



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (203)

TITLE: *Dulce Dueño*

AUTHOR: Emilia Pardo Bazán

EDITOR: Nuria Godón & Carmen Pereira-Muro

ISBN: 978-1-949938-20-3

I. OVERVIEW & SIGNIFICANCE

Dulce Dueño (1911), Emilia Pardo Bazán's final novel, represents a defiant challenge to the literary and gender categorizations often imposed on her work. This critical edition, meticulously prepared by Nuria Godón and Carmen Pereira-Muro, unveils an anti-dogmatic work that transcends traditional genres, emphasizing the author's late engagement with Modernismo and her pioneering feminist vision.

As part of Pardo Bazán's modernist trilogy, *Dulce Dueño* showcases her sophisticated adoption of preciosista aesthetics, exploring light, color, sound, and silence in pursuit of beauty and a new understanding of the world. Crucially, it prioritizes, for the first time, the first-person, feminine voice of its protagonist, Lina Mascareñas, transforming the text into a profound autobiography. Lina's journey is a powerful defense of individual freedom, contesting societal limitations across maternal-filial, educational, sexual, and political spheres concerning women.

This kit provides a framework for advanced study, urging a re-evaluation of Pardo Bazán beyond reductive ascriptions to specific literary movements, highlighting her interdisciplinary inclusion in Modernismo, her interest in emerging genres like detective fiction, and her unwavering advocacy for women's voices.

II. CONTEXT & CRITICAL APPROACHES

Dulce Dueño offers a rich tapestry for interdisciplinary exploration, engaging with critical themes of literary evolution, gender studies, and socio-historical context.

Literary Evolution and Modernismo:

Analyze *Dulce Dueño* as the culmination of Pardo Bazán's literary trajectory and her full immersion into Modernismo. How does she adopt and re-elaborate modernist aesthetics (preciosista, light/color, sound/silence, search for beauty, stories and legends)?

Discuss how this novel challenges the traditional view of Pardo Bazán primarily as a Naturalist writer. What are the "hybrid" characteristics (modernismo/idealismo intertwined with naturalist elements) that define her late novels?

Examine the "Trilogy of Monsters" (*La Quimera*, *La Sirena negra*, *Dulce Dueño*) and how these works reflect Pardo Bazán's evolving style and thematic concerns, particularly her shift towards psychological studies and spiritual realism.

Feminism and the Female Voice:

Explore Lina Mascareñas as a "female dandy" and how her first-person narration signifies a pioneering "openly feminine writing" (*escritura abiertamente femenina*) in Pardo Bazán's oeuvre.



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Discuss how Lina's character, through her autobiography, acts as a "chica rara" (queer woman), challenging sexual norms, binary classifications, and patriarchal expectations.

Analyze the novel as a "Bildungsroman femenino," tracing Lina's development in confrontation with societal pressures, and her rejection of idealized female roles like the "ángel del hogar." How does Pardo Bazán use Lina's journey to critique the limitations of marriage and traditional gender roles?

Interdisciplinarity and Total Work of Art:

Examine the novel's extensive interdisciplinarity, incorporating references to painting (Impressionism, Symbolism, Pre-Raphaelite), music (Wagnerian opera), architecture, fashion, and jewelry. How do these elements contribute to the novel's aspiration as a "total work of art"?

Discuss the significance of visual culture, such as reproductions of period magazines and artwork, in understanding the fin-de-siècle aesthetic.

Socio-Historical Context: Spain's Incomplete Modernity:

How does *Dulce Dueño* reflect Spain's "incomplete and unequal modernity" during the Belle Époque and the post-1898 crisis?

Analyze the novel's depiction of rapid material and cultural changes (urbanization, new technologies, consumerism) versus persistent social inequalities and political corruption.

Discuss the role of medical science (eugenics, psychiatry, neurosis) and its influence on understanding female behavior and societal anxieties, as portrayed in Lina's experiences.

Intertextuality and Canonization:

Explore the novel's rich intertextual dialogue with European authors (Huysmans, Baudelaire, Wilde) and Spanish classics (Cervantes, Calderón, Santa Teresa). How does Pardo Bazán "nationalize" and "feminize" Modernismo through these intertexts?

Analyze the novel's reception, particularly its initial lukewarm reception in Spain versus its later re-evaluation, especially through feminist criticism. What does this tell us about literary canon formation and the influence of academic trends?

III. ADVANCED DISCUSSION & RESEARCH PROMPTS

These prompts encourage deep engagement with the text, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary connections suitable for graduate-level seminars or research projects.

The Controversial Ending: The ending of *Dulce Dueño*, with Lina's mystical conversion and confinement, has divided critics. Discuss the two main critical perspectives: one viewing it as a subversive act of spiritual emancipation, and the other as a reinforcing submission to patriarchal structures. Which interpretation do you find more compelling and why? What role does Pardo Bazán's own "heterodox Catholic" faith play in this ambiguity?

Lina as a Female Dandy: Analyze Lina Mascareñas as a female dandy. How does she embody Baudelairean dandyism, and what unique challenges or opportunities does her gender present in this role? How does her "pose" function as a strategy of resistance against patriarchal control?



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Masochism and Agency: The prologue discusses Lina's "transgressive masochistic behaviors." Examine these episodes (e.g., her encounter with the prostitute, her self-imposed servitude) as expressions of agency rather than passive victimhood. How do these actions challenge or subvert dominant clinical and social discourses about female masochism in the late 19th/early 20th century?

Intermediality and the Visual: Select specific examples from the novel where Pardo Bazán integrates descriptions of painting, fashion, or architecture (e.g., Symbolist paintings, Art Nouveau designs, Alhambra descriptions). How do these intermedial references enrich the narrative and reflect the aesthetic concerns of Modernismo?

Pardo Bazán's Legacy: Morán's introduction highlights Pardo Bazán's constant struggle for recognition and her "impressive legacy" despite not achieving some key ambitions (e.g., Real Academia). How does *Dulce Dueño* contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of her entire oeuvre, especially its "less canonical" aspects?

Narrative Authority and the "Coro de Voces": Discuss how Lina's first-person narrative attempts to assert her voice against the "coro de voces" (chorus of voices) that seek to define, categorize, and judge her. How does the novel's structure, particularly the shift from a male homodiegetic narrator in Chapter I to Lina's autobiography, underscore her struggle for narrative authority?

The Maternal Instinct and Alternative Families: Analyze how Lina's actions, particularly her care for Torcuata, subvert traditional patriarchal discourse on "la sagrada misión materna." How does she build an "alternative female family," and what does this signify in the context of the novel's broader feminist critique?

IV. SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

This section complements the study of *Dulce Dueño*, providing avenues for deeper research.

Primary Text:

- Pardo Bazán, Emilia. *Dulce Dueño*. Edited by Nuria Godón & Carmen Pereira-Muro. Stockcero.

Key Secondary Scholarship (as referenced in the Introduction):

- Aldaraca, Bridget. *El ángel del hogar. Galdós and the Ideology of Domesticity in Spain*. 1991.
- Bieder, Maryellen. "Emilia Pardo Bazán and Literary Women." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 1993.
- Burdiel, Isabel. *Emilia Pardo Bazán*. Taurus, 2019. (For biographical context).
- Charnon-Deutsch, Lou. *Queer Women in Modern Spanish Literature*. 2022.
- Dupont, Denise. *Whole Faith: The Catholic Ideal of Emilia Pardo Bazán*. 2019.
- Gómez-Ferrer, Guadalupe, ed. *La mujer española y otros escritos de Emilia Pardo Bazán*. 1999.
- Godón, Nuria. "Sacrificial Performances" (2017) and "Masoquismos" (2022). (For specific analysis of masochism in the novel).
- Kirkpatrick, Susan. *Woman, Modernism, and the Feminine Voice: The Writing of Emilia Pardo Bazán*. 2003.
- Kronik, John W. "Emilia Pardo Bazán and the Phenomenon of French Decadentism." *PMLA*, 1966.



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- **Molloy, Sylvia.** "La política de la pose." *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, 2017.
- **Pereira-Muro, Carmen.** *Culturas de género en la España finisecular: Emilia Pardo Bazán y el modernismo*. 2013.
- **Smith, Jennifer.** *The Aesthetics of the Self: Emilia Pardo Bazán's Feminist Modernism*. 2021.
- **Vallejo, Catherine.** "Emilia Pardo Bazán, Gender, Modernity and Nationalism at the Paris World Exhibitions of 1889 and 1900." *Hispanic Review*, 2008.

Additional Resources:

- Research on fin-de-siècle Spanish periodicals for broader cultural context.
- Studies on Wagnerian opera, Symbolist painting, and Art Nouveau for interdisciplinary connections.

V. RELATED STOCKCERO RESOURCES

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