



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (027)

TEXT: *El payador* (1916)
AUTHOR: Leopoldo Lugones
EDITOR: Stockcero Edition

PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

(Based on the "Información Preliminar" by Lugones's son)

1. THE GAUCHO AS A NATIONAL EPIC:

Lugones's Intervention:

El Payador (1916) is a pivotal work by Leopoldo Lugones (1874-1938) that collects his influential 1913 conferences on José Hernández's *Martín Fierro*. Lugones's analysis rescued the poem from literary marginalization, establishing it as a "Homeric Tale of Argentine Culture" and the gaucho as Argentina's national hero and civilizer.

Shaping National Identity:

The book solidified the gaucho's place in the national consciousness, contributing significantly to the ongoing debate about the ideal Argentine identity, often contrasting with figures like those in Güiraldes's *Don Segundo Sombra*.

2. LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS:

The Concept of "Payador":

Lugones meticulously explores the etymology and meaning of "payador" (troubadour) and "payada" (poetic duel), linking them to ancient Provençal traditions and underscoring the payador's role as a sophisticated verbal artist.

Patriotic and Semantic Concerns:

Lugones's profound interest in language extended to a rigorous defense of Spanish against barbarisms and foreign influences, believing that the purity of language is fundamental to national identity and sovereignty.

Historical and Ideological Lineage:

The work also engages with historical discussions, including a critical examination of Christianity and ancient Greek systems, revealing Lugones's complex ideological framework and his commitment to understanding the "Integral Fatherland."

3. LUGONES'S EVOLVING THOUGHT AND CONTROVERSIES:

Political Evolution:

Lugones's own political trajectory, from anarchist to nationalist and ultimately fascist, adds a layer of complexity to the reception of his work. *El Payador* marks a crucial crossroads in his intellectual journey, foreshadowing a shift in his ideas.

Posthumous Justice:

The text argues for "posthumous justice" for the gaucho and, by extension, for Lugones himself, whose controversial political stances often overshadowed his immense literary contributions during his lifetime.



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"El Payador" as a "Fraternal Twin":

The text emphasizes the profound connection between *El Payador* and Lugones's later poetic works, particularly *Romances del Río Seco*, both deeply rooted in the native landscape and spirit of Argentina.

PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

The Gaucho in Argentine Identity:

Discuss how Lugones's *El Payador* influenced the perception of the gaucho as a national symbol. Compare his interpretation with other literary portrayals of the gaucho (e.g., *Martín Fierro*, *Don Segundo Sombra*).

Lugones's Literary and Political Evolution:

Analyze how *El Payador* reflects Lugones's intellectual development and the "crossroads" in his life. How do his changing political views intersect with his literary output?

Language and Nation:

Explore Lugones's emphasis on linguistic purity and the etymology of words like "payador." How does he connect language to the formation and health of a nation?

The Role of the Intellectual in Society:

Discuss Lugones's position as an intellectual engaging with national issues. How did his lectures and publications aim to shape public opinion and cultural discourse?

Reception of Martín Fierro:

How did Lugones's conferences challenge the previous neglect or condescension towards *Martín Fierro* by the Argentine oligarchy? What does this reveal about social attitudes towards national literature?

"Posthumous Justice":

Unpack the concept of "posthumous justice" as applied to the gaucho and, implicitly, to Lugones himself. What does this suggest about the recognition of truth and value in historical and literary figures?

PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lugones, Leopoldo. *El payador*. Stockcero.

Hernández, José. *Martín Fierro*.

Güiraldes, Ricardo. *Don Segundo Sombra*.

Borges, Jorge Luis. *El "Martín Fierro"*. Emecé Editores, 1953.

Martínez Estrada, Ezequiel. *Muerte y transfiguración de Martín Fierro: Ensayo de interpretación de la vida argentina*. Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1948.

Rama, Ángel. *La ciudad letrada*. Ediciones del Norte, 1984.



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PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

1. Who is the author of *El payador*?

- A) José Hernández
- B) Ricardo Güiraldes
- C) Leopoldo Lugones
- D) Bartolomé Hidalgo

Correct Answer: C

2. What is the main subject of *El payador*?

- A) The history of Argentine theater
- B) A biography of José Hernández
- C) An analysis and glorification of *Martín Fierro*
- D) A collection of Lugones's poems

Correct Answer: C

3. How did Lugones initially present the material that would become *El payador*?

- A) As a novel
- B) As a series of lectures
- C) As a collection of short stories
- D) As a political manifesto

Correct Answer: B

4. What term does Lugones use to describe *Martín Fierro*, emphasizing its foundational status in Argentine culture?

- A) A modern tragedy
- B) A philosophical treatise
- C) A Homeric Tale
- D) A picaresque novel

Correct Answer: C

5. Which historical event coincided with the publication of *El payador* in 1916?

- A) The Argentine Bicentennial of Independence
- B) The start of World War I
- C) The death of José Hernández
- D) The election of Roque Sáenz Peña

Correct Answer: A

Explore The Ultimate Gaucho Collection (6 Books): This book is part of our comprehensive collection exploring the iconic figure that shaped Argentina's and Uruguay's national identities: Martín Fierro (José Hernández); Don Segundo Sombra (Ricardo Güiraldes); Fausto (Estanislao del Campo); Santos Vega (Hilario Ascasubi); B. Hidalgo - Obra Completa (Bartolomé Hidalgo); and El payador (Leopoldo Lugones).

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