



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (055)

TEXT: *Índole* (1891)

AUTHOR: Clorinda Matto de Turner

EDITOR: Mary G. Berg

PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

(Based on the Prologue by Mary G. Berg and Matto de Turner's literary project)

1. CLORINDA MATTO DE TURNER: NOVELIST AND SOCIAL REFORMER:

The Novel as a "Photograph":

Clorinda Matto de Turner (1854-1909), a prominent Peruvian writer, views the novel as a "photograph" that captures the "vices and virtues of a people" for the purpose of moral correction and admiration. *Índole* continues this mission, focusing on the Andean town of Rosalina.

Patriotic and Social Concerns:

Matto de Turner's lifelong dedication to Peru is evident in her extensive writings that address national problems, advocate for Indigenous rights, promote women's education, and critique the corruption within the Catholic Church.

2. "ÍNDOLE" AND THE PERUVIAN NATIONAL LANDSCAPE:

Microcosm of Peru:

Rosalina, a fictional Andean village, serves as a microcosm of Peru, where Spanish-descendant landowners, mestizos, and Indigenous populations coexist. Matto de Turner meticulously details their lives, customs, and forms of interaction.

Historical Setting:

The novel is set amidst the civil unrest of 1858, culminating in the occupation of Arequipa by Marshal Ramón Castilla's army. This backdrop is ironically juxtaposed with the conservative nature of Arequipa and the novel's strong anticlerical themes.

Anticlericalism:

Índole openly criticizes a corrupt and lustful priest, placing clerical immorality and the Church's resistance to modernization at the forefront of the national debate.

3. SOCIAL CRITIQUE AND SCIENTIFIC IDEAS:

"Physio-Moral Observation":

Matto de Turner employs a "physio-moral observation" and meticulous description, influenced by the positivist and scientific ideas of her era (e.g., eugenics debates), to analyze her characters' behavior and the dynamics of their social context.

Critique of the "Notables":

The novel critically portrays the "notables"—the wealthy, educated elite—who, despite their supposed "good *índole*" (natural inclination towards virtue), fail to lead national progress due to their weaknesses, hypocrisy, and inability to confront social ills.



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The Ideal Citizen:

In contrast, the mestizo couple, Ziska and Foncito, symbolize Matto's vision of the ideal, healthy, and adaptable new citizens for the modernizing Peruvian nation.

Contrasts and Dualities:

Matto structures the novel around various contrasts: between good intentions and bad outcomes, between the joy of celebrations and the darkness of societal corruption, showcasing Rosalina as both idyllic and fraught with conflict.

PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

The Novel as a Tool for Social Reform:

How does *Índole* continue Clorinda Matto de Turner's literary project of using the novel to expose societal problems and advocate for change, building on the ideas expressed in the "Proemio" of *Aves sin nido*?

Anticlericalism in 19th-Century Peru:

Discuss the historical context of the debate surrounding the Catholic Church's power in Peru. How does Matto de Turner portray the corrupt clergy in *Índole*, and what was the impact of such portrayals?

Representation of Social and Racial Groups:

Analyze how Matto de Turner depicts the different social and racial groups in Rosalina (Spanish-descendant landowners, mestizos, Indigenous people). How do these portrayals reflect the social hierarchy of 19th-century Peru?

The Role of the "Notables":

Evaluate the characters of the "notables" (Antonio and Eulalia, Valentín and Asunción). Despite their "good *índole*," what are their failures, and how do they contribute to the stagnation of the community?

Matto's Vision of the "Ideal Citizen":

Discuss the significance of Ziska and Foncito as the "ideal" couple. What qualities do they possess that Matto de Turner believes are essential for the construction of a modern Peruvian nation?

Scientific Ideas and Social Commentary:

Explore the influence of contemporary scientific ideas (like eugenics) on Matto de Turner's narrative. How does her "physio-moral observation" connect with these scientific debates of the late 19th century?



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PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

1. What is the setting of Clorinda Matto de Turner's novel *Índole*?

- A) The bustling city of Lima
- B) The Andean village of Rosalina
- C) A coastal town in Peru
- D) A colonial plantation in the Amazon

Correct Answer: B

2. Which social problem is a central theme in *Índole*, particularly concerning the Church?

- A) Slavery
- B) Anticlericalism
- C) Political corruption
- D) Racial discrimination

Correct Answer: B

3. What scientific debates of the late 19th century influenced Matto de Turner's exploration of human behavior in *Índole*?

- A) Astrophysics and cosmology
- B) Quantum mechanics
- C) Eugenics and heredity
- D) Plate tectonics

Correct Answer: C

4. What does the mestizo couple Ziska and Foncito represent in Matto de Turner's vision for Peru?

- A) The corrupt elite
- B) The traditional Indigenous population
- C) The ideal new citizens of the nation
- D) Foreign influence

Correct Answer: C

5. How does the novel, in its structure, often contrast the idyllic aspects of Rosalina?

- A) With the vibrant urban life of Lima.
- B) With the conflicts, weaknesses, and crimes within the community.
- C) With the historical events of the Inca Empire.
- D) With the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape.

Correct Answer: B

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