



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (003)

TITLE: *El Chacho - Último caudillo de la montonera de los llanos*

AUTHOR: Domingo F. Sarmiento

Subject Areas: Latin American Literature, 19th-Century Argentine History, Nation-Building, Political Philosophy.

I. Academic Justification & Context

While Sarmiento is globally renowned for *Facundo*, his later work on General Ángel Vicente Peñaloza ("El Chacho") offers an equally vital, albeit distinct, window into the painful birth of the modern Argentine State. As Pablo Agrest Berge masterfully outlines in the prologue of this edition, *El Chacho* is a testament to the ethical and political difficulties that "civilization" faces when interacting with "barbarism" without losing its own moral compass.

For university courses in Latin American studies, this text moves the discussion of the "Civilization vs. Barbarism" dialectic out of the theoretical realm of *Facundo* and into the harsh reality of applied governance and civil war. It is an essential text for understanding the structural tensions that arise when attempting to enforce liberal, constitutional law upon factions that reject the authority of the modern state.

II. Core Thematic Axes for Lecture & Syllabus Integration

1. The Dialectic in Practice: Sarmiento the Governor vs. Sarmiento the Writer

Unlike in *Facundo*, where Sarmiento observes from exile, in *El Chacho* he is an active participant—the Governor of San Juan and Director of the War. Professors can use this text to explore the gap between liberal ideals and the brutal necessities of state-building in post-Pavón Argentina (1861-1863).

2. The Ethical Dilemma of State Violence

The text forces students to confront the paradox of liberal statecraft: can "Civilization" utilize barbaric methods to eradicate "Barbarism"? Agrest Berge highlights Sarmiento's infamous instruction to Mitre ("si mata gente cállense la boca..."), framing it not merely as a character flaw, but as the agonizing reaction of a statesman pushed to the brink by the assassination of his colleague, Dr. Aberastain. It opens a debate on the monopoly of violence and the limits of civil rights during an armed insurgency.

3. Institutional Liberalism vs. Populist/Neocorporativist Practices

This edition's prologue connects the 19th-century struggle directly to modern Argentine political culture. Students can trace the historical lineage from the *montonera's* rejection of universal laws in favor of immediate, personalistic mandates, to the modern crises of populism and institutional instability in the 20th and 21st centuries.

III. Classroom Discussion Topics

- Police Action vs. War of Extermination:** Compare President Bartolomé Mitre's strategy (treating the *montoneras* as a police matter) with Sarmiento's strategy (a war of extermination). What do these differing approaches reveal about their respective definitions of the Argentine Nation?
- The Justification of the State:** How does Sarmiento justify the extrajudicial violence committed by his forces? Does the text succeed in separating the



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author's intellectual project (schools, immigration, constitutionalism) from his ruthless military commands?

3. **The Shadow of Urquiza:** Discuss the role of Justo José de Urquiza as perceived by Peñaloza versus his actual passivity post-Pavón. How did the *caudillos* misread the new political landscape of 1862?

IV. Research Prompts & Essay Assignments

- **Comparative Literary Analysis:** "Contrast the literary and political portrait of Juan Facundo Quiroga in 'Facundo' with that of Ángel Vicente Peñaloza in 'El Chacho'. How does Sarmiento's change in political status (from exiled intellectual to sitting governor) alter his narrative approach to the figure of the caudillo?"
- **Political Philosophy Essay:** "Using Agrest Berge's prologue and Sarmiento's text, analyze the historical roots of Argentina's institutional crises. Argue whether the conflict between 'dura lex, sed lex' (the strict rule of law) and the populist interpretation of the 'will of the people' was resolved by the Generation of 1880, or if it remains the defining fracture of Argentine politics."

V. RELATED STOCKCERO RESOURCES

Southern Cone Collection: 6-Book Bundle. (Includes *El Chacho - Ultimo caudillo de la montonera* alongside *1804 - 1810 - Las Brevas Maduras*, *Rozas*, *Ensayo Histórico-psicológico*, *Una Excursión a los indios ranqueles*, *The Emancipation of South America*, and *Indios Guaranies y Jesuitas Misiones de la Compañía de Jesus en el Paraguay*).

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