



# Lizardi and the Birth of the Novel in Spanish America

*Nancy Vogeley*

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"Brilliant and succinct . . . the work is original, mature, interesting, and sure to be included in future research and teaching agendas." --Doris Sommer, Harvard University

"The most thorough and insightful study of Fernández de Lizardi and his era to date." --Harold Dana Sims, professor emeritus of history, University of Pittsburgh

Nancy Vogeley examines the emergence of the novel in Mexico at the conclusion of Spain's 300 years of colonial rule. Acknowledged as Spanish America's first novelist, José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi introduced the genre into Mexico during its war of independence. His novel *El Periquillo Sarniento*, published in 1816, became the symbol of new nationhood, and his commentary on social issues contributed to the revolutionary dialogue.

Focusing on the *Periquillo* and three other novels by Lizardi, Vogeley analyzes these stories for their decolonizing thinking--as an innovative linguistic discourse in a setting where the Inquisition and colonial tradition controlled production. She argues that Lizardi's satiric portrayal of ugly contemporary realities forced readers away from the text, and thus away from blind acceptance of authority and the mechanical repetition of words. She concludes that the birth of the novel came with the death of the catechism.

This first book-length treatment of Lizardi will be of interest to Latin Americanists, literary historians, and those concerned with imperial histories and the topic of decolonization.

Nancy Vogeley is professor emerita of Spanish at the University of San Francisco. Among her studies of early 19th-century Mexico is *La literatura manuscrita: Un manuscrito inédito de poesías de José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi*, an unknown poetry manuscript by Lizardi which she has edited.

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