his natural hunger aside to identify this other sort, one which involves an impetus much more profound than an empty stomach.

Next Lazarillo tells his audience that the "sabroso olor de la longaniza" has been "puesto dentro". Though the object itself, the sausage, is still cooking on the fire, its smell draws together the meat and Lazarillo. Beyond simply linking the two, however, the delicious smell has entered into Lazarillo's body. It is now with him in an intimate way – something from the outside world now ingested, as can be done only through smell and taste – and about to change the course of the action. Smell has taken control of the situation – it causes movement in the narration. While Lazarillo *conceived* his plan because he *saw* opportunity in the turnip, it was the *smell* of the sausage that got inside him and *caused him to act*.

Lazarillo's next phrase reveals even further the impact of scent on his actions: "habiéndome puesto el sabroso olor de longaniza, del cual solamente sabía que había de gozar" (38-9). With a quick glance at this part of the sentence, one would initially think that the need to enjoy is being expressed about the sausage, the physical object that serves as the focus of this episode. This is decidedly not the case as Lazarillo refers here to the smell – "del cual" can only refer to the *olor*, not the *longaniza*. And what does he know about it? Only that he had to have it, to enjoy it in a very sensual way, that the "apetito goloso" needed to savor that aroma even more.

The scent of the sausage at this point had taken over Lazarillo's senses, in a manner of speaking. Lazarillo uses the word *saber* here to explain the effect of the smell on him but this surprises the contemporary reader who is more used to the sense of sight leading to knowledge.⁹ Lazarillo's reason has been corrupted by the tantalizing aroma of the cooking sausage and so, in this imperfect world, smell gives way to knowledge.

from the locked box and speaking worshipfully of it, presents the idea that "Food is sacred, a means to communion with God, and [here] Lazarillo sees himself as inspired by God rather than the devil" (65).

⁹ From the time of Plato sight was considered the highest sense, with hearing a close second. As such, both were traditionally associated with the head and the male. The other three senses, more base in nature, were thought to be female senses and thus, inferior. Part of the connection between sight and the mind is the association of sight with knowledge and sight as the preferred and most reliable means of knowing the world (see Akbari, p. 3-4). The blind man's missing sight leaves him struggling to identify other ways for perceiving (knowing) the world.

Lazarillo continues, in the same sentence, “no mirando qué me podría suceder, pospuesto todo el temor por cumplir con el deseo” (39). Again the protagonist uses a sight verb, *mirar*, but in the negative, explaining that he is *not* seeing (considering) logically what might happen if he performs based on the temptation coursing through him. Though it is an emotion, the apprehension for future repercussions that he should be experiencing is logical but it is replaced by the desire he feels for the smell of the sausage. Because of the great force that smell had over him, sight had been corrupted and Lazarillo enters further into the *engaño* of the senses.

This leads the narrative directly into the moment when Lazarillo performs his food switch. Before continuing, however, one must note the relation between this explanation of the temptation of Lazarillo (that analyzed above) and the frame of time. In the order of the narration, right before the devil put the turnip in front of Lazarillo, the blind man took a *maravedí* out of his sack for the wine. What immediately follows is the entire description of Lazarillo’s temptation. The physical exchange of the turnip for sausage occurred “en tanto que el ciego sacaba de la bolsa el dinero” (39), the same action the boy-narrator already explained. By bookending Lazarillo’s temptation by the repetition of the one *maravedí* that came out of the sack the narrator stresses the instantaneous reaction that he (Lazarillo) had to the smell of the sausage. There is no thoughtful conniving or deliberation. The smell got into him, worked its magic, and caused him to act: “en tanto que el ciego sacaba de la bolsa el dinero, saqué la longaniza y muy presto metí el sobredicho nabo en el asador” (39).

The blind man gave Lazarillo the money, sent him on his way and took control of the cooking food: “tomó y comenzó a dar vueltas al fuego, queriendo asar al que de ser cocido por sus deméritos había escapado” (39). This casual, clever mention of the sausage holds more than a simple narration of events. Again Lazarillo stresses how it was the smell that affected him – the presence of the sausage did nothing to him but when it was cooked, when its fragrance was released into the air, it begins to enchant the boy.

While the force of the olfactory is evident by itself here, it is intensified when considered alongside the role of the other senses in this episode. In fact, the reader finds that the others are not working at full capacity which accentuates the power of smell. One would imagine that a work (and particularly an episode such as this one) replete with reference to food, would provide for an intense description of taste. However, the actual consumption of the sausage is mentioned only once and one can easily read through the passage and not remember when Lazarillo actually eats it! He says that “Yo fui por el vino, con el cual no tardé en despachar la longaniza” (39) and then focuses on his return to his master. Though the word choice (*despachar*) and context suggest a ravenous consumption of the sausage (and surely, it was greatly enjoyed) nothing is explicitly said about its taste.

Taste does implicitly function in the following moments, contrary to the sense of touch. Returning to the blind man, Lazarillo finds that his master has the turnip secured between two pieces of bread and he does not know of the trick played on him because he has not touched the vegetable itself. While a tactile exposure to the turnip may reveal its true identity, touch is shown ineffective here, as it is easily tricked by the bread encasing the rotten vegetable: “tenía entre dos rebanadas apretado el nabo, al cual aún no había conocido, por no haber tentado con la mano” (39). It is only when he takes the sandwich into his mouth, biting it, that the blind man does not taste the anticipated sausage but discovers the switch for the cold turnip: “Como tomase las

rebanadas y mordiese en ellas pensando también llevar parte de la longaniza, hallóse en frío con el frío nabo” (39).¹⁰

There is further confusion about the trustworthiness of the senses in the next few lines. Lazarillo returns and the blind man implies his guilt, asking “¿Qué es esto, Lazarillo?” The boy quickly defends himself, reminding his master that he had been away getting the wine, claiming someone else must have come by and switched the two. The blind man responds “No, no... que yo no he dejado el asador de la mano, no es posible” (39). He trusts that he hadn’t let go of the pan and therefore, that no one else could have come in and done anything to the sausage.¹¹ The blind man trusts his hand here when he knows that both had just deceived him!

Smell returns to be a strong contender for the most reliable sense in the second half of this episode. The blind man has spent enough time with Lazarillo, indeed, has taught him well, and will not be dissuaded from his original conclusion. Lazarillo relates what happened next:

Levantóse y asíóme por la cabeza y llegóse a olerme; y como debió sentir el huelgo, a uno de buen podenco, por mejor satisfacerse de la verdad, y con la gran agonía que llevaba, asíéndome con las manos abríame la boca más de su derecho y desatentadamente metía la nariz. [...] De manera que, antes que el mal ciego sacase de mi boca su trompa, tal alteración sintió mi estómago, que le dio con el hurto en ella, de suerte que su nariz y la negra malmascada longaniza a un tiempo salieron de mi boca. (39-40)

Rico explains that *huelgo* in this context is synonymous with *aliento*. The blind man suspects Lazarillo and trusts that smelling the boy will provide him the confirmation he seeks – he has confidence in his sense of smell to provide and correctly interpret this information for him. He gets the initial whiff of Lazarillo’s breath which encourages him to pursue this manner of inquiry – as Lazarillo says, “por *mejor* satisfacerse de la verdad” – sticking his nose down the boy’s throat.

The sense of smell functions in two ways as the blind man relies on this “lesser” sense to discover the truth. He is able to smell the scent of the sausage that is left on Lazarillo’s breath and, beyond that, his nose – his olfactory apparatus – incites the physical reaction in the boy which causes him to throw up, revealing concrete evidence of his having eaten the sausage. There are three references to the nose that call the reader’s attention. Lazarillo describes his master’s nose as already “luenga y afilada” (40) but embellishes his tale with the further description that, “a aquella sazón, con el enojo, se había aumentado un palmo; con el pico de la cual me llegó a la gullilla” (40). This image of the already substantial nose now growing in such an extreme fashion, signals the importance of the physical body part in determining truth as well as the overall significance of the role of smell in this scene. Lazarillo’s second reference to it as a “cumplidísima nariz” (40) definitively marks the power that it possesses as it, and smell, correctly ascertain truth.

The blind man considers this triumph of smell (as it reveals Lazarillo’s deception) a great personal victory: “Contaba el mal ciego a todos cuantos allí se allegaban mis desastres, y dábales cuenta una y otra vez, así de la del jarro como de la del racimo y agora de lo presente” (56).

¹⁰ Lazarillo had a clear idea of how the senses would play out in this trick. When he first sees the turnip, he identifies something related to touch, the shape of the vegetable. The turnip and the sausage look, smell, and taste incredibly different but Lazarillo knows that the perception of the food (by the blind man) will be through his hands and so the boy must only trick that sense.

¹¹ That he could trust his hand and physical grasp of an object is a lesson the blind man learned from Lazarillo. When Lazarillo bores the hole into the wine jug to create a hands-free method for drinking the liquid, the blind man discovers there is less wine and accuses the sneaky youth. Lazarillo responds: “No diréis, tío, que os lo bebo yo [...], pues no le quitáis de la mano” (32). Lazarillo insists in this statement that the blind man can trust his hand and indeed, that proves to be the case as the master feels around and discover the wax plug used to hide the hole.

Reflecting on what happened and the great joy that comes to the blind man in this mirthful re-telling of the story, Lazarillo laments: “Y en cuanto esto pasaba, a la memoria me vino una cobardía y flojedad que hice, porque me maldecía: y fue *no dejalle sin narices*, pues tan buen tiempo tuve para ello, que la mitad del camino estaba andado” (42, my emphasis). This statement symbolically points to an infallibility of the sense of smell. Lazarillo’s leaving his master’s nose intact highlights the intactness of this sense.

The reader arrives at the end of this scene with a new idea in his mind, a new possibility for understanding the world. The blind man’s ability to function successfully in the world seems to put forth that sight, for so long considered the highest sense, is not so essential after all. Into its place has crept the sense of smell, one that had been poorly regarded for centuries, triumphing not only over sight but also besting the other senses, showing them to be weak and unreliable. In the midst of this work which seeks to unveil long-standing illusions, the author appears to suggest that there is uncertainty as to which sense is most trustworthy and with that, how best to interpret the world and survive in it.

Although it may seem, based on the sausage interaction, that the sense of smell is most reliable, Lazarillo’s time with the blind man has not finished and neither has the author’s commentary on the senses. After this latest travail the young rogue decides he has had enough of the blind man and plans to leave, though not without a parting shot. It has been raining all day and the two are on their way to an inn but must traverse an overflowing gutter to arrive there. Lazarillo tells his master that he will scout out a spot for them to cross where the water has not come out as far. Having done so, he positions the blind man and tells him to jump straight ahead, leaping over the water to drier ground. Lazarillo has tricked his master, however, and placed him directly in front of a stone pillar:

[S]e abalanza el pobre ciego como cabrón y de toda su fuerza arremete, tomando un paso atrás de la corrida para hacer mayor salto y da con la cabeza en el poste, que sonó tan recio como si diera con una gran calabaza, y cayó luego para atrás medio muerto y hendida la cabeza (59-60).

In this moment of demise, Lazarillo taunts him: “¿Cómo, y oliste la longaniza y no el poste? ¡Olé, olé!” (60). Smell did not tell the blind man what he needed to know in this case – it could not – and sight is shown to be superior for perceiving the needed information.

At the end of this *tratado*, sight reigns, as it always had, but I contend that the play of the senses serves as a message to the reader to pay closer attention to what transpires around him and to question what he had previously accepted as truth. The moment of the blind man crashing into the pillar and falling back onto the ground is not the end of the scene. Rather, Lazarillo’s words close it out and at first glance, they appear to mockingly affirm the truth revealed in the action, to remind the blind man that he is without man’s greatest navigational tool. He ridicules him with his question and then seems to further the shame by encouraging the man to try again to ascertain truth that way and see if he again will fail. To the modern reader his “olé, olé” may read that way but Lazarillo here is using the imperative, the final *d*’s dropping off commands in popular speech (see Rico, p. 45, n. 143; p. 34, n. 94).¹² I propose that in these last two words, Lazarillo is turning

¹² For one example of a modern interpretation of this utterance, the Penguin Classics English translation maintains “olé, olé” in its original Spanish: “What! You smelled the sausage and you couldn’t smell the post? Olé! Olé! I jeered” (37). Leaving the Spanish conjures up images of bullfights and soccer games in the reader’s mind and denies the sensorial connection to the verb *oler*.

to his audience, to the explicit *Vuestra Merced* and through him, to the reader, and encouraging him to smell!

The long-standing critique of the senses for leading people to sin figures heavily in this text. Though the audience may hope for Lazarillo to acquire the food he needs, the focus of the narrative is his trickery, how he lies and steals to feed himself, suffering both physically from the blind man's punishment and spiritually as he damages his soul. While the senses retain this characteristic, they are also imbued with the contemporary concerns of a changing and uncertain world. That food is the vehicle for this emphasizes the necessity of both for successful survival but it also gives a universal quality to the question. Food is eaten by every class and race, it is known to all and the accessibility of the theme allows for a common ground through which to express these ideas. Jeanneret contends that "the paradigm of the banquet can serve as a special guide to highlight significant tendencies in Humanist culture" (3). Similarly, the food of *Lazarillo* communicates contemporary concerns.¹³

The author uses Lazarillo and his tale to unveil some of the illusion under which the country had been living, to reveal the gritty truth beneath the idealized (and unreal) surface. His play on the senses in this first *tratado* functions in a way to prepare the reader for the rest of the short work and the more profound unveiling he does later on (his commentary on the Church, for example). I contend, perhaps audaciously, that he is calling the reader to ready his own senses for what is about to be shown. At the same time, this call is not just for the pages that follow, to make a closer reader. Rather, the application demands that the reader wake up to his own world – that he look around, smell, sense, recognize and analyze the very surroundings in which he lives daily.

Through Lazarillo and the blind man the anonymous author has demonstrated the unreliable nature of the senses. Not only have certain ones failed these characters but traditionally held understandings of the senses have been questioned. The "righting" of the high rank of sight at the end does not re-place the sense at the top of the proverbial totem pole. Instead, the back and forth between sight and smell (so different in nature and esteem) never really concludes because sight seems to have been proven more useful but smell, literally, gets the last word. The reader feels much like the blind man in this last episode. As has been noted, there are numerous times when the blind man is said to sense what is going on around him and this overall "sensing" comes through for him every time. In this last exchange, however, this right perception of the world fails him; Lazarillo tells that, "Dios le cegó aquella hora el entendimiento [y] creyóse de mí" (45).

The author uses smell in conjunction with food to accentuate the necessity of this new awareness. As food is a basic need for survival, so too is a thoughtful, perceptive understanding of the world. Acquiring this is not as complicated and daunting as it may seem and, like finding food for the *pícaro*, it is necessary for survival. The reader is called to alert his senses, refresh them for something different. Though they may not be trusted in the same way as before, they can certainly still be employed, though perhaps in a surprisingly different manner. In a tumultuous and uncertain period, the olfactory is essentially used in the text as a type of smelling salts, shocking the reader to awaken his senses and newly perceive the world around him. To know your new world, to survive and thrive in it, "oled"!

¹³ It is worth noting that foodstuffs in the work can be used to understand the time period more concretely as well. In *Approaches to Teaching Lazarillo de Tormes and the Picaresque Tradition*, Kathryn A. Walterscheid stresses the importance of living in a wheat culture and the subsequent pursuit of bread as the primary food for Lazarillo. She also demonstrates how the types of food included in the text comment on the social, ethnic and religious positions of those who would be feasting.

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