



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (033)

TEXT: *Don Segundo Sombra* (1926)

AUTHOR: **Ricardo Güiraldes**

EDITOR: [Stockcero Edition based on original texts and comparative notes]

PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

(Based on Critical Studies and the Context of Criollismo)

THE BILDUNGSROMAN OF THE PAMPAS:

- **From Boy to Gaucho:** Unlike *Martín Fierro*, which is a lament for a disappearing way of life, *Don Segundo Sombra* is a novel of initiation (Bildungsroman). It follows Fabio Cáceres' journey from a "guacho" (orphan) to a man, guided by his mentor, Don Segundo.
- **Learning by Experience:** The narrative structure is built on lessons learned through inexperience. Fabio learns the skills of the trade (breaking horses, herding, leather working) and the moral code of the gaucho: resilience, silence, and courage.

CRIOLLISMO AND NATIONAL IDENTITY:

- **A Search for Essential Values:** Güiraldes, along with contemporaries like Rómulo Gallegos and Horacio Quiroga, represents the peak of "Criollismo." The novel seeks to objectify the essential values of Argentina at a time when immigration was reshaping the country.
- **The Idealized Gaucho:** While Hernández's *Fierro* was a victim of the state, Güiraldes' *Don Segundo* is a mythical, almost ghostly figure ("Sombra" means shadow). He represents an ethical ideal for a youth that Güiraldes considered disoriented.

STYLE AND LANGUAGE:

- **Avant-Garde Influence:** Written partly in Paris, the novel blends the authentic rural lexicon with a sophisticated, impressionistic literary style derived from the European avant-garde. It elevates the rural landscape to a poetic level.
- **Precise Lexicon:** The description of rural tasks is technically precise, serving as a repository of "lo argentino." (Stockcero's edition includes extensive lexicographical notes to aid modern readers).



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PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

Myth vs. Reality:

- Compare the character of Martín Fierro with Don Segundo Sombra. How does the representation of the gaucho change from the 1870s (social protest) to the 1920s (nostalgic idealization)?

The Meaning of "Sombra":

- Why is the protagonist named "Sombra" (Shadow)? Discuss the symbolic nature of the character as a fading spirit of the Pampas rather than a flesh-and-blood historical figure.

Civilization and Barbarism Revisited:

- Does Fabio's final acceptance of his inheritance (becoming a landowner and a man of culture) resolve the conflict between civilization and barbarism, or is it a betrayal of his gaucho identity?

The Mentor-Student Relationship:

- Analyze the dynamic between Fabio and Don Segundo. How does Don Segundo teach without preaching?

PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **Güiraldes, Ricardo.** *Don Segundo Sombra*. Edición anotada. Stockcero.
- **Borges, Jorge Luis.** *El escritor argentino y la tradición*. (Essay discussing Güiraldes).
- **Lugones, Leopoldo.** *El payador*. Ed. Centurión.
- **Sarlo, Beatriz.** *Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 1930*. Nueva Visión, 1988.



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PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

Who is the author of *Don Segundo Sombra*?

- A) Jorge Luis Borges
- B) Ricardo Güiraldes
- C) Benito Lynch
- D) Rómulo Gallegos

Correct Answer: B

What literary movement does this novel belong to?

- A) Magical Realism
- B) Modernismo
- C) Criollismo
- D) Romanticism

Correct Answer: C

What is the primary role of Don Segundo in Fabio's life?

- A) His biological father
- B) His wealthy patron
- C) His mentor and "godfather" in gaucho life
- D) His antagonist

Correct Answer: C

Where did Güiraldes write the first ten chapters of the novel?

- A) Buenos Aires
- B) San Antonio de Areco
- C) Paris
- D) Madrid

Correct Answer: C

How does the novel end for Fabio Cáceres?

- A) He dies in a knife fight
- B) He accepts his inheritance and becomes a landowner
- C) He disappears into the frontier with Don Segundo
- D) He travels to Europe to become a writer

Correct Answer: B

Explore the “The Ultimate Gaucho Collection”:

This book is part of our comprehensive collection on the iconic figure that shaped Argentina's and Uruguay's national identities through its foundational literature: *Martín Fierro* (José Hernández); *Don Segundo Sombra* (Ricardo Güiraldes); *Fausto* (Estanislao del Campo); *Santos Vega* (Hilario Ascasubi); and the uruguayan Bartolomé Hidalgo's *Obra Completa*.

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