



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (023)

TEXT: *Sotileza* (1885)

AUTHOR: José M. de Pereda

EDITOR: Stockcero Edition

PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

(Based on the work's critical reception and Pereda's literary trajectory)

1. PEREDA: BEYOND REGIONALISM:

Costumbrismo and Beyond:

José María de Pereda (1833-1906) is renowned as a *costumbrista* writer, often advised by Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo to focus on local themes. However, *Sotileza* transcends mere regional depiction, delving into universal human drama.

Painting the Soul:

The novel distinguishes itself by portraying the deep psychology of its characters, using the vivid atmosphere of Santander's "Calle Alta" not just as a backdrop but as an integral part of their being, revealed through their dialogues and interactions.

2. THE HUMAN DRAMA AND CHARACTER TRANSFORMATION:

Tragic Determinism:

Sotileza recreates a human drama where circumstances, reminiscent of Greek tragedy, often dictate events beyond the individual will of the characters.

Silda's Evolution:

The core of the narrative is the transformation of the young Silda into "Sotileza" (a term implying cunning, subtlety, or craftiness), a character whose hidden wisdom and attractive demeanor make her the compelling center of the narrative.

Universal Themes:

Through the orphan Silda and her entourage in a fishing village, Pereda brilliantly encapsulates the universal greatnesses and miseries of the human condition, making the local resonate with the global.

3. LANGUAGE AND STYLE AS ESSENCE:

Rich and Challenging Language:

The novel's language is notable for its hermeticism, laden with localisms, regionalisms, and specialized maritime jargon. This linguistic richness is not merely decorative but central to the novel's authenticity.

Rhythm and Melody:

Pereda's prose prioritizes sound and rhythm, conveying the characters' joys and sufferings beyond literal meaning. The annotated edition helps readers navigate these linguistic nuances, enabling them to appreciate the "music" of the text.



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Immersive Experience:

Pereda aimed for an immersive experience, inviting readers to engage with the authenticity of his characters' language, customs, and spirit as if participating in a real-life *tertulia*.

PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

Determinism vs. Free Will:

To what extent are the characters' lives and fates in *Sotileza* dictated by their social, economic, and environmental circumstances, and to what extent do they exercise agency?

The Character of Sotileza:

Analyze Silda's transformation and the significance of her nickname. How does she influence the other characters, and what universal human qualities does she embody?

Regionalism and Universalism:

Discuss how Pereda uses the specific setting and dialect of Santander's fishing community to explore broader themes relevant to the human condition beyond a regional scope.

Language as Character:

How does Pereda's use of dialect, localisms, and maritime jargon contribute to the authenticity of the characters and the atmosphere of the novel? How does it challenge or reward the reader?

Social Hierarchy and Class Conflict:

Examine the social structures and tensions present in the fishing village. How do economic conditions and social standing impact the characters' relationships and choices?

Narrative Voice and Reader Engagement:

Discuss Pereda's direct address to the reader and his "conversational" style. How does this technique shape the reader's experience and interpretation of the narrative?

PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Pereda, José M. de. *Sotileza*. Stockcero.

Montesinos, J.F. *Pereda o la novela idilio*. Madrid: Castalia, 1961.

García Castañeda, Salvador. "José María de Pereda." *Historia de la literatura española. Siglo XIX*, vol. II, edited by Guillermo Carnero, Madrid: Cátedra, 1991. (Offers broad context on Pereda's work).

Aguinaga, Magdalena. *El costumbrismo en la primera narrativa de Pereda*. Santander: Gobierno de Cantabria, 1994.

PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)



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1. Who is the author of *Sotileza*?

- A) Benito Pérez Galdós
- B) Juan Valera
- C) Fernán Caballero
- D) José M. de Pereda

Correct Answer: D

2. What is the central character, Silda, primarily known for in the novel?

- A) Her political activism
- B) Her transformation and cunning nature
- C) Her devout religious beliefs
- D) Her wealth and social standing

Correct Answer: B

3. What type of setting is *Sotileza* primarily known for portraying?

- A) The high society of Madrid
- B) Rural Basque Country
- C) A fishing village in Santander
- D) The intellectual circles of Barcelona

Correct Answer: C

4. What unique aspect of Pereda's writing in *Sotileza* is highlighted by critics?

- A) Its avant-garde experimentation
- B) Its focus on sound, rhythm, and local dialect
- C) Its strict adherence to classical Latin
- D) Its explicit political allegory

Correct Answer: B

5. Which literary figure is mentioned as having advised Pereda on focusing on local themes?

- A) Clarín
- B) Emilia Pardo Bazán
- C) Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo
- D) Federico García Lorca

Correct Answer: C

Explore the "19th Century Spanish Novel: Realism & Naturalism": This book is part of our comprehensive collection on the foundational works that captured the social fabric and individual struggles of Spain's 19th century through its literature: *La Regenta* (Clarín); *Doña Perfecta* (Benito Pérez Galdós); *Pepita Jiménez* (Juan Valera); *Sotileza* (José M. de Pereda); *La gaviota* (Fernán Caballero); and *Blasones y Talegas* (José M. de Pereda).

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