# Trickster Characters

This essay explores the life of trickster characters in two novels to identify the motivation behind their use of tricks. In the Life of Lazarillo de Tormes, Lazaro is the trickster who mainly survives by using tricks on his masters. Without the tricks, could starve due to lack of food and drinks as his master's stuff significant amounts of these essential commodities. On the Life of a Sensuous Woman, the woman uses tricks on men to get money and satisfy her sexual cravings.

## Thesis Statement

After an in-depth analysis of the two novels, it is argued that Lazaro is a man who must survive through stealing from his masters whereas the woman is a female personality who must survive through giving her body to various men.

The use of tricks for Lazaro and the woman are demonstrated in the second and third page. In the second page, Lazaro is described as a sharp and witty character. He demonstrates wit by using tricks on the blind master and the priest to get food and drinks. The woman is also described as sharp and witty as she rolls out the woman-loving sect campaign. The trick helps her to attract the head priest, who eventually marries her for three years and pays her twenty-five pounds of silver. The ideas developed by analyzing the character traits of the main character and relating them to the norms of their respective societies. I found that though the tricks go against the societal norms, they help the characters achieve their desired ends. I need to work on the alternative means that can help the characters achieve their desires without using tricks.

## Yours Faithfully

Trickster Character

A trickster character uses agreat degree of intellect to get around the conventional behavior with the aim of achieving desired ends. In the Life of Lazarillo de Tormes by anonymous, Lazaro employs tricks to survive in the harsh in conditions of scarcity of basic needs. Lazaro has to trick his masters to obtain food and drinks for survival. In the Life of a Sensuous Woman by Saikaku, the woman is dismissed from her husband, the lord. She employs tricks to obtain resources for survival and satisfy her sexual cravings. Tricksters develop because of subjection to tough living conditions that require the use of tricks as the only means to survive. The essay will draw comparison between the two novels to show how tricks are used as an element of survival by the male gender to steal from their masters whereas the female character is portrayed as one that has to use her body to gain favor from men. The in-depth analysis will be drawn from the use of tricks by a woman personality and Lazaro as a man.

## Comparison of Lazaro and the Sensuous Woman

### Similarities

Lazaro is depicted as a sham and witty character, who uses tricks to outwit his blind master, and although the master is deceptive, Lazaro is able to craft tricks to provide himself with food and water. Lazaro lives in the harsh conditions of serving under the blind master. The blindness can be taken as a character weakness of the boss. Lazaro must, therefore, employ tricks to survive the harsh conditions at the expense of his boss and he does not relent from using them to eat and drink like the master. Lazaro does not do anything more with his tricks other than drinking and eating like the master which implies that men use their tricks to exploit other people’s weaknesses for survival.

When Lazaro finds a second master, the priest, he realizes that he has to coin another trick to survive. The former master was blind but the second master has sharp eyesight. The priest has plenty of food while Lazaro suffers great hunger. Lazaro decides to use tricks to steal the Eucharist bread that the priest keeps in a chest. At first, he persuades a passing thinker to make him a key for the chest and offers a payment of a loaf after opening the chest. To absolve himself from being the suspect for theft, Lazaro drills a hole in the chest as a diversionary decoy that the bread is eaten by mice. Lazaro steals the bread at night when the priest is asleep(Anonymous*,* 1554). When the priest decides to keep vigil and guard the bread, Lazaro changes the time for stealing to daytime when the priest is at the church.

On the other hand, the sensuous woman makes use of her sexual wit to trick priests and get her sexual satisfaction. Just like Lazaro who greatest need is getting food and drinks from the master to survive, the woman is driven by her sexual appetite to trick men into satisfying her sexually and get paid for it. Just like her name suggests, the woman is attractive, physically gratifying, and is thus driven by the sexual desires to win the favor of men by seducing them. The woman personality is portrayed to use tricks to seduce men and survive under their attention (Saikaku, 1686).

Lazaro’s tricks help him to survive under the harsh conditions of the blind man. He is able to use his tricks to deceive his master and reduce the suffering. But when he finds that the blind man has learnt of his tricks, he decides to move on. This shows that to Lazaro, lack of tricks reduces chances of survival in any situation and he, therefore, decides to leave for the reasons he says he cannot mention (Anonymous*,* 1554). When Lazaro feels he has saved enough to accord him honor, he abandons the water selling job after four years of service.

Similarly, the sensuous woman is decisive. The lord is worn out and the old men accuse the woman of exhausting the lord with fancy sex. They dismiss her and send the woman to her parents. The woman makes a quick decision to return to her house and look for the clothes of her youthful days (Saikaku, 1686). She decides to present herself as a young lady and search for new ways of satisfying her sex desires.

Both the sensuous woman and Lazaro use tricks to exploit situations and obtain basic necessities. Lazaro tricks the blind master to obtain sausage and wine. During his service at the priest’s place, Lazaro is under great hunger and desperately needs food. He employs tricks on the priest to obtain bread from the chest (Anonymous*,* 1554). Similarly, the sensuous woman sleeps with so many men for a living. However, the two characters emerge as heroes in their society. Lazaro is a hero because of succeeding to trick many of his masters to achieve his ends and the woman is a hero because he satisfies sexual desires of many men.

Lazaro and the sensuous woman go against the norms set by their respective societies. Lazaro employs trickery even to the most respectable religious leaders such as the priest for the sake of food. Cheating in a religious environment is forbidden. Similarly, the sensuous woman goes out with men and breaks marriages in a society which holds family as its basic unit. Her society required women to be married to one man while they were still virgins. The woman sleeps with a total of ten thousand men in the life captured in the novel.

### Differences

The use of tricks as a way of survival by Lazaro also implies using the tricks to regain his lost glory which he believes he has lost under the servitude of the blind man. Lazaro believes to have been deceived by the blind man in their first day of survival I which he smashed his head. Definitely, this encounter was a defining moment of struggle, suffering, and servitude under the blind man. Lazaro utilized his tricks to regain his purpose and survival when he persuaded the blind man to take a running jump in which he smashed his head. In this regard, men are portrayed to use tricks not only to get the necessities but also to win their strength over others as a way of survival. This implies that Lazaro used tricks to get food and drinks and also to get the accomplishment of a man by overcoming the powers of his master.

The trickster nature of Lazaro brings prosperity at every stage of his life. At the blind master’s place and the priest, his trickster nature helped him to acquire food and drinks. Later, he secured a water peddling job and saved enough to earn him honor. In contrast, the trickster nature of the woman makes her degenerate from an honorable member of the society to a despicable harlot. Going out with married men ends up breaking families. She confesses that that from the time the lotus of her heart opened until the petals withered, she has lived the world by selling her body, which has polluted her heart (Saikaku, 1686). The woman is able a survive by using her body as an object of sexual appeal to men which she uses to allure and trick them On the other hand, Lazaro uses his mental ability to craft tricks that helps him to survive. In this case, the tricks fade with the degeneration of her body whereas Lazaro’s tricks help to improve his condition.

## Depiction of Spain

The life of Lazaro de Tormes reveals facts about the lives and tribulations of slaves in Spain. The masters could have plenty of resources but deny the slaves the basic needs. The masters of Lazaro such as the blind beggar and the priest had abundant food but left Lazarillo to languish in hunger. Even religious leaders hired slaves. Slaves were in high demand as seen by Lazaro’s shifting from one master to another in quick succession. The slaves had low status in society because even payments are not disclosed. The use of tricks depicts the desperate nature of the slaves; they lacked resources and their only sure way of survival was living under the inhumane masters. Desperate slaves are shown to use tricks as a way of survival under the under conditions in the society to win decency. At every point of the slave’s life, the story highlights their lack of basic needs.

## Depiction about Japan

The Life of a Sensuous Woman reveals so much information about Japan. The narrated life of the woman perfectly portrays the Ukiyo culture of Japan at the time the story was set. The culture of Japan pursued a pleasure-seeking life. The disadvantage with the culture is that it drove people to live a superficial and meaningless life. It focuses mainly on beauty. The society strives to satisfy its sexual addiction where all; human efforts signified by the sensuous woman’s tricks are meant to achieve sexual pleasure. The society is shown to be full of perversion, and the woman caught in centre of the perversion.

The society also perceives women as sex objects. A woman is supposed to fulfill the sexual desires of a man to avoid temptation. The society treats a woman as a second priority. Women are recognized on the basis of their physical attributes. The society places worth on a woman insofar as their sex appeal has not waned. The old woman has cast aside to the corner of the temple when she got old (614). In contrast, men are recognized based on their social status. Women in the society prefer men in well-respected positions. The novel reflects the contemporary society of Japan where women exchange beauty for material possessions.

## Conclusion

The two authors confirm the fact that individuals use tricks to survive tough living conditions. When people are subjected to acute scarcity of basic needs or conditions that prevent them from achieving their pressing needs, they resort to using tricks to beat the system. However, the tricks come with consequences. The anonymous author tries to segregate workers to the point of denying them basic needs. Saikaku also educates the society about the overindulgence of pleasure. The moral values learned from the two authors can prevent conflict in the society.

## References

Anonymous*.* (1554). *the Life of Lazarillo de Tormes.* Spain: Paperback.

Saikaku, I. (1686). The *Life of a Sensuous Woman.* Japan.