



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (099)

TITLE: *La Quijotita y su prima*

AUTHOR: José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi

ISBN: 978-1-934768-16-7

Editor: Graciela Michelotti

I. OVERVIEW & SIGNIFICANCE

Published in installments between 1818 and 1819 (and fully in 1831–1832) during the turbulent pre-independence era of Mexico, *La Quijotita y su prima. Historia muy cierta con apariencia de novela* is José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi's second major novel, following his groundbreaking *El periquillo sarniento*. Known popularly as "El Pensador Mexicano," Lizardi employs the narrative framework of a didactic novel to address one of the most pressing socio-cultural debates of the late colonial period: the education and societal role of women under the influence of Enlightenment ideals.

The novel contrasts the upbringing and trajectories of two cousins: Pudenciana, who benefits from a rational, disciplined, and practical education overseen by her judicious parents (Don Rodrigo and Matilde), and Pomposa (dubbed "Quijotita"), whose superficial, indulgent upbringing and unguided romantic readings lead her into vanity, financial ruin, and a tragic downfall. Through sharp satire, interpolated stories, and deep-seated moral philosophy, Lizardi crafts a foundational text that examines gender roles, domestic economy, and the transition from colonial stagnation to national modernity.

II. CONTEXT & CRITICAL APPROACHES

This text offers a rich framework for exploring the intersections of Enlightenment thought, gender studies, educational reform, and cervantine parody in early 19th-century Latin America.

Female Education and the Enlightenment:

Examine how Lizardi incorporates European Enlightenment thinkers (such as Rousseau, Fénelon, and Feijoo) and Spanish reformist ideas into the Mexican colonial context. Analyze the novel's central thesis: that women must be educated not merely as decorative objects, but as rational agents capable of managing households, contributing economically, and instilling civic virtue in future citizens.

Cervantine Parody and "Female Quixotism":

Explore how Lizardi adapts Miguel de Cervantes' model of *quixotism* to target female reading habits and romantic delusions. Compare Pomposa's distorted view of reality—shaped by poorly digested romances and religious fanaticism—to Don Quixote's knightly illusions. Discuss how this aligns with the broader transatlantic tradition of "female quixotic" literature.

Class, Family, and Social Mobility:

Analyze the domestic dichotomy established between the households of Matilde and Eufrosina. How does Lizardi link moral rigor, frugality, and labor with economic stability and happiness, contrasted against superficiality, vanity, and financial collapse? Discuss the role of the narrator (Joaquín) as an observer and pupil of the Colonel's enlightened patriarchal authority.



The Stockcero Guarantee

SpanishBookPress Editions.

Printed in the USA. Never backlisted. Always available.

Copyright © 2025 Stockcero, Inc.

3785 N.W. 82nd Avenue, Suite 302, Miami, FL 33166, USA

Nation-Building and Civic Morality:

Discuss how domestic reform serves as a metaphor for national reform. In the face of political instability leading up to Mexico's independence, explore why Lizardi viewed the family unit—and specifically the mother as an educator—as the vital foundational nucleus of the new republic.

III. ADVANCED DISCUSSION & RESEARCH PROMPTS

These prompts encourage deep engagement with the text, critical thinking, and historical analysis suitable for undergraduate and graduate-level courses.

The Politics of Reading: In Chapter XXXI, Eufrosina destroys the books that drove Pomposa to madness, echoing the famous scrutiny of Don Quixote's library. Analyze the novel's anxiety regarding popular print culture, sentimental novels, and how women consume literature.

Subversion vs. Patriarchal Control: While Lizardi champions women's education, critics like Nancy Vogeley and Jean Franco note the ideological limitations of his framework (educating women primarily to better serve domestic and patriarchal structures). Have students debate whether Pomposa's tragic end is an overly punitive moral lesson or a structural critique of a society that offers women no viable economic alternatives outside of marriage or the convent.

The Role of Interpolated Tales: Analyze the function of the inserted stories (such as the history of Carlota and Welster, or Irene). How do these narrative digressions reinforce or complicate the central didactic message regarding love, parental authority, and female agency?

Language, Ethnicity, and Nation: Examine the comedic and ideological implications of Pomposa's encounter with indigenous charcoal burners, where she misinterprets their language and treats them like celestial beings. How does this episode reflect elite anxieties regarding cultural and linguistic pluralism in the formation of the Mexican nation?

IV. SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

This section complements the study of *La Quijotita y su prima*, providing avenues for deeper research into Lizardi's work and colonial/early independent Mexican literature.

Primary Text:

- José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi. *La Quijotita y su prima*. Stockcero. (TK ORDER: 099)

Key Secondary Scholarship:

- **Arrom, Silvia Marina.** *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857*. Stanford University Press, 1985.
- **Franco, Jean.** *Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico*. University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
- **Spell, Jefferson Rea.** *The Life and Works of José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi*. University of Pennsylvania, 1931.
- **Vogeley, Nancy.** *Lizardi and the Birth of the Mexican Novel Custom, Narrative and Nation in the Work of J. J. Fernández de Lizardi*. University of Arizona Press, 2001.



The Stockcero Guarantee

SpanishBookPress Editions.

Printed in the USA. Never backlisted. Always available.

Copyright © 2025 Stockcero, Inc

3785 N.W. 82nd Avenue, Suite 302, Miami, FL 33166, USA

V. RELATED STOCKCERO RESOURCES

Origins, Picaresque & Costumbrismo (6-Book Bundle).

Other titles in the bundle: *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*, *El lazarillo de ciegos caminantes*, *La Quijotita y su prima*, *Don Catrín de la Fachenda*, *Manuela. Novela bogotana*.

[Browse Collection](#)

Interested in adopting this text for your course?

[Request an Evaluation Copy](#)
or [Browse our Full Catalog](#)



The Stockcero Guarantee

SpanishBookPress Editions.

Printed in the USA. Never backlisted. Always available.

Copyright © 2025 Stockcero, Inc
3785 N.W. 82nd Avenue, Suite 302, Miami, FL 33166, USA