



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (036)

TEXT: *Santos Vega* (1872)

AUTHOR: *Hilario Ascasubi*

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

PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

(Based on the Prologues by the Author, the Editor, and Critical Studies)

THE MYTH OF THE PAYADOR:

Legend vs. Literature:

- Hilario Ascasubi ("Aniceto el Gallo") takes the mythical figure of Santos Vega—the invincible payador who only lost to the Devil (Juan Sin Ropa)—and turns him into a narrator of gaucho life. Unlike the tragic *Martín Fierro*, *Santos Vega* (or "Los Mellizos de la Flor") is a vast canvas of manners, customs, and rural life in the mid-19th century.

A Work of a Lifetime:

- As Ascasubi mentions in his prologue, written from Paris in his old age, this work was begun in 1850 and completed over two decades later. It represents a nostalgic reconstruction of the "Patria" from memory and exile.

GAUCHESCA AS POLITICAL WEAPON AND CULTURAL RECORD:

The "Beranger" of the Plate:

- Critical reception in his time (as seen in reviews from *The Neo-Granadino*, *The Commerce of Valparaíso*, and French critics) compared Ascasubi to the French poet Béranger for his popular appeal and political engagement. Ascasubi used his verse to fight the Rosas dictatorship, blending art with political activism.

Preserving a Vanishing World:

- The prologue by the first editor highlights the text's value as a "living document." Ascasubi deliberately included extensive footnotes to explain the specific rural lexicon, conscious that the gaucho world was disappearing due to progress and immigration.

THE LITERARY GAUCHO:

From Orality to Print:

- Ascasubi is a bridge between the oral tradition (Hidalgo) and the masterwork of Hernández. His style is more descriptive and less existential than *Martín Fierro*. He focuses on the "costumbrismo"—the details of the *estancia*, the interactions with Indigenous peoples, and the social fabric of the countryside.



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Originality of the Genre:

- Contemporary critics like Palemón Huergo argued that "gauchi-poetic" style was the only truly original contribution of the River Plate to world literature, distinct from European romanticism.

PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

The Function of the Prologues:

- Analyze the included prologues. How do Ascasubi and his contemporaries defend the value of "gauchesca" literature against European models? What does this say about the construction of a national literary canon?

The Payada Duel:

- Discuss the symbolic significance of the *payada* (improvised musical duel). How does the figure of Santos Vega embody the soul of the gaucho through his voice and guitar?

Political Context:

- Ascasubi was a staunch Unitarian and enemy of Rosas. Can you trace political allegories or criticisms of the Federalist regime within the text, or does the nostalgic tone overshadow the political conflict?

The "Civilized" Gaucho:

- The first editor notes that Santos Vega is a "somewhat civilized" gaucho. How does this characterization differ from the "outlaw" gaucho represented by Martín Fierro?

PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **Ascasubi, Hilario.** *Santos Vega*. Edición anotada. Stockcero.
- **Ludmer, Josefina.** *El género gauchesco: Un tratado sobre la patria*. Perfil Libros, 2000.
- **Borges, Jorge Luis.** *La poesía gauchesca*. (Essay).
- **Rama, Ángel.** *Los gauchipolíticos rioplatenses*. Calicanto, 1976.



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PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

Who is the author of Santos Vega?

- A) Estanislao del Campo
- B) Hilario Ascasubi
- C) José Hernández
- D) Bartolomé Hidalgo

Correct Answer: B

What pseudonym did Ascasubi famously use in his political poetry?

- A) Anastasio el Pollo
- B) Martín Fierro
- C) Aniceto el Gallo
- D) Paulino Lucero

Correct Answer: C

According to the legend, who was the only one to defeat Santos Vega in a payada?

- A) Juan Manuel de Rosas
- B) A stranger representing the Devil (Juan Sin Ropa)
- C) Martín Fierro
- D) His own shadow

Correct Answer: B

Where did Ascasubi write the prologue to the complete edition of his works?

- A) Buenos Aires
- B) Montevideo
- C) Paris
- D) Rio de Janeiro

Correct Answer: C

What was Ascasubi's political stance during the civil wars?

- A) He was a supporter of Rosas (Federalist)
- B) He was a Unitarian and fought against Rosas
- C) He was neutral
- D) He was a monarchist

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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