



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (158)

TEXT: *Imán* (1930)

AUTHOR: Ramón J. Sender

EDITOR: Borja Rodríguez-Gutiérrez

PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

(Based on the Introduction by Borja Rodríguez-Gutiérrez and historical context)

1. THE MOROCCAN WAR AND CLASS CONFLICT:

Colonial Disaster:

The novel is set against the backdrop of the Moroccan War (Rif War) and specifically the "Disaster of Annual" (1921), a catastrophic defeat for the Spanish army due to incompetence and corruption.

War of the Poor:

Sender highlights the stark class divide of the conflict. The wealthy could pay to avoid conscription, leaving the poor—workers and peasants like the protagonist Viance—to fight and die for economic interests (mines) they did not share.

Personal Experience:

Sender draws directly from his own service in Morocco (1923), infusing the narrative with the authenticity of a witness to the horrors of colonial warfare.

2. VIANCE: THE ANTI-HERO AND THE "MAGNET" FOR MISFORTUNE:

Symbolic Name:

The protagonist, Viance, is nicknamed "Imán" (Magnet) because he attracts misfortune. He represents the Spanish people: resilient, suffering, but ultimately passive and unable to rebel against their exploiters.

The Destruction of the Individual:

The novel chronicles Viance's physical and moral destruction. The army strips him of his identity, turning him into an automaton. His "Odyssey" of survival does not lead to a triumphant return but to further humiliation and the erasure of his past (his village submerged by a dam).

Failed Bildungsroman:

Unlike a traditional coming-of-age story where the hero learns and grows, Viance fails to internalize the lessons of his suffering. He remains submissive to authority, representing a "lost generation" unable to say "no" to unjust power.

3. DEHUMANIZATION AND THE NATURE OF WAR:

Grotesque Realism:

Sender portrays war not as glorious but as a slaughterhouse. The narrative is filled with visceral descriptions of thirst, heat, filth, and death, using a "telegraphic" style and powerful sensory imagery (synesthesia) to convey the immediacy of horror.

Rebirth in the Beast:

A pivotal scene involves Viance hiding inside the belly of a dead horse to survive. This grotesque "return to the womb" offers a chance for rebirth and connection with



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nature/instinct, but Viance ultimately fails to carry this transformation into a political awakening.

Critique of "Patriotism":

The novel savagely critiques empty patriotic rhetoric ("God, Country, King"). The true drivers of the war are revealed to be economic interests (mines, stock markets), reducing soldiers to expendable tools.

PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

The Concept of "Imán":

Discuss the significance of the title and Viance's nickname. How does the metaphor of the "magnet" function throughout the novel? Is Viance's misfortune fate, bad luck, or systemic oppression?

War and Class Structure:

Analyze how the novel depicts the class differences within the Spanish army. How are officers portrayed versus common soldiers? What does this say about Spanish society in the 1920s?

Man vs. Nature:

Discuss the role of the landscape in the novel. Is nature an enemy, an indifferent observer, or a refuge? How does Sender describe the Moroccan desert?

The Episode of the Dead Horse:

Analyze the symbolism of Viance hiding inside the dead horse. What does this represent in terms of survival, instinct, and rebirth? Why does his "rebirth" fail to lead to political action?

Critique of Heroism:

How does *Imán* deconstruct the traditional concept of the war hero? Compare Viance's experience with the patriotic songs and medals mentioned at the end of the novel.

Style and Tone: Examine Sender's writing style. How do the use of present tense, sensory details, and disjointed narrative structure contribute to the novel's impact?

PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **Sender, Ramón J. *Imán*.** Stockcero.
- **Barea, Arturo.** *The Forging of a Rebel*. (For a comparative perspective on the Moroccan War).
- **Carr, Raymond.** *Modern Spain 1875-1980*. Oxford University Press, 1980.
- **Peñuelas, Marcelino.** *La obra narrativa de Ramón J. Sender*. Gredos, 1971.
- **Rodríguez-Gutiérrez, Borja.** "Introducción" to *Imán*. (This edition).
- **Triana-Toribio, Núria.** (On the historical context of the Rif War).



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PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

1. What historical event is the central subject of the novel *Imán*?

- A) The Spanish Civil War
- B) The Cuban War of Independence
- C) The Moroccan War (Rif War) and the Disaster of Annual
- D) The First World War

Correct Answer: C

2. Why is the protagonist, Viance, nicknamed "Imán" (Magnet)?

- A) Because of his charismatic personality.
- B) Because he attracts misfortune and accidents.
- C) Because he is skilled with a compass.
- D) Because he is a leader who draws people to him.

Correct Answer: B

3. What does the introduction suggest Viance represents allegorically?

- A) The brave Spanish officer class.
- B) The suffering and submissive Spanish people/proletariat.
- C) The enemy Moroccan fighters.
- D) The intellectual elite of the Generation of '98.

Correct Answer: B

4. In a grotesque scene of survival, where does Viance hide to escape the enemy?

- A) Inside a cave.
- B) Under a tank.
- C) Inside the belly of a dead horse.
- D) In a dry well.

Correct Answer: C

5. What happens to Viance's home village at the end of the novel?

- A) It has prospered during his absence.
- B) It has been destroyed by the war.
- C) It has been submerged under a reservoir (pantano).
- D) It is celebrating his return as a hero.

Correct Answer: C

Explore the "Spain in Crisis" Collection: This book is part of our comprehensive collection on the Spanish Civil War and its literary legacy: *Réquiem por un campesino español* (Sender); *Imán* (Sender); *La Barbarie Organizada* (Galán); *Vida de Fermín Galán* (Díaz Fernández & Arderíus); and *Red October in Asturias* (Díaz Fernández). Browse Collection:

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