



## STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (069)

TEXT: *Herencia* (1895)

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'S EVOLVING LITERARY PROJECT:

##### *Novel as "Photograph":*

Clorinda Matto de Turner (1854-1909) consistently viewed the novel as a "photograph" to expose societal "vices and virtues" and promote moral reform. *Herencia* continues this mission, shifting her focus from the rural Andes to urban Lima.

##### *Lima as a Disappointing Capital:*

Having moved to Lima in 1886, Matto de Turner found the capital to be far from the social paradise she had envisioned, mirroring the disillusionment of the Marín family who found Lima still plagued by corruption and anti-liberal sentiments.

#### 2. ANATOMY OF A CITY IN TRANSITION:

##### *Lima in Flux:*

*Herencia* is an "anatomy of a great city in transition," exploring the complex interplay of class, race, and gender in Lima during the late 19th century, a period marked by rapid modernization, the expansion of capitalism, and the aftermath of the War of the Pacific (1879-1883).

##### *Social Mobility and Economic Forces:*

The novel scrutinizes the aspirations, strategies for survival, and failures of diverse characters striving for social mobility. Money, both inherited and earned, becomes a central, literal, and symbolic force.

##### *Appearances vs. Reality:*

- A key theme is the disparity between social appearances and underlying truths. Matto uses detailed descriptions of fashion and consumerism (e.g., Margarita's shopping trip) to highlight how women are judged by external display in Lima's high society.

#### 3. INFLUENCE OF SCIENTIFIC THEORIES AND SOCIAL CRITIQUE:

##### *Scientific Debates:*

*Herencia* reflects contemporary debates surrounding new "scientific" theories like evolution, eugenics, and heredity. Matto de Turner uses these ideas to explore how genetic and environmental factors shape human behavior, though her conclusions remain complex and open-ended.



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***Critique of Elites and Immigration:***

The novel critiques the moral decay and vacillation of the "notables" (aristocratic classes), who despite their "good *índole*," are shown to be corrupt and stagnant. It also examines the ambivalent role of immigrants (like Aquilino Merlo) in national progress, often portraying them negatively despite Matto de Turner's public support for immigration.

***Women's Roles and Political Participation:***

While critical of men's corruption, the novel ironically suggests, through the invention of "feminine ministries," that women could govern the country better. Matto de Turner highlights the limited but evolving possibilities for women's agency and their roles as consumers and social arbiters.

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## PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

### **Lima as a Character:**

How does Matto de Turner portray Lima as a complex, dynamic "character" in *Herencia*, contrasting it with the rural settings of her previous novels?

### **Social Class and Mobility:**

Analyze the different social classes depicted in the novel. How do characters attempt to navigate or change their social standing, and what are the forces that aid or hinder their mobility?

### **Influence of Science and Heredity:**

Discuss the impact of 19th-century scientific ideas (e.g., eugenics, heredity) on the novel's themes and character development. How does Matto de Turner use or critique these theories?

### **The Role of Money:**

Examine the pervasive influence of money in *Herencia*. How does it drive character motivations, expose corruption, and shape social interactions?

### **Women and Appearances:**

Discuss the significance of women's clothing, fashion, and physical appearance in the novel. How do these elements reflect societal expectations, social status, and personal agency?

### **Clorinda Matto's Reformist Agenda:**

How does Matto de Turner's reformist purpose, as stated in her "Proemio" to *Aves sin nido*, manifest in *Herencia*? What specific societal ills does she "fustigate"?

### **Critique of the Aristocracy:**

How does the novel depict the Peruvian aristocracy? What are their "vices," and how do they contribute to the nation's problems?

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## PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **Matto de Turner, Clorinda.** *Herencia*. Stockcero.
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## PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

1. *What is the primary setting of Herencia?*

- A) An Andean village
- B) The city of Lima
- C) A remote hacienda
- D) European capitals

**Correct Answer: B**

2. *Which of Clorinda Matto de Turner's earlier novels does Herencia continue the narrative of, specifically involving the Marín family?*

- A) *Índole*
- B) *Aves sin nido*
- C) *Hima-Sumac*
- D) *Viaje de recreo*

**Correct Answer: B**

3. *What scientific and social theory of the 19th century is explored in Herencia regarding human behavior and national progress?*

- A) Marxism
- B) Existentialism
- C) Eugenics and heredity
- D) Psychoanalysis

**Correct Answer: C**

4. *How does the novel largely portray the Peruvian aristocracy (e.g., Nieves de Aguilera)?*

- A) As champions of progress.
- B) As morally bankrupt and obsessed with appearances.
- C) As devout and philanthropic.
- D) As intellectual and innovative.

**Correct Answer: B**

5. *What is the symbolic meaning of the novel's title, "Herencia"?*

- A) Only monetary inheritance.
- B) Genetic and social legacies, as well as moral and financial inheritances.
- C) The inheritance of Indigenous traditions.
- D) The inheritance of Spanish colonial power.

**Correct Answer: B**

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