



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (205)

TEXT: La Tribuna

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LITERARY EDITOR: Víctor Fuentes

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I. OVERVIEW & SIGNIFICANCE

La Tribuna (1883) by Emilia Pardo Bazán is a pioneering work that solidified her stature as a key figure in Spanish Naturalism. This novel is a meticulous and empathetic portrayal of the working class, particularly the women employed in the tobacco factory of A Coruña (fictional Marineda), during the tumultuous "Sexenio Democrático" (1868-1874) in Spain. Its significance lies in its early and unflinching documentation of proletarian life and class struggle, predating Émile Zola's *Germinal*.

Pardo Bazán, through the character of Amparo—a young, eloquent tobacco worker—explores themes of social awakening, early feminism, and the complex interplay between individual aspirations and societal constraints. The novel critically examines the contradictions within 19th-century Spanish society, from political idealism to the hypocrisy of the bourgeois class. Edited by Víctor Fuentes, this Stockcero edition highlights *La Tribuna*'s enduring relevance as a foundational text for understanding Spanish literary Naturalism and the socio-political landscape of its era.

II. CONTEXT & CRITICAL APPROACHES

La Tribuna provides rich ground for exploring critical literary and historical concepts, making it highly suitable for advanced courses in Spanish literature and cultural studies.

Pioneering Naturalism and Social Critique:

Discuss how *La Tribuna* implements Pardo Bazán's theory of Naturalism, as articulated in *La Cuestión Palpitante*, emphasizing documentation, environmental conditioning, corporality, and the force of passions.

Analyze how Pardo Bazán's portrayal of the working-class tobacco factory women predates and perhaps influences European Naturalism, particularly in relation to Zola's *Germinal*.

Examine the novel's depiction of the "clases menesterosas" and the innovative focus on working-class consciousness and class struggle within the context of the 1868-1874 "Sexenio Democrático."

Gender, Class, and Early Feminism:

Explore the character of Amparo as an early feminist figure. How does she challenge traditional gender roles by engaging in public political discourse and seeking human and social recognition beyond romantic love?

Analyze the novel's critique of the double moral standard and the limitations placed on women's autonomy and social mobility within 19th-century Spanish society.

Discuss the theme of "sororidad" (sisterhood) among the tobacco workers and how it functions as a counterpoint to the individual struggles.



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Socio-Political Landscape of Restoration Spain:

Examine the historical context of the "Gloriosa Revolution" (1868) and the First Republic (1873-1874) as depicted in the novel. How does Pardo Bazán, despite her conservative ideology, capture the revolutionary fervor and aspirations of the working class?

Analyze the "paradoxical moral" expressed in the prologue regarding the people's "absurd" hopes for redemption through unknown forms of government. How does the narrative itself (the "insurgent novelist's sixth sense") often subvert or complicate this authorial intention?

Discuss the presence of "demófila" (people-loving) sensibility and "popular humanism" in the novel, anticipating later historical analyses of this period.

Literary Style and Language:

Examine Pardo Bazán's innovative use of popular language and indirect free style, which captures the speech and sentiments of the working-class characters, particularly the tobacco workers.

Discuss the linguistic phenomenon of "galleguismos" and phonetic spellings within the Castilian text, and how this "mixed language" enriches the novel's style and authenticity.

Analyze the detailed "documental and testimonial" descriptions of factory conditions and working-class life. How do these elements contribute to the novel's social and historical value?

Intertextuality and Artistic Representation:

Explore the novel's intertextual connections to other literary works and artistic representations of the era (e.g., Ricardo Palma's *Tradiciones peruanas*, Carmen, the drama *Valencianos con honra*).

Discuss the novel's engagement with the "ludismo" movement and historical strikes, and how Pardo Bazán blends fictional narrative with real historical events.

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.

Pardo Bazán's Political Ambiguity: The novel's introduction highlights Pardo Bazán's conservative political ideology contrasting with the progressive themes in *La Tribuna*. Discuss how this tension is manifested in the narrative. Does the novel ultimately uphold or subvert the author's stated intentions? Use specific examples from the text.

The "Tribuna" as a Political Symbol: Analyze the significance of the title "La Tribuna" in light of its classical Roman origins and its application to Amparo. How does Amparo embody the role of a "Tribuno del Pueblo," and what does this suggest about the novel's commentary on popular representation and political voice?

Gender and Urban Space: *La Tribuna* offers a vivid portrayal of A Coruña. Discuss how the city's urban spaces are depicted, particularly the contrast between the bourgeois and working-class areas. How does Amparo's movement through these spaces (e.g., as a *flâneur*) challenge or reinforce gendered norms of public and private spheres in 19th-century Spain?

Literary Foreshadowing: The text points out how Pardo Bazán's descriptions of worker exploitation and alienation foreshadow Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. Discuss the extent to which *La Tribuna* engages with nascent socialist or proto-Marxist ideas, and whether this aligns with or contradicts Pardo Bazán's declared position.

The Role of Emotion vs. Reason in Social Change: The novel suggests that the enthusiasm of the working class for republican ideals is based on "emotional" rather than rational



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understanding. Discuss this perspective. Does Pardo Bazán ultimately validate or critique the emotional drivers of social movements?

The "New Woman" in *La Tribuna*: How does Amparo represent a proto-"New Woman" figure? Compare her character and aspirations with other female protagonists of the era, considering her pursuit of both political ideals and romantic love. What are the successes and failures of her personal and political journey?

The Carnavalesque and Social Resistance: Analyze the "Carnaval de las cigarreras" scene. How does this instance of collective joy and transgression function as a form of social resistance or temporary escape from the realities of labor and poverty? What is the significance of Amparo's transformation into a "bacante"?

IV. SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

This section complements the study of *La Tribuna*, providing avenues for deeper research.

Primary Text:

- Pardo Bazán, Emilia. *La Tribuna*. Edited by Víctor Fuentes. Stockcero.

Key Secondary Scholarship (as referenced in the Introduction):

- **Alonso Álvarez, Luis.** *As tecedorias do fume. Historia de Fábrica de Tabacos da Coruña*. 2005. (For historical context of the tobacco factory and strikes).
- **Alonso Montero, Xesús.** "Relendo *La Tribuna* de Emilia Pardo Bazán, observacións sociolingüísticas (e algo máis) sobre as vidas de Amparo e de Chinto." *Grial*, 2023. (For sociolinguistic analysis).
- **Barral Martínez, Margarita.** "De cómo nace el movimiento obrero en Galicia." *Revista de Estudios Históricos de Galicia*, 2002.
- **Fuentes, Víctor.** "La aparición del proletariado en la novelística española. Sobre *La Tribuna*." *Grial*, 1971. (Editor's seminal essay).
- **González Herrán, José Manuel.** "Lecturas críticas de *La Tribuna*, de Emilia Pardo Bazán, 1883-2018." 2018. (Comprehensive review of criticism).
- **Jover Zamora, José María.** *Política, diplomacia y humanismo popular en la España del siglo XIX*. 1991. (For socio-historical context of popular humanism).
- **Oñoro, Cristina.** "Paseos proletarios en *La Tribuna*." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 2023. (For analysis of Amparo as *flâneur*).
- **Pardo Bazán, Emilia.** "Apuntes autobiográficos." *Obras completas III*, 1886. (For authorial intent and context).
- **Sotelo Vázquez, Marisa.** "Amparo lee periódicos: la función educativa de la prensa revolucionaria en '*La Tribuna*' de Emilia Pardo Bazán." *Hispanic Review*, 2007.
- **Tsuchiya, Akiko.** "Deseo y desviación sexual en la nueva sociedad de consumo: la lectura femenina en *La Tribuna* de Emilia Pardo Bazán." *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 2001.

Additional Resources:

- Studies on Émile Zola and French Naturalism for comparative analysis.
- Historical accounts of the "Sexenio Democrático" and the First Spanish Republic.
- Research on 19th-century labor movements and feminism in Spain.



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