



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (019)

TITLE: *Peregrinación de Luz del Día*

AUTHOR: Juan Bautista Alberdi

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I. OVERVIEW & SIGNIFICANCE

Juan Bautista Alberdi's *Peregrinación de Luz del Día, o Viajes y aventuras de la Verdad en el Nuevo Mundo* (1871) is a foundational text in Latin American political thought, offering a profound and often bitter critique of post-independence political culture. Written during a period of Alberdi's public ostracism, this work transcends mere narrative to become a masterwork of socio-political observation, philosophical allegory, and incisive social commentary.

Through the allegorical journey of "Luz del Día" (Truth) in the New World, Alberdi exposes the enduring challenges to genuine liberty in Latin America. He dissects the insidious mechanisms of political corruption, demagoguery, and the perpetuation of power by a class he critiques as "Tartufos, Basilius y Gil Blases." The work's core argument distinguishes between "Anglo-Saxon liberty" (rooted in individual rights) and "Latin liberty" (often an "authoritarian liberty" personified in the state or a charismatic leader), a distinction highly relevant for understanding contemporary political dynamics in the region.

This Stockcero edition provides an essential resource for advanced courses in **Latin American Political Thought, Constitutional Law, 19th-Century History, and Comparative Political Philosophy**, offering a timeless perspective on the arduous path to genuine freedom and the ongoing "pilgrimage" of truth in the face of political fantasy.

II. CONTEXT & CRITICAL APPROACHES

This volume offers a multi-disciplinary framework for exploring the historical, philosophical, and political underpinnings of Latin American development.

Alberdi's Prophetic Critique:

Discuss the historical context of the work's publication in 1871, following Alberdi's disillusionment with figures like Sarmiento and Mitre, and in the shadow of the Paraguayan War.

Analyze why Alberdi's vision, though initially considered "too bitter" for an Argentina entering a period of peace and growth, proved to be prophetically accurate in anticipating the region's political "failures" (traspies) in the 20th century.

Examine the question: "in what measure Alberdi did not see in the rejection towards his person the sleeping monster that fostered the Latin American failure."

The Allegory of "Luz del Día" and Political Types:

Analyze "Luz del Día" (Truth) as an allegorical character. How does her journey through the New World expose the "chistosos desencantos" (humorous disappointments) of a continent where Truth finds herself among "types and characters from whom she was fleeing in the Old World"?



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Discuss the figures of "Tartufo" (hypocrisy, false piety), "Basilio" (slander, manipulation of public opinion), and "Gil Blas" (sycophancy, opportunistic flattery). How do these literary archetypes represent the enduring characteristics of the Latin American political class?

Liberty vs. Independence: A Foundational Distinction:

Explore Alberdi's fundamental distinction between "liberty" (a product of peace and individual rights, exemplified by Anglo-Saxon models) and "independence" (a result of war, often leading to oppression and taxation).

Discuss his argument that "South America would be free the day it frees itself from its liberators of the sword." How does this critique challenge the romanticized narratives of independence heroes?

Constitutionalism and the "Argentine Miracle":

Revisit Alberdi's "Bases y puntos de partida..." and its influence on the 1853 Argentine Constitution. How did this document, rooted in Anglo-American principles, temporarily propel Argentina to global prominence?

Analyze the "philosophical equivocations" (as referenced by Ribas) that later allowed the 1853 Constitution to become a "dead letter," contrasting this with the enduring vitality of the U.S. Constitution.

Alberdi as a Contemporary Voice:

Discuss the book's claim that Alberdi's insights remain "astonishingly current," particularly in light of contemporary Latin American populism and the critique of "neoliberal" policies.

How does the work present Armando Ribas as an "aggiornado echo" of Alberdi, applying his principles to modern challenges?

III. ADVANCED DISCUSSION & RESEARCH PROMPTS

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

Alberdi's Melancholy Prognosis: Given Alberdi's profound disillusionment, discuss whether *Peregrinación de Luz del Día* ultimately offers a hopeful or pessimistic vision for Latin American political development. What role does "Truth" play in a world where "everything is according to the color of the glass through which one looks" (Campoamor, cited by Ribas)?

The "Industry of Politics": Alberdi critiques a political class that profits from "false discourses" and "ingenious tricks." Analyze how this "industry of politics" (as described by Ribas in the introduction) operates in the novel's allegorical world and in the historical context of 19th-century Latin America.

Literary Allusions as Political Critique: Examine Alberdi's use of characters like Tartuffe, Basilio, and Gil Blas. How do these literary allusions (from Molière, Lesage, etc.) function as a powerful shorthand for critiquing specific political behaviors and types prevalent in Latin American society?

The "Luz del Día" Metaphor in Historical Context: Research the various uses of the "Luz del Día" metaphor in political and philosophical discourse of the 19th century. How does Alberdi's allegorical journey of Truth relate to or diverge from contemporary Enlightenment ideals?

Alberdi vs. Sarmiento and Mitre: The contraportada mentions Alberdi's "epistolary battle" with Sarmiento and the "eternal malice" of Mitre. Research this historical conflict. How does



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Alberdi's personal experience of political marginalization inform his critique of the "liberators of the sword"?

Constitutionalism and its Discontents: Compare Alberdi's vision of a constitutional republic (based on individual rights) with the historical trajectory of the Argentine Constitution of 1853. What factors, beyond those identified by Alberdi, contributed to its "dead letter" status?

Relevance for Contemporary Latin America: Discuss the enduring relevance of Alberdi's critique for understanding current political challenges in Latin America. Which of his observations about populism, state power, and individual liberty still resonate today?

IV. SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Text:

- Alberdi, Juan B. *Peregrinación de Luz del Día*. Stockcero. (TK ORDER: 019)

Key Secondary Scholarship & Referenced Figures:

- Ribas, Armando P. Introductions and analyses of Alberdi's work.
- Sarmiento, Domingo F. *Facundo*. (For comparative perspective).
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America / Cartas Persas*.
- Popper, Karl. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*.
- Gambini, Hugo. *Historia del peronismo*. (For later Argentine political history).

Additional Resources:

- Studies on 19th-century Argentine political thought and history.
 - Biographies of Juan Bautista Alberdi.
 - Scholarship on constitutionalism and liberalism in Latin America.
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V. RELATED STOCKCERO RESOURCES

- [Hispanic Heritage Thinkers: 7-Book Bundle.](#)
- Other titles by Hugo Gambini: [Historia del peronismo III - la violencia.](#)
- Other titles by Armando Ribas:
 - [Entre la Libertad y la Servidumbre,](#)
 - [Rule of Law: The Path to Freedom,](#)
 - [Los '90,](#)
 - [La Falacia de la Civilización Occidental](#)

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