



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (015)

TEXT: *Viajes por Europa, Africa y Norte America -1845/1847* (1849)

AUTHOR: Domingo F. Sarmiento

EDITOR: Stockcero.

PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Sarmiento's Transformative Journey (1845-1848)

Domingo F. Sarmiento's *Viajes por Europa, Africa y Norte America -1845/1847* is far more than a travelogue; it is a foundational text of nation-building and comparative political thought. This two-year odyssey, commissioned by the Chilean government (though influenced by figures like Manuel Montt), allowed Sarmiento to observe and critically analyze diverse societies, informing his vision for a modern Argentina.

A Critical Gaze on the Old and New Worlds

Sarmiento navigates through Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro (where he fiercely condemns slavery), Paris (exposing political corruption), Spain (criticizing its perceived backwardness), Algeria (studying French colonization), Rome (observing political unrest), and Germany (analyzing educational systems and emigration). His journey culminates in the United States, which profoundly shocks and impresses him with its dynamism, inventiveness, and democratic ideals, despite its "disparate" appearance.

Themes of Civilization, Barbarism, and Progress

Throughout his travels, Sarmiento constantly engages with the themes of "civilization" and "barbarism," concepts central to his earlier work, *Facundo*. He uses his observations to draw comparisons, highlight contrasts, and extract lessons applicable to Argentina's development. His experiences reinforce his conviction in the power of public education, free trade, and republican institutions as drivers of progress, often contrasting them with the archaic structures of Spain or the corruption he witnessed in Europe.

Political Commentary and Economic Thought

Sarmiento's *Viajes* offers sharp political commentary, whether dissecting French parliamentary corruption or analyzing the repudiation of public debt in various U.S. states. His discussions with figures like Richard Cobden reveal his deep interest in economic liberalism and his condemnation of protectionism. The text is a vibrant intellectual autobiography, documenting his engagement with the leading political and social ideas of his time.

The United States: A Model and a Puzzle

The sections on the United States are particularly illuminating. Sarmiento is awestruck by American ingenuity (telegraphy, steamships), the rapid growth of its population, and the liberty of its single women. He views the U.S. as a unique, powerful, and ultimately successful experiment in democracy, despite its lack of European historical models. This vision positions *Viajes* as a parallel to Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, sharing a common spirit of insightful observation on the burgeoning American republic.



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PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

Travel as a Tool for National Identity:

How does **Sarmiento** use his travel experiences in **Viajes** to construct his vision for Argentina's national identity and future? Discuss specific examples from his observations in Europe, Africa, and North America.

The "Civilization and Barbarism" Dichotomy:

Revisit **Sarmiento's** seminal concept of "civilization and barbarism." How do his experiences and observations during these travels reinforce, challenge, or refine this dichotomy in his thinking?

Critique of European Societies:

Analyze **Sarmiento's** criticisms of European nations, particularly Spain and France. What specific aspects of their politics, culture, or societal structures does he highlight, and what lessons does he draw for Latin America?

The American Model:

Discuss **Sarmiento's** profound impressions of the **United States**. What aspects of American society (e.g., education, innovation, women's freedom) does he admire, and how do these observations shape his reformist agenda for Argentina?

Economic Liberalism and Protectionism:

Examine **Sarmiento's** engagement with economic debates, such as his conversation with **Richard Cobden**. How do these discussions reflect broader economic theories of the 19th century and **Sarmiento's** advocacy for free trade?

Literary Genre: Travelogue and Essay:

How does **Viajes** blend elements of travel writing, personal memoir, and political essay? Discuss how this hybrid genre serves **Sarmiento's** didactic and persuasive aims.

PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **Sarmiento, Domingo F. *Viajes por Europa, Africa y Norte America - 1845/1847*. SpanishBookPress Edition.**
- **Gálvez, Manuel. *Vida de Sarmiento*.**
- **Sarmiento, Domingo F. *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie*.**
- **Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*.**
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PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

What was the primary purpose of **Sarmiento's** commission from the Chilean government for his travels?

- A) To secure political asylum in Europe
- B) To study public education systems
- C) To negotiate trade agreements
- D) To explore new territories

Correct Answer: B

In which city does **Sarmiento** observe and critique political corruption in a parliamentary debate?

- A) Madrid
- B) London
- C) Paris
- D) Rome

Correct Answer: C

What specific societal issue in Brazil does **Sarmiento** strongly condemn?

- A) Political instability
- B) Slavery
- C) Lack of infrastructure
- D) High crime rates

Correct Answer: B

Which country's ingenuity and dynamism particularly impress **Sarmiento**, leading him to see it as a model despite its "disparate" appearance?

- A) England
- B) Germany
- C) France
- D) The United States

Correct Answer: D

Sarmiento's experiences during his travels reinforce his conviction in the power of which three key areas for national progress?

- A) Military strength, religious unity, and artistic development
- B) Public education, free trade, and republican institutions
- C) Agricultural expansion, industrialization, and traditional values
- D) Colonial expansion, social hierarchies, and aristocratic rule

Correct Answer: B

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