



## STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (064)

**TEXT:** *Maluco. La novela de los descubridores*

**AUTHOR:** Napoleón Baccino Ponce de León

**EDITOR:** Malva E. Filer

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## I. OVERVIEW & SIGNIFICANCE

*Maluco* (1989) is a cornerstone of the "New Historical Novel" in Latin America. It reimagines Ferdinand Magellan's circumnavigation through the eyes of Juanillo, the fleet's jester. Awarded the *Casa de las Américas* Prize, the novel subverts official historiography, replacing epic heroism with a raw, human, and often absurd account of hunger, violence, and disillusionment. It is an essential text for studying postmodern narrative and the re-reading of the Conquest.

## II. CONTEXT & CRITICAL APPROACHES (by Malva E. Filer)

### ***The New Historical Novel (NHN):***

Analyze *Maluco* within the framework of Menton's NHN. Discuss how it subordinates historical facts to contemporary philosophical concerns.

Examine the "double gaze": How does the novel use the 16th-century context to obliquely critique modern authoritarian regimes (specifically the Uruguayan dictatorship)?

### ***Juanillo: The Jester as Subversive Witness:***

Analyze the choice of a marginalized narrator (an illegitimate son, a "marrano"). How does his social status validate his "unofficial" truth against the accounts of Pigafetta or Peter Martyr?

Discuss the "carnavalesque" elements, such as the baptism of monkeys with royal names.

### ***Intertextuality and Metafiction:***

Identify the dialogues with primary sources (*Diario de Pigafetta*) and literary classics (*Don Quixote*, *Coplas de Manrique*).

Explore the metafictional nature of the text: Juanillo frequently interrupts the story to remind the King (and the reader) that this is a constructed verbal artifice.

### ***The "Narrative of Failure":***

Contrast the official "epic" of the first circumnavigation with Juanillo's description of the return: "The ship smells of rotten wood... and broken dreams."

Discuss the concept of the "inner journey" vs. the physical exploration.

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## III. ADVANCED DISCUSSION & RESEARCH PROMPTS

***Humanizing the Icon:*** How does the novel deconstruct the figure of Magellan? Does he emerge as a tragic hero or a misguided fanatic?

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**The Ethics of Truth:** Juanillo admits to "spicing his speech with lies." Discuss the paradox of using fiction to reach a deeper historical "truth."

**Language and Anachronism:** Analyze Baccino's use of language. How does he blend 16th-century style with modern narrative sensibilities?

**The Role of the Intellectual:** Compare the official chronicler (Sepúlveda) with the jester. Who holds the ultimate power over memory?

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#### IV. RELATED STOCKCERO RESOURCES

- **The Age of Discovery: Deluxe Collection:** *Viajes a Las Indias (Colón), El Nuevo Mundo (Vespucci), Maluco.*
- **Colonial Latin America:** *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias, Cristobal Colon – Viajes a Las Indias, Verdadera Historia y Descripción de un País, Usos y Costumbres de los Salvajes de Virginia, Viajes al Río de la Plata y a Potosí.*

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