

STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (144)

TITLE: Eleodora - Las consecuencias
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EDITOR: Mónica Cárdenas
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Subject Areas: 19th-Century Latin American Literature, Peruvian Realism & Naturalism, Genetic Criticism & Rewriting, Race & Subaltern Studies, Gender & Anticlericalism

I. OVERVIEW & SIGNIFICANCE

Presenting for the first time in a single comparative volume both Eleodora (serialized in El Ateneo de Lima in 1887) and its radical, book-length rewriting *Las consecuencias* (1889), this critical edition by Mónica Cárdenas illuminates the exact aesthetic turning point of Peru's foremost nineteenth-century woman of letters, Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera (1842–1909).

Both texts depart from the same foundational plot—inspired by Ricardo Palma's tradición "Amor de madre"—in which the sheltered limeña heiress Eleodora Alvarado marries the compulsive gambler Enrique Guido, who squanders her fortune, wagers his own wife, murders his rival, and mortally wounds Eleodora, only for her to falsely confess to adultery on her deathbed to save her husband from the gallows and preserve her children's honor.

Yet while *Eleodora* frames this tragedy within the socially sanctioned conventions of romantic melodrama and maternal sanctification, *Las consecuencias*—published in the wake of the scandal surrounding Cabello's *Blanca Sol* (1888)—doubles the narrative's length and transforms the story into a relentless positivist and naturalist indictment of pre-War of the Pacific Lima.

As Juana Manuela Gorriti famously remarked in *Lo íntimo*, in *Las consecuencias* Cabello "beats the whole world with a stick... with more audacity than Zola."

Essential for graduate and advanced undergraduate seminars, this dual edition offers an unprecedented laboratory in genetic criticism, allowing students to trace sentence by sentence how a nineteenth-century female author dismantled romantic idealism to forge the modern social novel.

II. CONTEXT & CRITICAL APPROACHES

• Genetic Criticism, Rewriting, and the Literary "Trojan Horse":

Drawing on Mónica Cárdenas's critical introduction, instructors can teach *Eleodora* and *Las consecuencias* as a masterclass in textual genetics and authorial strategy.

Dedicated to literary patriarch Ricardo Palma, *Eleodora* functioned as a "Trojan horse" that secured canonical approval before Cabello rewrote nearly every paragraph in Las consecuencias—shifting the title from the individual heroine to deterministic social causes, eliminating the comforting epilogue of family restoration, and replacing Enrique's romantic madness with suicide.

• Subaltern Agency, Race, and "Postcolonial Dystopia":

While *Eleodora* keeps secondary characters on the margins, *Las consecuencias* foregrounds the bodily and psychological presence of subaltern intermediaries: the Afro-Peruvian servant Juan and the hypocritical beata Serafina.

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Engaging scholarship by Francesca Denegri and Marcel Velázquez Castro, courses can examine the charged, transgressive eroticism of the scenes in which Juan secretly enters Eleodora's bedroom and carries her fainting body—an interracial physical proximity that disrupts elite republican racial hierarchies.

• Positivist Physiology, Gambling, and Pre-War Limeño Decadence:

Echoing Manuel González Prada's diagnosis of the moral causes behind Peru's defeat in the War of the Pacific, Cabello diagnoses an oligarchy corrupted by rentier idleness, authoritarian paternal seclusion, and gambling—explicitly comparing Enrique's wagering of his wife to limeño gamblers betting Chinese coolies from the guano islands.
In *Las consecuencias*, romantic passion is replaced by clinical physiology: cerebral atrophy, neuralgia, hereditary predisposition, and nervous pathology.

• The Grotesque, Anticlericalism, and Contradictory Modernity at Hacienda San Eloy:

Contrasting corrupt urban Lima with the productive sugar-cane hacienda of San Eloy, Las consecuencias deploys what Jean-Louis Cabanès terms the nineteenth-century "grotesque" to satirize Catholic hypocrisy through Serafina (who dresses a statue of the Virgin in courtesans' gowns amidst nests of rats and bats).
Simultaneously, Eleodora's fascination and terror before the sugar mill's steam machinery—whose belts resemble giant bats rising from an abyss—captures the anxieties of industrial modernization.

• Paired Pedagogical Module (Sacrificio y Recompensa & Eleodora - Las consecuencias):

Paired with Stockcero's edition of Cabello's gold-medal novel *Sacrificio y Recompensa* (051, 1886), instructors can map all three phases of Cabello's trajectory: her traditional domestic phase, her transitional rewriting phase, and her transgressive naturalist aesthetic that ultimately led to her ostracism and tragic confinement in the Lima Asylum in 1900.

Classroom Discussion Questions:

• Why did a minor change in title—from the proper name *Eleodora* (1887) to the sociological noun *Las consecuencias* (1889)—signal a radical shift in genre from the nineteenth-century female bildungsroman to positivist social determinism?

• How does the expansion of the Afro-Peruvian servant Juan's role in *Las consecuencias*—particularly the sensory, eroticized descriptions of his physical contact with Eleodora during her nocturnal escape—challenge nineteenth-century literary conventions regarding race, class, and female chastity?

• In what ways does Cabello use the character of the spinster and alcahueta Serafina at the San Eloy hacienda to critique religious fanaticism and double standards of female morality in nineteenth-century Peru?

• How does Eleodora's ambivalent reaction to the industrial sugar-processing machinery at San Eloy—admiring its productive power for hours while fearing being crushed by its bat-like belts—reflect the broader contradictions of Latin American positivist modernization?

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III. ADVANCED DISCUSSION & RESEARCH PROMPTS

• From Palma's Tradición to Zolaesque Naturalism (A Genetic Study):

Conduct a close comparative reading of parallel passages in Eleodora, Las consecuencias, and Ricardo Palma's tradición "Amor de madre." How do Cabello's lexical, syntactic, and structural revisions transform a tale of sublime maternal self-sacrifice into a clinical critique of patriarchal education and marital law?

• Gender, Patronage, and the "Virile Pen" in Late Nineteenth-Century Peru:

Investigate the critical backlash against Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera following the publication of Blanca Sol (1888) and Las consecuencias (1889), including her break with the circle of Juana Manuela Gorriti and Ricardo Palma and her alignment with freethinkers and positivists like Manuel González Prada and Emilia Pardo Bazán. Why was naturalist aesthetics deemed particularly dangerous when wielded by a woman writer?

• Subaltern Bodies and the Contagion of Desire:

Drawing on Francesca Denegri's concept of "postcolonial dystopia" and Marcel Velázquez Castro's studies on race in nineteenth-century Peru, analyze the narrator's claim in Las consecuencias that "love is contagious, without unbridgeable social abysses being able to prevent it." How do Juan's desire for Eleodora and Serafina's pursuit of Enrique destabilize the bourgeois household?

IV. SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

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• Velázquez Castro, Marcel. Las máscaras de la representación: *El sujeto esclavista y las rutas del racismo en el Perú (1775–1895)*. Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2005.

V. RELATED STOCKCERO RESOURCES

A comprehensive collection focusing on female protagonists, writers, and the shifting societal roles of women in Latin America. Included titles:
Sacrificio y Recompensa, Stella, La gozadora del dolor, Mecha Iturbe, Eleodora - Las consecuencias, A Dead Rose, La Vida manda, y otros textos, and *Roque Moreno.*

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